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AGRIS
A SOCIO-ECONOMIC SURVEY

A Thesis submitted for the Ph.D. Degree
of the University of Bombay

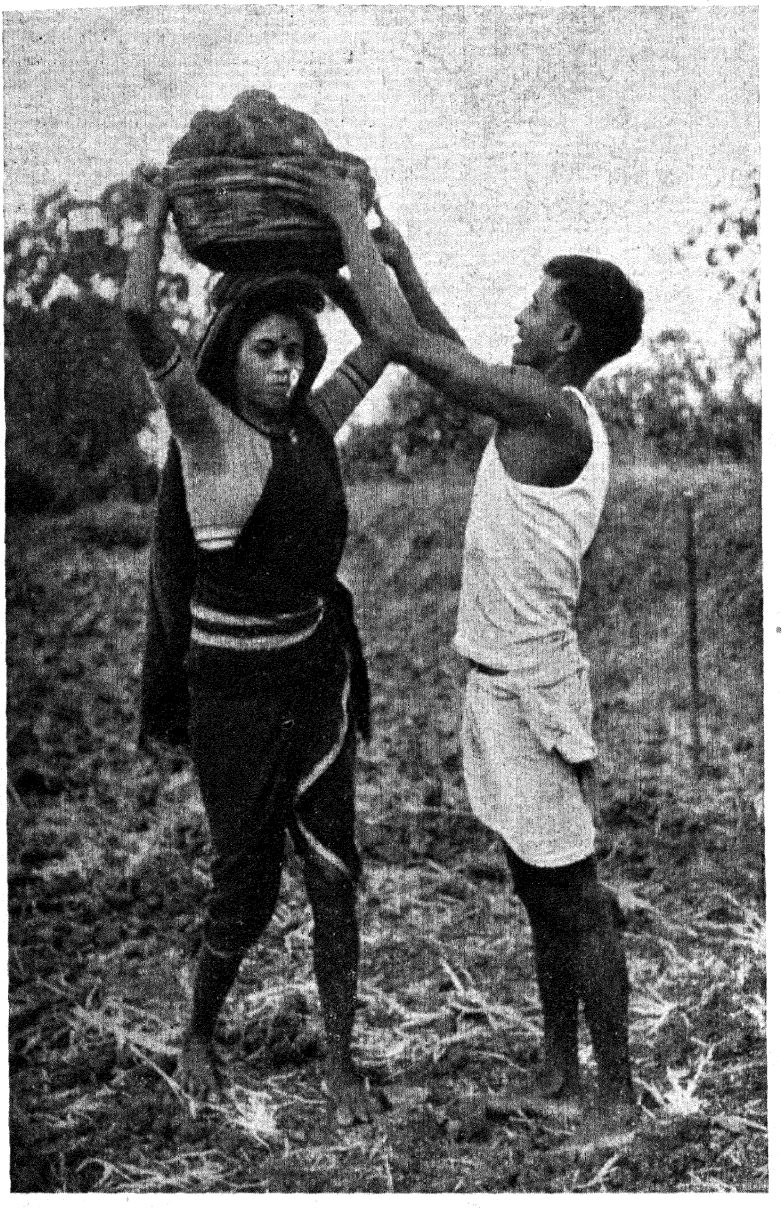
By

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AN AGRI COUPLE WORKING IN THE FIELD

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PREFACE

This is an humble attempt to study the small community of the Agris, who are mainly agriculturists and distributed over Northern and Central Konkan on the western littoral of India.

The writer actually made his start in 1943. He spent about a year in visiting about a hundred places in this area and collected three hundred life-sketches with a view to get a general idea of their living.

Then he restricted his activities to Alibag Taluka in 1944, from which period he moved extensively and intensively among the agrarian Agris, particularly in Kharapat and adjoining groups of villages. He witnessed a number of Agri marriages, funeral rites and other socially important occasions.

He collected more than 550 schedules to understand their economic position. He studied their dialect and tried to build a skeleton grammar and collected about 200 dialogues.

In short :

564 Economic schedules,
284 Songs,
203 Dialogues,
86 Medicines,
21 Treatment or medicines for cattle,
14 Sacred formulae,

collected during this period of five years form the backbone of this work. Thus he tried to deal with almost all the aspects of the Agri life in Alibag Taluka.

He spent most of his week-ends and all long vacations during the years 1944-48 amongst the Agris. He covered about three thousand miles on a bicycle during this period.

Throughout this period the writer had the good fortune to be guided by Dr. G. S. Ghurye of the University School of Economics and Sociology, Bombay.

The author feels highly obliged to Messrs. John Fonseca, M.A., LL.B., Advocate, Dhokawade; N. J. Mhatre of Shahabaj; and K. A. Anthony, M.A., of the Reserve Bank of India for their valuable assistance in this work. He also feels highly obliged to all the members of the Agri population —whom it is impossible to refer individually—who extended their whole-hearted co-operation to make this work as informative as possible.

The author acknowledges his indebtedness to the University of Bombay for the grant-in-aid received by him from the University towards the cost of publication of this work.

D. N. K.

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CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL AND PROTO HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE PEOPLE

FROM the Marathi word 'Agar' we get the word 'Agari'; and "an Agari" in Marathi connotes "one who works in an Agar". The word "Agar" means either a plantation of palms (trees) or "a salt pan".[1] According to the District Gazetteer of Kolaba the word "Agari" means "literally a gardener". But this word is used more commonly in the sense of those "who depend upon salt-pans for their maintenance". To avoid this confusion some Agris like to style themselves as "Mith Agris" to signify their particular profession. A similar instance is to be found in the Ratnagiri District, where the Mith-Gavadas distinguish themselves from other Gavadas, not engaged in the manufacture of salt, by prefixing 'mith' to the general term 'Gavada' before their name.

The people in the neighbourhood of the 'Mithagris' in the Alibag and Pen Talukas of the Kolaba District distinguish them by the denomination of "Kharakis" or "Kharpates", signifying their association with salt-lands. The Agris are therefore so called because they work in the salt pans. The name Agri has thus come to have a functional origin. "Lunia and Agri mean salt workers".[2] "Of the major groups called Castes, many bear names, derived from the principal professions they followed or the crafts they practised and in the majority of cases are still engaged in." *

A few aged and well-informed Agris were able to throw some light on their traditions, past history and the meaning and origin of their community names. We now make an attempt to use this information collected and the references made available.

A Note on References:

No. 1 and 2 — stories as narrated by the Agris.

No. 3 — a passage from Sahyadri Khand (Marathi) which was shown to me by Mr. Vaman Babaji

[1] *Vyutpatti Kosh*, by Prof. K. P. Kulkarni, Molesworth & Candy, Date.

[2] Dr. Ghurye, *Caste and Race in India*, p. 33. * *Ibid.*, p. 32.

Thanage, Chikanghar, Kalyan, according to whom the original book is not available at present.

No. 4 — It is from a book written by Mr. Dharkar.

No. 5 — This comes from a Prakrit Scripture (Pothi). The publisher says in the introduction that it is a collection of works from old manuscripts.

No. 6 — *a.b.* 'Bimba Akhyan' by Mr. R. P. Rane.
'Mahishkavatichi Bakhar' by Mr. V. K. Rajawade. "There are at least three different versions of the History of Bimba and at least six varying statements on particular points."[3]

No. 7 — This is a small booklet published by Mr. Bhoir. It is quite a recent publication as it refers to the Marathi Dnyankosh.

No. 8 — Bombay Souvenir—contributed by Dr. Pusalkar, Dr. Dighe and others.

No. 9 — Bombay. Place Names and Street Names—by Mr. S. T. Sheppard.

No. 10 — Appeal No. 323 of 1923 from Original Decree, Bombay High Court.

Other References :

Marathi Dnyankosha—by Dr. Ketkar and others.
Prachin Maharashtracha Itihas—by Dr. Ketkar.

(1) *As the descendants of Musicians of Ravana*

According to a narrative handed down from generation to generation and at present current in the older set of the Agris, they are the descendants of the musician[4] of Ravana, the demon King of Lanka from the famous Hindu epic of Ramayana, who in recognition of the services rendered to him conferred upon his musicians some lands on the western coast. These musicians who settled on these lands are claimed to be the ancestors of the Agaris of the present day.

Relics of this mythological narrative are still prevalent amongst the Agris. They say the Dhola Agris are called as such because they beat a 'Dhola' or a drum. And not a small number of the Agris follow the profession of musicians to supplement their inadequate income, derived from agriculture.

[3] Dr. Pusalkar, Bombay Souvenir, p. 15.
[4] *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XI, p. 51.

(2) *The story of Bimba*

Some six hundred years ago, three Hindu chiefs ruled over the small kingdoms of Choul, Avas-Sasavane and Sagargad, all of them now constituting together the present political unit of the Alibag Taluka. A Muhammadon Embassy was opened at Sagargad by the King Emperor of Delhi to collect the annual subsidies from these chiefs and make them over to the Central Treasury at Delhi. As the Muhammadon official-in-charge failed to make over his collections to the headquarters at Delhi even after repeated warnings, the Moghul Emperor, as a last resort, sent one of his generals to reprimand the delinquent. The official-in-charge of the Embassy, however, gave fight with this general of the Moghul Emperor and threw away the yoke of the sovereign power. Nevertheless the King Emperor of Delhi with a firm determination to bring low his audacity despatched another strong detachment under an able general with instructions to seek, on his way to Sagargad, the help of one Raja Bimba, then ruling at Mungi Paithan. The Emperor also wrote under his own seal to Raja Bimba who left his capital with a big force and joined the Moghul armies at Thana. With a carefully set plan these combined armies then proceeded further to complete their mission.

As soon as the Moghul armies launched their attack on Sagargad from the west, Raja Bimba advancing from the eastern side stormed the Sagargad fort, imprisoned the local chief and took the recalcitrant official of the Moghul Embassy into his custody. After peace and order had been restored in the territory, the Moghul General left for Delhi taking the war-captives with him.

Raja Bimba now styled himself as the ruling prince of Sagargad. Raja Bimba appears to have been a powerful ruler, as he soon annexed the other two kingdoms of Choul and Avas-Sasawane to his existing territory. He disbanded a major bulk of his army and distributed amongst the disbanded soldiers the land acquired by him in the course of his conquests in recognition of their faithful services. These soldiers were pleased with their new beautiful environments and soon settled down there. They readily took to agriculture and salt-manufacture. And the descendants of these people later on came to be known as Agris.

(3) *A passage from Sahyadri Khand*
(rendered in English)

From ' Omkar ', Sakti was born—From this Sakti, Vishnu was born. Brahma was born from the navel of Vishnu. And sage Marichi was the son of Brahma. The son of Marichi was Kashyapa, who was responsible for the creation on the earth. He had thirty-six wives, who gave birth to the gods and sages. Amongst these sages, the prominent ones were, Atri, Vasistha, Saraswat and others. In the days of Saraswat, the life on this globe had to face the great danger of a chronic famine. The scorching heat of the sun and scarcity of water brought death to the vast portion of creation.

In such a calamity the sage Saraswata with his sixty thousand pupils left his hermitage for the sea-coast to perform a sacrifice there. After the sacrificial fuel was collected, and the altar erected, they kindled the holy fire and threw in it the sacrificial oblations accompanied by recitations of various vedic passages. Lord Fire was pleased with their ritual and devotion. He blessed them with happiness and the famine and poverty disappeared at once at his command. Lord Fire asked him (Saraswat) to invoke Lord Vishnu to bless their crops. Saraswat also made assiduous efforts and pleased Lord Vishnu with his devotion. As a result of this Lord Vishnu appeared before him and asked him the reason for invoking him. The sage Saraswat then submitted thus: " The chronic famine has upset all life on this globe ; no one cares for the sacrificial rituals. The Brahmins and the sacred cows are not treated properly as is their due. And only a few care for the edicts of the Vedas. The people indulge in malpractices. And the whole population is being starved." Lord Vishnu took pity on Saraswat and in his mercy ordered Indra, the God of rain, to let the rain fall and bring about the growth of corn in the fields. He then departed.

The two daughters of the sage Saraswat, one of whom was named Kalika, married Kashyap and the other named Agala, marrying Shandilya, partook of what was left behind of the oblations offered to God Fire. They therefore bore sons to their spouses by the favour of God Fire.

The descendants of Kashyapa scrupulously followed the prescribed religious code of behaviour. They would catch a fish from the sea reciting a special formula (Mantram) and would eat its middle portion. They would join the head and the tail of the fish, breathe the life into it and let it free into

the sea. They thus became fish eaters. All the same they continued to learn the Vedas. They taught the Vedas to those who had forgotten them.

As it rained regularly and abundantly at the instance of God Indra there came to be a rich crop of cereals. Peace and order were now restored to the earth.

These descendants of Kashyapa, later on known as Agles, established themselves and settled in the neighbourhood of the Sahya Ghats and in Mungi Paithan especially. They are the ancestors of the present Agris.

(4) *A passage from Shannav Kuli Urpha Kshatriyachi Vamshavala*

(rendered in English)

During the course of their usual talk in the lighter vein as Lord Shiva and his wife Parvati were reposing on the heights of the Kailas mountain, Parvati requested her husband Lord Shiva, to explain to her the origin of the eighteen castes and colours (varnas) prevalent on the face of the earth.

Lord Shiva remarked that he was the cause of the creation of the eighteen castes and he was responsible for their present continuance also. Lady Parvati once more requested her husband to be kind to explain to her when and how these castes were created. Lord Shiva then narrated the whole story as follows :

"Once there was born a mighty demon called Tilakasur who harassed the gods and the sages all the while. Unable as they were to defend themselves against him the gods and the sages approached me to lodge a complaint against the demon and prayed that they should be spared from the calamity. I acceeded to their prayers and started to engage the wily demon in a fight. I overpowered him during the course of the fight, carried him to my camp and put him in an oil-press operated by my faithful servant Nandi, yoked to it. The whole task was very arduous and I perspired through fatigue. I passed urine also.

From my urine was born an oilman called Taraka. From my spit a Coppersmith was born, who was called Bhagna-Tamra. A weaver was born from my glances ; he was known as Sundar (and so on till we come to the Agris). And one was born from the front portion of my body. He was called Agala. Their descendants are the present Agris or Agales."

(5) *A passage from Vounshavali and Shannav Kuli*

(rendered in English)

In the fourth chapter of this Prakrit scripture (Pothi), termed as Dnyati Nirnaya, the author has dealt with ninety castes prevalent in the Deccan. After he has mentioned some account of the Brahmins, the Kayasthas, the Shenavis and others he refers to the Agri caste which is numbered tenth in the list. It is as follows :

" This caste owes its origin to the sage Agal according to some. It may be the sage Agasti according to others. A certain scripture gives their details, according to which Balindra, a descendant in the line of the ancient King Yayati, begot a son, called Agala after his mother Agalika. After his father's death, this son settled in Mungi Paithan with the whole of his family. Another scripture mentions that some of his descendants called Agales, left Mungi Paithan to accompany Raja Bimba to Konkan. Since then the Agris settled in North Konkan and followed salt-manufacture as their main pursuit. Hence they came to be known as Mith Agris since then.

They gave up their former traditions of wearing the sacred thread and the silken garment at the time of taking meals ; and accepted liquor as well as non-vegetarian diet in addition to this. Some of the present Agales in Mungi Paithan do observe the above-mentioned pattern of behaviour closely and are never addicted to liquor or flesh. The Agris in Sarlambe and Shahapur area wear sacred threads and yet eat flesh. They inter-marry with people from Choul, Uran and other places, but never have such relations with the Agales at Mungi Paithan. Nava Marathas also, found in the Bassein Taluka, style themselves as Agris.

" There are two sub-castes of the Agris. They are Dhol Agris and Mith Agris. These are two different endogamous groups."

(6) *A passage from Bimba Akhyan by Mr. R. P. Rane, Jukar*

(rendered in English)

There is a casual reference to the Agris on page 92. It runs as follows :

" Dhor Kolis are different. Agari Khum are different. Kharus are different. Dhol Agaris are different."

"Behaviour and ornaments of all the castes are different. There are particular etiquettes in particular regions. Pattern of behaviour is based according to one's family, opinions of the older set and scriptures. One should follow the rules of behaviour prescribed by the scriptures.

Similarly, there is a passing reference to the Agris in Mahishkavatichi Bakhar by Mr. Rajawade. The Agris were present at a meeting held at Malad along other castes."

(7) *Daxini Rana Rajaput Geetavali*

Some of the Agris in our days claim that they are the descendants of Rajputs and style themselves as Daxini Rana Rajputs. An attempt is made in the above booklet to establish this claim.

In the first chapter of this booklet it is said that the present Agris scattered over the Kolaba and Thana Districts, who are agriculturists by profession, really came from Rajputana. They were the inhabitants of Argal—a small town—the brave queen of Argal is very well known in the annals of the Rajput History. Some of them moved with Raja Bimba to the Northern Konkan and gradually settled there The booklet stresses that the information is collected by the professional bards, known as Bhats who used to visit various houses every ten years and kept in touch with all the details of the diverse families. They were honest in their work and faithful in narration.

(8) *Ancient and Medieval Bombay*

"Though the Agris themselves claim only a later connection with this island (Bombay), long after the Kolis and other non-Aryans, anthropological evidence shows that they settled in Thana District in pre-historic times." ... "The Agris, however, are on a much higher level than Kolis, Katkaris, Thakurs and other aboriginal tribes. They follow agriculture and manufacture of salt."

Dr. A. D. Pusalkar,
Book of Bombay Souvenir, 1947, p. 18.

(9) *Bombay—Place names and Street names*

"—according to most widely known Marathi account, the first immigrants to Bombay in 1294 included seven families of Agris."

Sheppard—Bombay Place names and Street names, p. 18.
Gazetteer of the Bombay City & Island, Vol. 1, p. 144.

(*10*) *Bombay High Court*

Appeal No. 323 of 1923 from Original Decree

(*True Copy*)

The Bombay High Court, while hearing a case in 1923, when the share of the adopted son from an Agri family was to be ascertained, has made the following remarks :

(i) " The parties are ' Agris ' by caste and it cannot be assumed that the Agris are Shudras."—p. 6.

(ii) " The parties are admittedly ' Agris ', and there is reason to believe that ' Agris ' claim to be Kshatriyas." —p. 10.

and further without weighing any decision on either side in the matter, has left it open for the authorities to locate the status of the Agris in the hierarchy of the caste system of the Hindus.

In the light of the information gathered from traditions preserved amongst the Agris to this day and from various references about them available at present to us, we are led to believe that some of the ancestors of the Agris had settled in Mungi Paithan and in the region thereabout. They could not have then been known by their modern name as the process of ramification of castes and sub-castes of the Hindus in the Deccan was still in the process of development. Dr. Ketkar in his ' History of the Ancient Maharashtra ' refers to the Brahmins, Marathas, Kolis and Mahars as the principal classes known at that time.[5] There was no mention made of numerous castes and sub-castes that came to be later on. Some of the Agris from Mungi Paithan had accompanied the fighting forces of Raja Bimba to the North Konkan, a region then known as Aparanta, at the close of the 13th century A.D. To quote the Kolaba Gazetteer, " The late or Aryan element, which they claim and appears in their surnames, was according to their story, introduced into the Konkan from Paithan in the Deccan, when the Deccan was conquered by the Mussalmans at the close of the 13th century." [6]

Their dark pigment, their black hair, their build and their pearl-white teeth do present us with their resemblance to the members of another community known as Padmashali

[5] Dr. Ketkar S. V., *Prachin Maharashtra*, Chapter IV, p. 24,
[6] *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XI, p. 51.

Kshatriyas who at present occupy the eastern districts of the Nizam's Dominions.

With the gradual severance of the cultural relations and ties that linked and bound them to their people at Mungi Paithan the Agris gave up their original pattern of behaviour and in the new environment of North Konkan, where they were long settled, they came to adopt some manners and customs of the people with whom they happened to be associated. And simultaneously with this adjustment and association there could not have been but some intermixture of blood as well.

They now took to manufacture of salt as their new profession, which they mastered soon to adjust themselves to the new circumstances when the social life was being stabilized in the Deccan. They were then known by this functional name of the 'Agri'.

In the opening years of the twentieth century a spirit of class-consciousness began to creep into the ranks of the literate Agris. The educationally advanced amongst them tried as best as they could to raise the general standard of life of their community by diverse social activities, which have been referred to in Chapter XI. The Alibag Taluka alone can boast of a number of Agri social workers, who are taking a keen interest in the social affairs of their community with a view to improve the well-being of their caste fellows. There are some four Agri graduates and double graduates, a number of the college-going students and an appreciable number of High School pupils.

The fact that the President of the Kolaba District Local Board can be an Agri (we mean one Mr. Narayan Nagu Patil, who started his career as an ordinary assistant teacher and rose to this office) and can occupy this office of dignity in spite of his not being a member of the party in majority on the Board, speaks of the capacity and efficiency an Agri can display if given the proper scope to develop his individuality.

CHAPTER II

HABITAT, NUMBER AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION

THE Agris, who engage themselves directly or indirectly in agricultural pursuits, constitute a small population spread mainly over the North and Central Konkan littoral, which is divided by a number of silted tidal creeks and small streams, running dry as soon as the monsoons are over. The homeland of the Agris with its typical marshy soil along either bank of the silted tidal creeks is a humid region with blazing sun by day and comparatively cooler temperature by night. "The study of population distribution has shown that the main factor underlying the Deccan life is food availablility. Population concentrates in the fertile food growing areas." [1] These tidal creeks provide the Agris with a variety of fish which is an indispensable factor in the diet of an Agri family and their fertile paddy fields yield a rich supply of rice, which is their staple food. The problem of drinking water is very acute in the winter and summer seasons and is an additional handicap to their already over-burdened, toilsome life.

A glance at the map of the western part of Maharashtra will show that the Agri population is found in the North in Palghar Taluka of Thana District and extends as far as Shrivardhan, and Mhasala creek in Janjira * State of Kolaba District in the south, and is hardly to be found as we proceed in the eastern direction beyond the limits reached by the high tidal water in the inland creeks. A striking feature of this species is that wherever they are found they are always a homogeneous group, which goes to make a solid majority of cent per cent Agri population and covers an area of miles together. Their solidarity is not affected even today by any foreign repercussions and thus their villages remain entirely a block of Agri population.

As one goes from the main coastline, which is generally inhabited by fishermen (Kolis) and allied communities, into any one of the creeks in this part of Konkan, he gets a glimpse of a conglomoration of Agri houses and hamlets, situated on an elevated expanse of land, surrounded by rice fields and dotted by straw heaps on either side of the creek ! As one further penetrates in the interior beyond the limits reached

[1] Simkims, *Agricultural Geography of the Deccan*, p. 92.
* Now merged in Kolaba District.

by the high tidal waters, these Agri villages appear to him isolated and separated from non-Agri people like the Gavalis, Marathas and others until finally the Agris disappear from sight as one comes to the villages at the foot of the Western Ghats. In short the Agris are found on either bank of the littoral creek and the creeks of Kalyan, Bassein, Nagothana, Panvel, Roha and Mhasala which area is the actual home of the Agri population.

Out of the sub-divisions of the Agris, mentioned in the Census Report of 1891, namely, Mitha-Agris, Dhol-Agris, Das-Agris and others, the first two are not known to exist from so far as the information which I have been able to collect in my tour of a number of villages in Thana and Kolaba Districts (*vide* Appendix) where many prominent Agris who were supposed to know these two sub-divisions, were not able to fix a locality of "Dhola-Agris" nor to point out persons who were specifically known by that name. Leading Agris from both these districts averred that some of the members from the Mith-Agri community were designated as "Dhol Agris" because they formerly followed the profession of musicians, i.e. beating the "Dhols"—the large drums—during social festivals or marriage ceremonies. The Agris further asserted that Dhol Agris are possibly present in a district other than their own. But, as I moved from village to village in both Kolaba and Thana districts and Janjira State, I did not meet any persons who specifically styled themselves as "Dhol Agris". All the Agris, as a rule, now style themselves as "Mith-Agris" or "Agris".

The "Das-Agris", who are mainly found in the Palghar Taluka of Thana district and in a few villages in the south-eastern part of the Alibag Taluka of Kolaba district, where they are known as 'Karada Agris', are really speaking an altogether different community with whom the Agris—rather the Mith Agris if we choose to use the term—neither intermarry nor interdine. These Karada Agris are referred to as toddy-tappers, in a period as far back as 1751 A.D., in the Alibag Taluka.[2]

Likewise, the other sub-communities among the Agris like 'Son-Agle' and 'Pan-Agle' as mentioned by Mr. Enthoven seem to have melted in these days, the question of the Varap-Agris being out of our scope, as they were first converted to Christianity and then reconverted to Hinduism at a later date.

[2] This statement is based on some manuscripts collected by Mr. S. V. Avalaskar from Alibag, who kindly showed them to me.

The following table gives the total population of the Agris according to the Census Report of 1931 :—

TABLE No. 1

Total population of the Agris in the year 1931

Males	...	...	...	1,36,096
Females	...	..	...	1,29,189
			Total ...	2,65,285

The following table shows the distribution of the Agri population in Bombay, Bombay Suburban District and surrounding regions according to the Census Report :—

TABLE No. 2

Distribution of the Agris in the year 1931

S. No.	Place		Males	Females	Total
1.	Kolaba District	...	68,485	69,043	1,37,528
2.	Thana District	...	50,578	48,139	98,717
3.	Janjira State	...	4,938	5,004	9,942
4.	Bombay City	...	2,603	4,883	7,486
5.	Bombay Suburban District	...	4,842	2,478	7,320
6.	Karachi	...	4,333	2,347	6,680
7.	Bhor State	...	221	212	433
8.	Nasik District	...	82	82	164
9.	Poona District	...	14	1	15

From this table it will be noticed that the number of the Agris in a large majority is in Kolaba, Thana, Bombay Suburban Districts and Janjira State follow in a descending order. They are almost in a negligible number in Poona District. It seems almost certain that there must be a greater number of Agris than the figures given in the above census table show in Nasik District (Igatpuri Taluka) who are socially linked with the Agris of Wada Taluka of Thana District, who for some reason or other were not entered in the Census Report as " Agris ".

The same table refers to 6,680 Agris as living in Karachi, who obviously must have gone there as labourers or factory workers like most of the Marathas and members of other communities from Konkan. As has always been the case with her, Konkan with an inadequate supply of agricultural products to feed her people, has always a big export of human

population, who go abroad to the remote ends of the presidency in search of some means of livelihood! However, the number of such out-going Agris is comparatively small and their emigration temporary, as they have ample means for their subsistence in their homeland. As these out-going members do not happen to be permanent settlers in the factory areas and the towns where they are employed, we find that the number of female members, accompanying their spouses to these places, is small, as most of them are left behind in their native homes under the care of their elderly relatives.

Table No. 3 (on p. 14.) shows the movement of the Agri population during the period 1891-1931 from Kolaba and Thana Districts and Janjira State, where they are found in large numbers.

In this table no separate figures for Janjira State for these years are given separately as the population of this State was included in the total population of the Kolaba District. Further it is found that, although the population of the Agris in the Kolaba District has risen during this period of forty years from 16.32 per cent to 21.87 per cent of the total population, their number has diminished in Jinjira State in spite of the fact that the total population of this State has risen from 81,780 to 98,286 during the corresponding period.

Similarly, the increase in their population has not kept pace with the general trend of the increase of population in Thana District where their percentage to the whole population fell from 15.27 to 11.79. The number of the Agris, which was 1,10,498 in 1891 fell as low as 98,717 in 1931 even though the general population of Thana District rose from 7,23,407 to 8,36,625 during the same period.

The following table gives the total population of the Bombay Presidency including State Agencies and total Agri population from 1891 to 1931 :—

TABLE No. 4

Percentage of the Agris to the total population of the Bombay Presidency

Year		General Population	Agris	Percentage
1891	...	22,959,997	215,733	.93
1901	...	22,139,746	221,176	.99
1911	...	22,513,574	233,553	.99
1921	...	23,159,538	231,589	.99
1931	...	26,347,519	265,285	1.0

TABLE NO. 3

Population of the Agris

Year	KOLABA			THANA			JANJIRA			TOTAL POPULATION			Total Population of Agris
	Population		Percentage of the Agris	Population		Percentage of the Agris	Population		Percentage of the Agris	Population		Percentage of the Agris	
	Agris	Total		Agris	Total		Agris	Total		Agris	Total		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1891	97,084	5,94,872	16 32	1,10,498	7,23,407	15.27	...	81,780	...	2,07,582	14,00,059	14.82	2,15,783
1901	1,13,015	6,05,566	18.66	83,733	7,16,243	11.69	...	85,414	...	1,96,748	14,07,223	13.98	2,21,176
1911	1,16,711	5,94,166	19.64	96,548	7,78,840	12.39	10,120	88,747	11.40	2,23,379	14,61,753	15.28	2,33,553
1921	1,16,401	5,62,942	20.67	86,071	7,57,834	11.35	10,105	87,534	11.54	2,12,577	14,08,310	15.09	2,31,589
1931	1,37,528	6,28,721	21.87	98,717	8,36,625	11.79	9,942	98,296	10.11	2,46,187	15,63,642	15.74	2,65,265

From this table it is clear that the population of the Agris keeps pace with the increase of the general population and this leads us to the conclusion that they have maintained the normal standard of growth throughout these years.

TABLE No. 5

Female Ratio of the Agris

Year	Per cent
1891	99
1901	95
1911	98
1921	101
1931	98

From the above table it is clear that there are 98-99 Agri women per hundred Agri men. This ratio is one of the common ratios arrived at as a sequel to the Census Report of 1931.

In the case of Thana District there is however a different tale to tell. Here the total figure of the general population has risen, in spite of local unfavourable climatic conditions, whereas the number of the Agris has gradually diminished not only in percentage but in their numerical strength also.

From all this we find that the fertile salt paddy fields of Kolaba District with their small ponds, in which are reared and preserved varieties of fish, seem to make an agreeable home for the Agris whose number is gradually rising.

General Survey of 300 Life sketches from Thana and Kolaba Districts (including Janjira State)

In order to get a glimpse into routine of the Agris in their physical environment and to understand how they have adjusted themselves to their surrounding homeland, I have collected information regarding the life sketches of different Agris from various villages, scattered over Thana and Kolaba districts and Janjira State. The number of villages I visited during my research tour exceeds seventy. Some of these villages are situated in the deep interior with no easy means of access to them even in the fair season. In some cases crossing or sailing the creek is the only way of approach. Many of these villages are more remote in the interior than what one would expect from their geographical distance.

Living in these villages becomes possible for only those with a sort of self-complacency with a few needs and a fewer opportunities to have them satisfied. Seldom has any stranger appeared in their social circle through whom they could gather information of the outside world and hence the life in an Agri village is of such a uniform pattern as to make it almost monotonous and even static.

In these sketches I have generally dealt with the social and economic aspects of their life. In the economic aspect the pursuits followed by the Agris for their living have been considered, while in the social aspect have been included various stages in their span of life, marriage, personal behaviour and habits.

The Economic Aspect

The following table shows the professions and occupations of three hundred Agris whose life-sketches I have tried to study : —

TABLE No. 6

S. No.	Vocation	Number
1.	Farmers	152
2.	Agricultural Labourers	77
3.	Cartmen	13
4.	Factory workers	8
5.	Carpenters	6
6.	Pensioners	6
7.	Domestic employees	8
8.	Village Patils	5
9.	Navigators	5
10.	Hotel keepers	4
11.	Teachers	3
12.	Talathis	3
13.	Vintners	3
14.	Sawyers	2
15.	All others	5
	Total ...	300

The above table gives a rough picture of the vocations mainly followed by the Agris, which are often supplemented by other subsidiary occupations so as to enable them to adjust

their family budgets. Invariably no one profession or vocation is remunerative enough to fully support them and their families owing to the inadequacy of the income derived from it.

Most of the Agri agriculturists, in addition to their regular profession of cultivation, which they carry on as their main pursuit in life, are always prepared to offer themselves for hire to cut down timber, fell trees for charcoal or in some such agricultural pursuits involving no particular skill or special training. They are also employed by the more well-to-do classes of land-owners to help them in their agricultural routine. They go to work whenever they are free and with whatever little wages they get they make their usual purchase of commodities for their household use, e.g. sweet oil, chillies, salt, etc. The number of such agriculturists is 152 as the table given above shows.

The seventy-seven agricultural labourers are, really speaking, 'landless labourers', who work from time to time in the fields of other landlords or brother agriculturists, to earn their livelihood. The cultivation of paddy requires more labour than any other crop. During the transplanting and harvesting period a good many labourers are required by the agriculturists and landlords for transplanting, cutting the fields and threshing. Besides these occupations, they do various odd jobs like chopping wood for fuel, driving carts or as labourers in the 'koop' or charcoal industries in the forests and works of other and similar nature. The general tendency of the Agri labourers is to work for daily wages, rather than seek permanent employment. There may be a few cases, when the period of their work may be fixed for a month or two, but in general these men go out in search of work when they are in need of money. But they are otherwise irregular in their attendance.

Thirteen men are cartmen, who have their own pair of bullocks and a cart. They carry load of timber, wood or agricultural products from fields or villages to the markets. As the income from his agricultural produce, after an Agri farmer has reserved the necessary quota for the next season, is quite inadequate to meet his household expenses, he has to supplement his income by securing work in a factory or mill in Bombay, for a few months every year. Every year such workers return home in the early days of the monsoons to

look after their fields during the season and leave for Bombay again after the harvest period is over. They work in factories or mills as relieving hands in places of permanent workers and subsist on minimum necessities sending home to their family as much money as they can save.

Carpentry and tailoring are the two vocations taken up by the Agris with sufficient means for the purchase of necessary tools and sewing machines. They accept apprenticeship at a local artisan to learn the elements of these trades only to enable themselves to meet the local demand. They never make any attempt to master the art either systematically or scientifically. The carpenters build simple houses, manufacture ordinary furniture and carry out ordinary repairs of the agricultural implements. The tailor is not a skilful worker, but he can ordinarily stitch a shirt, a kabaja (a sort of a jacket) and a half pant. He is irregular in his routine, inefficient in his work and very often stitches clothes perhaps useful to one, whom he never means. The taste for clothes is at its primitive stage amongst the Agris and neither the customers nor the tailors worry much about the details of fashions, the former being satisfied with whatever clothes they get to put on.

The post of a village police 'Patil' is very often a hereditary one in a particular group of families bearing the same surname. It is conferred upon the members of these families by rotation. The police 'Patil' as a Government servant rises to a status of some importance amongst the local inhabitants of the village, even when his total earnings do not exceed the paltry sum of a few rupees a year. He is a respectable nestor in the village and is always found to be present at public and social functions.

Their houses and fields being all along the small arms of inland creeks that divide their homeland from one end to the other, it is no surprise that the Agris display an elementary knowledge of navigation. To ferry across a little creek or to carry drinking water from some distant place in a boat to their home is not an unfamiliar spectacle in the life of an Agri. Not quite a small number of Agris is engaged in carrying sand from the basins of the Ulhas, Amba and Panwell rivers to the Bombay harbour. They dig sand, load their boats with it and man them to Bombay. The Agris are, however, fresh water sailors, employed very often on boats and

country-crafts plying in the inland creeks. They do not put their ships out in the open sea. They carry on fishing also in their home creeks by spreading nets and placing bamboo baskets—known as 'Bokshi', 'Bagli'—in the openings in their fields when the water is allowed to pass during the high and low tides. As the social and religious regulations prohibit them to sell the fish they catch, they distribute it amongst their neighbours after they have reserved it, in sufficient quantities to meet their household purposes.

Some of the Agris who have been fortunate enough to receive primary education in their childhood and to get themselves fortified with a Primary School Leaving Certificate are found to be in the services of the Revenue Department of the Government and of the District Local Board. They are a respectable class in the Society and the Agri Teachers have rendered a yeoman's service in the cause of social development of their community. Invariably a number of the present Agri leaders have started their careers as teachers.

A few Agris in the Thana District follow the pursuit of vintner. They have a number of palm (Borassus Flabelli Fera) trees at their disposal for tapping toddy. This profession is usually taken up by a small section of the community known as 'Kalan'. The Agri vintners, on being questioned why they followed the profession, replied that they saw nothing wrong in it; and in turn they put me a cross question, "If there is no objection to drinking toddy, what harm is there in selling it to others? Don't you sell the milk you drink?"

A small number of Agris is also found to be occupied in maintaining and managing hotels or boarding houses. This profession is a lucrative one and all the Agris found in this line are economically sound. A hotel in an Agri village is a sort of a meeting place, a forum attracting a number of persons, situated as it is, at some important place or at the junction of two roads, where the local inhabitants spend their idle and leisure hours. It is also a centre of news, where village politics are discussed and schemes evolved.

The Social Aspect

The study of three hundred life sketches gives the general impression that the life led by an Agri is one of a uniform pattern. The commonest type is as detailed below:

The life of an Agri man

Period in life		Specifications
1- 5	...	Childhood and child activities.
5-15	...	Tending the cattle.
16 onwards	...	Full-grown man—an adult following his profession.
18-25	...	Period of marriage.
25 and after	...	Settles in life.

The years of demarcation are liable for variation on either side of the limit according to the individual circumstances. The marriage period of a man may be extended to his 28th or 30th year for want of his economic preparation to celebrate his wedding, a costly affair including a common feast to be served to all the caste people in the local village, and a number of relatives scattered in the surrounding area, according to the Agri social regulations. The marriage of an Agri youth coming from a poorer family has to be postponed till the relatives are able to procure the amount either by saving or by borrowing it from a money-lender. Money taken as a loan has to be returned. With the increase in the number of mouths to feed, a necessary sequel of marriage consummation, and unstable agricultural income mainly due to the caprices of the monsoons, he is never able to repay the instalments in due time with the result that the family is economically crippled and the career of the youth spoiled and wrecked.

Late marriage, on the other hand, is a social stigma on the bridegroom, who is often subjected to a volley of unhealthy criticism. In a typical wedding celebration in Alibag Taluka, the old female relatives of a bride were criticising the bridegroom, to my surprise in these words * " whence has this goat been secured ?—so long are his mustache and beard ! " A bachelor's life is never an ideal, according to the Agri view of life, inasmuch as that an unmarried member of either sex is considered as unsocial if not anti-social.

The sixteenth year marks the beginning of youth, when a boy starts wearing his 'Langot'—loincloth—unfailingly. He is then considered physically fit to carry on all operations of agriculture. He shares the household and agricultural responsibility of the family along with the elder male members. Hereafter he attends the caste meetings to learn the social

* कुठशी बाय हा बोकड हानलास ? केवड्या मिशा न् दाढी !

code of regulations and the general code of behaviour of the community of which he is now a part and parcel.

The life sketch of an Agri female

Period in life		Specifications
1- 5	...	Childhood and child activities.
5-10	...	Helps her mother in the household work.
10-14	...	Accompanies other women to a forest to bring fuel or to a well to bring water.
14-18	...	Marriage.

An Agri girl is usually married between her fourteenth and eighteenth year, or sometimes even earlier ! After spending a few years under the guidance of her self-assertive mother-in-law, she has a separate abode with her husband, where she faces the brunt of the whole household responsibility.

In the majority of circumstances, except in the case of 28 men out of 300 men, who have been fortunate to receive some kind of education in their childhood, literacy is found to have faded into illiteracy. With no chance to make use of whatever little education received earlier, in their future life, the Agris have not cultivated any appreciable liking for the sort of education they receive. After he has completed his course of education of the type, imparted in the school, an Agri boy thinks himself to be in some way different from a man who would put his hand to the agricultural job but for something else which will not spoil his hands and clothes.

The general tendency of the Agris is found to be apathetic towards education of their children, who are found more useful to their parents at home than to their teacher in the school. " They go to school to learn the things which they are going to forget soon. Why should my son waste his time this way ? He has a better scope in a cow-boy's job—a step preliminary to begin with a farmer's life." Such is the general impression of the adult Agri farmers. A young boy is badly needed at home to look after the cattle. A young girl is equally serviceable to her mother in the domestic work. Education to make it a popular feature in an Agri life is a matter of futurity.

In many villages I found children unwilling to go to school because they thought teaching was nothing but getting

punished and to get enclosed within four walls of a building to waste their time in learning things, which seemed to have no meaning to them in their everyday life, while their fellow brothers would be enjoying a free life outside.

The bigamous tendency is prevalent amongst the Agris. Forty-two men were found to have two wives living at one and the same time. In other agricultural pursuits and in the field itself, a wife is a useful hand, whose labour is always available and can be depended upon. I met an Agri who had three wives—all living—this advocate of bigamy died only recently ! I requested him to explain the circumstances that led him to marry a third time. He said his mother being extremely anxious to see the face of a grandson and becoming restless to see his previous two wives giving birth to daughters alone he was compelled to marry a third time against his own wish. He added, " you can just imagine my mother's joy, when her third daughter-in-law fulfilled her long-cherished desire for a grandson ! "

I asked another Agri why he married a second wife. He said his first wife was physically unfit to look after his household affairs and so he badly needed a second wife to help him in his household affairs. According to the unwritten code of social regulations a second marriage is allowed in the absence of a male issue from the first wife or in some cases when a man's concern is too big to be managed by one wife ; but more often than not it is out of lust that an Agri marries a second time.

The life of an Agri is regulated by social regulations, conventions and customs. Any deviation from the general pattern of behaviour is immediately checked by the influential leaders of the community, known as Panchas, Mukadams and Gotarne, who are the all-powerful authorities within their jurisdiction. A special reference is made to this in Chapter VIII on Social Regulations.

Drinking is an ubiquitous phenomena in an Agri population. The Agris drink toddy in large quantities. They distinguish toddy from liquor with a preference to the former. Toddy-drinking is quite usual and social while liquor-drinking is regarded as something serious and unsocial. Out of 300, 266 men honestly confessed that they drink toddy and reliability of a dozen out of the remaining is doubtful !

Till very recently the caste meetings of the Agris were characterised by consumption of gallons of toddy in the Janjira State. In the absence of toddy it would be no meeting at all.

This state of affairs is gradually improving on account of all-round efforts made by the social leaders. The evil of drinking, however, has gone far deep in the social structure of the Agris with no chance of getting it eradicated in the near future. In both the Thana and Kolaba districts the Agris are reputed to be skilful and efficient manufacturers of distilled liquor, a job which is singularly their own.

Smoking is also popular amongst these people. "An agriculturist must smoke, otherwise he cannot find any leisure time", said an Agri to me in the course of one of his usual talks. Another time he said, "A plough man must be a smoker, or his bullocks will not get rest at intervals, if he does not stop to have a few puffs". A hospitable Agri in the Kolaba district will offer dried leaves and powdered tobacco in a wooden square block to anybody who visits his house. Boys start smoking when they are 15 or 16 years old. Out of respect for his older relatives a young man will not smoke in their presence. The Agris do not usually smoke ready-made bidis but they make a fresh one every time by adding tobacco in a rolled leaf. Every Agri carries with him a little tobacco and a few dried leaves in his pocket.

Females do not smoke. In exceptional cases women, who were found to be smokers, were all old widows.

Tea-drinking is a common feature of an Agri household though in many cases it is a privilege of the grown-up male members of the family. They add a lot of gur to the decoction of tea powder and add milk if it is available. Besides the usual custom of taking tea in the morning and the noon, tea-drinking has reached a rampant stage in the Kolaba district where tea is drunk any time anywhere. Generally it is the only drink available in an Agri village, where a hotel is otherwise called a "Tea Shop".

Chewing betel leaves is not a usual habit, as they are not always available in the Agri villages: nevertheless most of the Agri women display a liking for eating 'pan', as they neither smoke nor drink.

All these life sketches give a general impression that a large majority of the Agris follow agricultural pursuits directly or indirectly for their subsistence. Due to the inadequacy of the income they derive from their bits of agricultural holdings, almost all of them are required to hire themselves as labourers to some other vocation to supplement their income. They have been shrewd enough to follow vocations which neither bring social stigma nor necessitate any special

skill on their part. A few of them have secured jobs involving brain work. With an intense love for their homeland they make an attempt to stick to it with effort and casually remain absent from their homes, only when they are badly required to do so. After the seasonal agricultural operations are over, there is no work for them for the remaining period. They spend their idle hours in gossiping over a cup of tea on village politics or some other village conflict. On account of the abundance of leisure hours and want of sufficient work to keep them engaged throughout the year, it is but natural that they regard their life as unstable and feel a pinch of poverty whenever they cannot hire their labour.

Socially the life of the Agris is of one uniform pattern, their behaviour being restricted by regulations of the community and often goaded by the consciousness that they are the members of one organic whole. Except for the seasonal activities, every next day rises for them as the previous one. The elderly folk are very particular to preserve the traditions of the earlier generations and pass them to the next generations. Education has yet to occupy a substantial position in their economic and social system. They ignore education as it has no effect on their life. This apathetic attitude towards education easily explains their superstitious love for their own things with no non-Agri standard for comparison in a land exclusively inhabited by the Agris. This situation is being gradually improved by a steady spread of primary education and honest efforts by the socially conscious members to develop their community. Clubs, societies and associations are some of the attempts launched in the direction to bring them home, the light of learning. Annual gatherings convened at different places, where the leaders deliver discourses on education, social reforms, have awakened the Agris to self-consciousness with the result that a number of them have started sending their children for secondary education and in some cases even higher education. Their standard of living is being raised and they are entering new fields of activity.

Since it is proposed to associate ourselves closely with the life of the Agris in Alibag Taluka in this work, a general survey of this region is attempted in the following chapter to get an idea of the local conditions prevalent in their home land.

CHAPTER III

SURVEY OF ALIBAG TALUKA

Brief History

Alibag Taluka was created as the present political and revenue unit in 1858 A.D. by the British Government, when the Kingdom of the Angrias was annexed to the British territory after Kanhoji II, the last in the line of the Angrias, the famous admirals of the Marathas, and the rulers of this territory, died in 1839 having no male issue to succeed him.

Boundaries

The Alibag Taluka lies on the western coast of India just south of Bombay separated from it by a seven to nine miles wide arm of the Arabian sea, where the Amba and the Ulhas rivers pour their waters. This Taluka is oblong in shape. It measures roughly twenty-one miles from north to south, averaging ten miles from east to west and covers a total area of 189.6 miles or 1,21,344 acres.[1]

On its northern shore stand the two beacons of the Bombay harbour, " the Thull Knob " and " the Thull Shoal " on the Kolgaon and Hashivara hills respectively.[2] Beyond the Gull island or the Kansa rock and the confluence of the Apta and Amba Creeks lies the Uran Taluka of the Kolaba Collectorate. On its eastern side lies the Pen Taluka separated from it by the Amba river, penetrating in a winding course to the south, the Sambari village on her western bank being the border-line village of the Alibag Taluka.

The western littoral of the Alibag Taluka includes the Kennery and Unneri (Kenry and Henry) islands (known locally as Khanderi and Undheri) about half a mile in the Arabian sea, to the west of the mainland of the central part of the Taluka and Korli village and the fort on the southern side of the mouth of the Kundalika estuary, which divides the rest of the Alibag Taluka from the Janjira State and the Roha Taluka. The little village of Kuda, some nine miles in the interior from the sea-coast on the northern side of the Kundalika river, is the southern limit of the Taluka.

[1] *Second Revenue Settlement Report.*
[2] Bombay Pilot: *Limits of the Bombay Harbour.*

A short account of some natural divisions of the Alibag Taluka

The Alibag Taluka may be roughly divided in

(1) Western part or Ashtagar,
(2) Eastern part or Kharapat,
(3) Southern Kharland, and
(4) Bamangaon and Beloshi groups.

(1) The western part or the Ashtagar lies on the western coast of the Taluka, bordered by a line of hills on the eastern side. It is a fertile region with many facilities for communications. Its richness in gardens of palm trees and vegetable plantations makes it picturesque in appearance. It is a well developed area with every sign of prosperity in future. It is inhabited both by agricultural and sedentary classes mostly from the Hindus, though some Jews and Moslems have made it their home.

(2) The eastern part of the Alibag Taluka, which is otherwise known as Kharapat, stretches between Rewas on the northern end and Sambri on the southern, separated from the western part by a range of hills and bordered by the Amba creek on its eastern side. It is a flat surface of salt paddy fields, divided by a number of tidal creeks. It often abounds in marshy soil with scarcity of drinking water as its notorious feature. It is a region mainly populated by the Agris who are known as 'kharkis' to other people.

(3) Few villages round about Sudakoli on the eastern side of the Kundalika estuary are as it were geographically isolated from the rest of the Taluka. These villages together comprise another salt-land area.

(4) Two groups of some twenty-five to thirty villages in the proximity of Bamangaon and Beloshi and surrounded by a horse-shoe of hills, have features of their own. The whole area is sultry in the summer and malarious during the monsoon. Inhabitants of this region and of the one previously mentioned, though most of them are Agris, have not progressed much. They are easily distinguished from their Agri brothers in the eastern area of the Taluka, many of whom have taken pains to improve their standard of living.

The Alibag Taluka is divided in various 'Tapas', the Agri inhabitants of each 'Tapa' being ruled by social customs and regulations of the individual area. A detailed reference will be made to this in Chapter VIII on Social Regulations of the Agris.

TABLE No. 1

Maximum and minimum temperature in the Alibag Taluka

(1931 to 1946)

Year	Highest Temp. °F	Lowest Temp. °F
1931	96	59
1932	96	61
1933	101	55
1934	97	49
1935	101	50
1936	102	56
1937	95	56
1938	93	56
1939	97	57
1940	96	57
1941	103	57
1942	97	58
1943	100	56
1944	97	57
1945	103	52
1946	97	59

Highest Temperature . 103°F
Lowest Temperature : 49°F.

Climate

There are four distinct climatic periods in the Alibag Taluka. June to October is the duration of the annual rainfall and chill weather. It is sultry and damp in the months of October and November, when the days are hot and nights cool. During this period malaria and influenza rage in the Taluka. December to March is the period of cool season. From March commences the summer season, which lasts till the middle of June and then follows the onset of powerful winds of the south-west monsoon.

The Table No. 1 gives the minimum and maximum temperatures for the period 1931 to 1946, which are available at the Climatological Department, Government Observatory, Poona. Accordingly, the average maximum temperature was 98.19°F. The lowest maximum was 93°F, the highest being 103°F. The average minimum temperature for the same period was

50.56°F. The lowest minimum was 49°F, the highest minimum being 61°F during the same period.

Further, a diagram in Appendixes shows the graph of the annual maximum and minimum temperatures for the period 1931 to 1946. We find, whereas the graph for the lowest temperature is steady in comparison with the irregular and uneven line denoting the maximum temperature.

On the whole, the climate on the western coast is cool and salibrious. Gardens of palm trees, viviferous plantations, and occasional sea breezes, blowing from the Arabian sea, make it a very agreeable home for human habitation.

The climate in the interior is comparatively unpleasant in the Khar lands of the Amba and Kundalika basins, and especially in the former locality, where pinching winter breezes blow in December and January.

A range of hills, that runs practically parallel to the western coast, has caused diverse weather conditions in the Alibag Taluka. These hills receive the fresh breezes, that blow from the sea during all the year for the western part. They further prevent the pinching cool breezes on winter morning and sultry powerful winds in summer, that sweep along the Kharapat area on their eastern side, from penetrating into the western part.

Rainfall

The south-west monsoon, which sweeps along the western coast of India, brings rain to the regions by the side of the western coast. The period of rainfall on this coast extends from June to October. Dull and squalid weather overcast by a cloudy sky continues to prevail for days together and ends in a gust of powerful south-west gales and hurricanes and with the onset of these signs comes the beginning of the monsoon in the month of June. The rainfall is ample and fairly widespread over the Alibag Taluka during the months of July, August and September. And by the end of the month of October sudden and strong gales and heavy showers, which phenomenon is otherwise known as 'Elephantas' to the seamen, because the gales blow from the direction of the Elephanta Island,[3] marks the abrupt end of the monsoon, only to return in the month of June, i.e. after an interval of an average of eight months.

[3] And also because it falls in the period of Hasta Constellation according to Hindu almanac.

TABLE NO. 2

Annual Rainfall in the Alibag Taluka

(1930 to 1946)

Year	Rainfall in inches
1930	84 10
1931	94.16
1932	72.14
1933	78 63
1934	96.19
1935	84.86
1936	60.06
1937	66.46
1938	107.97
1939	60.82
1940	96.91
1941	26.66
1942	84.07
1943	75.87
1944	63.61
1945	74.90
1946	70.19

Average rainfall : 70 51"
Maximum—107.97" in 1938.
Minimum—26.66" in 1941.

Average rainfall during the period 1878 to 1918 was 85.29" according to the data available in the Statistical Atlas of the Bombay Presidency, and the maximum rainfall was 144.02" in the year 1878 the minimum being 34.7" in 1918. The second Revision Settlement Report of the Alibag Taluka published in 1926 by the Revenue Department of the Government of India mentions that the average rainfall was 81.89" and the maximum was 119.07" in 1916, the minimum being 34.7" in 1918.

Further details of figures of the annual rainfall for the last 17 years, i.e. from 1930 to 1946 supplied by the Climatological Department of the Central Government Observatory, stationed at Poona, are given in Table No. 2. Accordingly the average rainfall during this period was 70.51", the maximum being 107.97" in the year 1938 and the minimum 26.66" in 1941.

Reading of the graph showing the annual rainfall for this period (i.e. 1920 to 1946) shown in Appendix will warrant the conclusion that the rainfall both in its quantity and course is

irregular and uncertain and the disparity in the rainfall for the different years is most marked. Hence one can be never sure of the fertility of the rain clouds and the extent and intensity of rainfall that will dictate the boon or the bane of the next monsoon. As pointed out by various authors on Indian economics and agricultural experts, the uncertainty of the rainfall has been so fatal as to have affected the outlook of an Indian farmer for the worse rather than for the better. He feels that the monsoon is his dictator. A villager is convinced that he has to accept what providence has seen fit to provide for him. This explains the well marked fashion of the people.

A previous forecast of the seasonal rainfall with definite instructions by the Meteorological Department in the circumstances will be a great boon to the agriculturists to fix their agricultural time table. "The rainfall produced by the monsoon winds varies from year to year, and as so much of the economic life of India depends on plentiful rainfall, the problem of forecasting the Indian monsoon rainfall in advance is one of the most important problems, which any meteorological service has to endeavour to solve." [4]

Taken on the whole, the rainfall in the Alibag Taluka shows every tendency to decrease. Even the minimum rainfall before 1889 in Konkan was 74".[5] Not only that the rainfall is decreasing but the worst of it is that it is getting capricious. Irregularity has become its characteristic feature. The monsoon starts sometimes very early in June and often continues upto November with long periods of drought at intervals. This uncertainty of rainfall disorganises the supply of labour to the agricultural operations and upsets a farmer's time table, making a heavy demand on agricultural workers during a particular period, especially during the harvest period, when every farmer is in need of their services. It throws in jeopardy the standing crop in the fields, which is ready for cutting and which would, failing the timely action, be destroyed. The vital task of reaping the standing paddy crop to be completed within a short span of a fortnight makes an overwhelming demand of the agricultural labour when the 'Halva' (maturing soon) and 'Garava' (maturing late) varieties of rice crops synchronize in the month of November in case of irregular rainfall. Tables Nos. 3 and 4 give details of agricultural labour for khar land and other

[4] David Brunt, *Weather Study*, p. 59.
[5] Blanford, *Climates & Weather of India*, p. 73.

soil, as supplied to me by the agricultural people of the villages of Chari and Hashivara. And it is not in the least surprising to see that in the last two years of irregular rainfall epidemics like fever, malaria and influenza keep breaking out intermittently during the months of October and November and spreading themselves in the ranks of the agricultural population of the Alibag Taluka, as these helpless people in an attempt to save their paddy crop continued to work in their fields oppressed by the scorching sun from above and the wet marshy soil under their feet.

TABLE No. 3

Time Table of Agricultural Operations for five acres of salt paddy land

Nature of operation	Digging up clods	Sowing	Hand-weeding	Harvesting	Threshing and winnowing	Repairing the outer bund
Units of labour	40	1	20	60	30	5
Duration	December to April	June	July-August-Sept.	October-Nov.	December to March	December to April

TABLE No. 4

Time Table of Agricultural Operations for five acres of paddy land

Nature of operation	Ploughing, crushing clods, preparing Rabs (burning ground)	Sowing and ploughing	Transplanting	Hand-weeding	Harvesting, threshing	Threshing and winnowing
Unit of labour	20	5	40	5	60	40
Duration	February-May	May-June	July	August-Sept.	October-November	December to March

One unit = hired labour of one adult male per day. Ploughing requires the assistance of the bullocks, which is not considered.

Further, the scarcity of rain makes the soil dry and barren. Every year any amount of trees and fresh undergrowth are indiscriminately cut. The people inhabiting the Kharapat and internal village, remote from the coast, run desperately short

of drinking water during the summer months, an effect which is attributed by some to the reckless cutting of the forest growth, for fuel and charcoal to be exported to Bombay with no effort on the part of the owner or the farmer to plant new trees instead of those already cut. This attitude adversely affects the rainfall in this district. With the dwindling number of trees, the soil, which is otherwise held fast by the roots of the trees, gets loose and disintegrated with the result that with every downpour of rain tons of soil are washed down the slopes of the hills and other land by the torrents of rain water to the sea, only to silt the beautiful creeks of this Taluka and render them difficult for navigation.

Government efforts to encourage the planting of new trees are not satisfactory, as the day fixed for this plantation is the 15th July in every year. It should come more than a month earlier and instructions to the farmers or propaganda in public to that effect should precede it by a fortnight at least.

Water Supply

Agriculturists in the Alibag Taluka depend upon rainfall as their chief source of water supply to raise crops in their fields. Horticulturists and floriculturists get their water supply from individual wells, situated in their compounds, irrigation in any form being absent in the Taluka. The total number of wells, including pucca or otherwise, comes, say, to about 4,320,[6] besides a number of Tanks.

Scarcity of drinking water is a baffling problem, all over the Taluka, except for the western and central parts; it reaches a perplexing height in the 'khara land' area along the Amba and Kundalika creeks during the summer months. Agriculturists from these parts subsist on whatever little amount of paddy they obtain from salt paddy fields. Their days are idle after the harvest is over for want of water supply, irrigated or otherwise.

Regulation of water supply, or harnessing the monsoon, by construction of dams to store the water of the Tinwira and the Shirgaon brooks is likely to develop the agricultural prospects of the Kharapat. Similarly, diversion of either of the water-mains from the Bhira Hydraulic Works, which at present swell the Kundalika river to the Amba river will relieve the people of the acute scarcity of water in the Kharapat where the guinea worm, dysentery, diarrhoea, ring worm and

[6] *Administration Report*, Alibag Taluka, 1947-48.

other skin diseases have sapped the people of their vitality and where the problem to meet the demand of water supply for home consumption keeps the agricultural population engaged for more than two months a year.

TABLE No. 5 *

Details of land-acreage in the Alibag Taluka

	Acres
Gross area	1,20,798
Not available for cultivation :	
Forest	35,021
Cultivable waste	7,294
Other	16,009
Under cultivation :	
Rice	39,838
Gardening	3,342
Fodder	2,742

* *Revision Settlement Report*, 1926.

TABLE No. 6

Distribution of important crops in the Alibag Taluka

No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Item	Rice	Nagli	Varai	Val	Udid	Tur	Mug	Niger seeds	Others	Total
Acreage in Nos.	40,252	366	213	1,601	83	12	21	12	2,093	44,653

Crops of the Bombay Presidency : Govt. Agricultural Bulletin No. 109 of 1921.

A similar condition prevailed in the village of Roth,[7] before the water of the Bhira Water Works was diverted to the Kundalika river. There are now no guinea worms, nor any skin disease, that are all the result of filthy habits and shortage

[7] Ranade, *A Social and Economic Survey of a Konkan Village.*

of drinking water, in this village. The inhabitants of Roth have, further, developed a better sense for hygiene. Some similar attempt needs to be launched in this direction in the Kharapat of the Alibag Taluka also. And extension of the water pipe line from the Narangi Water Works to the village of Mankola, which has solved the problem of drinking water in that area, may be said to be a commencing step in the solution of the problem.

Crops

Emblements in the agricultural land of this taluka are solely at the mercy of the monsoon, in the absence of any facilities for irrigation. Hence monsoon is the period of raising principal crop. After the monsoon is over, subsidiary crops like Val (Dolichos lablab) and vegetables like Tondali (Caphalandra Indica), brinjals (Solanum Melonbena), Ghevada and the rest as raised up in suitable fields where water is available.

The Table No. 5 gives the average of the agricultural land. In the light of the information supplied by it we find that the forests exhaust more than half of the acreage, not available for cultivation. And the area mentioned under cultivable waste is comparatively negligible.

TABLE NO. 7

Statement showing the gross cropped area of the Alibag Taluka allotted to different crops, the gross cropped area of the Taluka being 100

No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Item	Rice	Nagli	Varai	Val	Udid	Tur	Mug	Niger seeds	Others	Total
Percentage	90.14	0.82	0.48	3.58	0.18	0.03	0.04	0.03	4.69	100.0

Crops of the Bombay Presidency: Govt. Agricultural Bulletin No. 109 of 1921.

TABLE No. 8

Details of Crops and total acreage in the Alibag Taluka

—	1922-23	1918-19
Cereals :		
Rice	50,175	38,937
Course gram	378	73
Total	50,559	39,130
Pulses :		
Gram	11	17
Mug & Udid	132	101
Others	8	17
Orchard & Garden Produce :		
Vegetables	1,621	941
Fruits, etc.	248	1,348
Total	1,869	2,289
Drugs and Narcotics	473	495
Condiments & Spices ...	30	83
Sugarcane ...	18	17
Sesame ...	4	...
Others ...	1,178	...
Fibres ...	81	55
Miscellaneous ...	5,528	3,524
Gross area cropped ...	59,615	45,752
Deduct twice cropped ...	1,680	1,029
Remainder net area cropped ...	57,935	44,723

Paddy crop takes a lion's share of the acreage of land available for cultivation and it is the first and only principal crop of the Alibag Taluka, though it "stands third among the food crops of the Bombay Presidency." [8]

Table No. 6 gives information of total acreage per crop raised in the taluka. It does not leave us in the doubt that the rest of the crops grown in the Alibag Taluka are practically negligible as compared to the principal crop of rice. From

[8] Government Agricultural Bulletin No. 109 of 1921.

Table No. 7 we find that rice occupies as much as 90.14 per cent of the total crop area in the taluka.

Further, Table No. 8, which supplies information about the respective acreage of land occupied by various crops in the years 1918-19 and 1922-23, says that the acreage of rice land alone has increased. It is evident that the rest of the subsidiary crops are being neglected.

Farmers from the northern and central parts of the taluka are inclined to pay more attention to floriculture and horticulture. Proximity of the first-grade market of Bombay which is easily reached in short time by country-crafts during all parts of the year, has proved to be a great boon to these people. These products have added to the fortune of the local agriculturists in the last twenty years, who were otherwise idle for most of the year, after the harvest of their paddy crop.

Fodder for cattle grows on the varkas land, which is 5.84 per cent of the total land under cultivation, *vide* Table No. 2. There are some grass lands fit for browsing, but on account of heavy rainfall, malarious climate during the rainy season

TABLE No. 9 *

Villages and population of the Alibag Taluka

No. of villages	...	205
Dwelling houses	...	21,867
POPULATION		
Males	... ...	47,511
Females	... ...	50,123
Total	... ...	97,634
Scheduled Castes	... ...	2,001
Others	... ...	87,073
Total Hindus	... ...	89,074
Muslims	... ...	2,268
Christians	... ...	388
Tribals	... ...	4,959
Others	... ...	945

* *Village Handbook*, 1942.

TABLE No. 10*

Revenue of the Alibag Taluka in 1947-48

			Rs.	a.	p.
Total	...	...	4,08,337	3	9
Soot	...	...	41,489	2	10
Actual	...	...	3,66,848	0	11

Soot = remission.

* *Alibag Taluka Administration Report*, 1947-48.

and scarcity of water after the monsoon, they are not very suitable for cattle. No special efforts are taken to raise up fodder except by way of reservation of some plots during the rainy season.

Villages and Population

The total number of villages in the Alibag Taluka of the Kolaba Collectorate is two hundred and five including 'payakhasta', i.e. villages not inhabited. They are grouped in twenty-nine revenue units, otherwise known as 'Sajas'. The total number of the population of the Alibag Taluka is 97,634 housed in 21,867 dwellings.

Table No. 9 gives the details of population.

There are only nineteen villages with a population of a thousand or more in this taluka. Alibag, which is the Taluka and District place of the Government, holds a population of 6,460. The rest of the population is scattered all over the taluka in small villages.

Ports

The Alibag Taluka, surrounded by the arms of sea, almost on three sides, is linked with the rest of the Kolaba Collectorate by water traffic only, except for the Choul-Medha Road which was opened a few years ago.

This taluka is linked with the Pen Taluka by a ferry across the Dharamtar Creek, from which place bus services run to Poona, Mahad and other towns. It is directly connected with the Bombay Island through the Rewas port by a steamer service all the year round. The historical ports of Alibag and Rewdanda, where the Konkan line coastal steamers used to call some twenty years ago, are at present closed for steamers

as these ports are getting shallower due to silting. Water released from Bhira Power House in the Kundalika Creek has acted as a natural dredger in the mouth of the Rewdanda estuary and in view of the information collected from the local fishermen, it should at present be navigable for ships of nine to ten feet draught. The Rewdanda port is the biggest centre of trade in the Alibag Taluka, which carries trade with Ratnagiri District and Bombay Island. The port of Sakhar, situated to the south-east of the Alibag town on the Sakhar Creek, also carries trade with Bombay and other places.

Mandwa port on the northern shore of the taluka, where also the Creek Service steamers used to call some twenty years ago, carries passenger-cum-cargo traffic with Bombay Island throughout the year.

All these above-mentioned ports are connected with Alibag by good metalled roads.

The rest of the ports like Pezari, Kambharle, Manakola, distributed over the northern part of the taluka are situated in the interior and can be reached by small creeks navigable for country-crafts during the high tides.

The Table No. 11 gives a list of the ports in the Alibag Taluka with main details of exports and the places where they are chiefly exported. And the Table No. 12 gives a list of the ferries across various creeks in the Alibag Taluka.

TABLE No. 11

Ports in the Alibag Taluka with details of exports, etc.

No.	Name of the Port	Details of export, etc.	Exported mainly to
1.	Alibag	Paddy, Dried Fish, Timber, Rice, etc.	Bombay and South Konkan
2.	Rewdanda	Charcoal, Dried Fish, Paddy, Rice, etc.	Bombay and South Konkan
3.	Mandwa	Vegetables, Mangoes, Paddy, Passengers	Bombay
4.	Rewas	Mainly Passenger Traffic	Bombay
5.	Pezari	Charcoal, Timber, Paddy	Bombay
6.	Hashivara	Vegetables, Paddy and Passengers	Bombay
7.	Mankola	Do.	Bombay
8.	Kambharla	Do.	Bombay

TABLE No. 12

A list of the Ferries

Out of 21 ferries under the management of the Kolaba District Local Board as many as 7 are found in the Alibag Taluka. They are run by Contractors.

1.	Alibag-Sakhar
2.	Rewdanda-Salav
3.	Theronda
4.	Thal-Navagaon
5.	Varsoli-Chalmala
6.	Mankula
7.	Sambari
Besides this list there are others	
8.	Rewas-Karanja
9.	Dharamtar

TABLE No. 13

Details of the Roads

No.	Name			Approximate length in miles
1.	Alibag-Rewas	...	...	15
2.	Alibag-Dharamtar	...	...	13
3.	Alibag-Rewdanda	...	...	11
4.	Bibikhand-Saral	. .	...	8½
5.	Poynad-Kusumbala	...	...	5
6.	Choul-Ramraj	...	...	6
7.	Pezari-Pirkhind	...	...	5
8	Pali-Chari ...	...	...	½
9.	Mugar-Avas	...	...	2
10.	Chondhi-Kihim	...	...	1½

The ports of Navagaon, Agrav and others mainly occupied by fisherfolk are centres of fishing industries. They are not mentioned in the Table No. 11.

Roads and Communications

Three metalled roads run from Alibag as a centre in three different directions, which connect it with Rewas, Dharamtar and Rewdanda.

Besides these roads, there are numerous lanes, by-ways across paddy fields, varkas land and the like joining village to village but are closed for traffic during monsoon. Only bullock carts can ply on these lanes and by-ways.

On the whole the western part of the taluka has a better system of roads than the rest. The condition, as regards the means of communication, is pitiable in the southern part of the taluka comprising of Sudkoli and other villages, where to reach Kuda [9]—the last in the line—is a matter of more than a day and a half during the monsoon, though geographically it is not more remote than Kalyan from Bombay. During fair season these villages are connected with Rewdanda by an irregular and often unreliable ferry service.

Some of the villages in Kharapat situated in salt lands, often divided by small creeks, are best approached by small boats during tidal hours.

Industries

The type of industries in any region is determined by agricultural products and other material available in the surrounding country. Further, the progress of these industries depends upon, inasmuch as facilities for transportation, nature

TABLE No. 14 *

Rice Mills in the Alibag Taluka in 1947-48

Place	No.
Rewdanda	4
Alibag	2
Thal	1
Pezari	1
Akshi	1
Saral	1
Nagaon	1
Kurkumdi Koltembi	1
Total ...	12

* *Alibag Taluka Administration Report*, 1947-48.

Besides one parched rice mill at Poynad.

[9] Where the author could reach within 23 minutes in a taxi-plane from Juhu aerodrome in Bombay.

TABLE NO. 15 *

Flour Mills in the Alibag Taluka in 1947-48

Place	No.
Alibag	3
Rewdanda	4
Varsoli	1
Thal	1
Akshi	1
Total ...	10

TABLE NO. 16 *

Saw Mills in the Alibag Taluka in 1947-48

Place	No.
Alibag	1
Akshi	1
Total ...	2

* *Alibag Taluka Administration Report*, 1947-48.

of the labour available, as upon the demand for their product and utility of the purpose they serve.

Paddy fields cover nearly 85 per cent of the total arable land in the Alibag Taluka and out of twenty-five industries, twelve are rice mills, ten flour mills, two saw mills and one parched rice mill. Except two rice mills and one parched rice mill, which are situated in the vicinity of Poynad, all of these mills are located in the western part of the taluka on account of quick and easy transportation facilities available there.

The number of flour mills has steadily risen with the advent of the Government Rationing System within the last four or five years as a result of some extraneous millets like jowar and bajra included amongst the rationed foodgrains, which cannot be conveniently milled in the home mill-stones, mainly suitable for rice ! Grinding corn in the flour mills is cheaper and more convenient in comparison to the labour and time

required to get it milled at home ! The problem of getting the hired labour of a household employee in the rural families of leisure classes in the western part of the taluka has become complicated and perplexing as ever, where almost all these flour mills are situated. The two saw-mills situated at Alibag and Akshi, which stand on either side of the Sakhar creek, get most of their teak wood from the forests amidst the neighbouring hills. The timber, sawn in these mills, is exported from the Sakhar port to Bombay and other places.

Silver-smiths, all of whom are the residents of Rewdanda, on account of their very moderate cost of labour, receive orders from big merchants from Bombay where the wages for a skilled labour are high. These silver-smiths from Rewdanda have ultimately to be content with whatever wages they earn by way of such labour contracts from Bombay, being unable to start a business of their own simply because they have a limited capital at their disposal.

A general survey of the main industries, we have carried so far, makes it clear that most of them are situated in the region adjoining Alibag and Rewdanda, the biggest trading centres in the taluka. They lie in the western part of the taluka, a well developed region—known as Ashtagar, literally comprised of eight gardens,—from historical times.

Fishing as their main pursuit in life is followed by most of the inhabitants of Rewas, Thal, Sakhar, Agrav and other villages, mainly populated by the Son Kolis (fishermen). They put their boats a few miles out in the sea where their fishing nets are fixed to wooden poles and return to their home ports with their catch of fish. Their womenfolk, after assorting the catch, set out for the neighbouring villages to effect a sale of their basketful loads. These fishermen, though noted for their skill in navigation and adventure from the days of the Marathas, when Alibag was the seat of the Maratha Admiralty, still use their vessels of a hackynete type and follow their traditional methods.

Exports of Alibag Taluka

Most of the trade is carried in the fair season by country-crafts, some of which are manned and owned by local inhabitants. The Table No. 17 gives a summary of the commodities, exported from the Alibag Taluka and the places, where they are mainly sent, in the year 1947-48.

TABLE No. 17*

Exports from the Alibag Taluka in 1947-48

No.	Name of the article exported	Value of the article in Rs.	Where they are exported
1.	Paddy	15,00,000	Bombay, Panwel and Ratnagiri
2.	Rice	12,00,000	do.
3.	Betel nuts	4,40,000	Bombay
4.	Cocoanuts	2,28,000	Poona, Satara
5.	Fish (dry)	1,50,000	do.
6.	Timber	75,000	Bombay
7.	Vegetables	75,000	do.
8.	Wood (fuel)	60,000	do.
9.	Country coal	52,000	do.
10.	Silver-ware	47,250	do.
11.	Mangoes	25,000	Bombay, Poona
12.	Bamboos	17,000	Bombay
13.	Plantains	15,000	do.
14.	Country Blankets	2,000	do.

* *Alibag Taluka Administration Report*, 1947-48.

Except silver-ware, which is manufactured by the local silver-smiths at Rewdanda, more or less, all the items are agricultural products and dried fish.

Timber, fuel and country charcoal come from the forests situated in the inland region, lying round about the basins of the Amba and Kundalika rivers. Fresh fish, caught by the local fishermen from that and Alibag, is exported to Bombay. Dried fish is exported to the Poona and Satara Districts from the Poynad market, where the local agents collect it from the fishermen coming from the coastal fishing villages.

Mangoes, other fruits and vegetables are exported mainly to Bombay from the ports of Mandwa, Rewas, Hashivara and Kambharla. Paddy is shipped from the ports of Alibag and Rewdanda to the Ratnagiri district and Malabar ripa and from Mandwa, Rewas and other ports to Panwell, Bombay and Bulsar.

Blankets exported are, really speaking, turned out by the shepherds of the Poona and Satara Districts who come down to the Konkan in fair season with their flocks of sheep and keep moving with them from village to village. They receive good remuneration from local agriculturists for an overnight

stay in their paddy fields, for getting them manured by the dung of their sheep !

Cattle

The number of cattle including bulls, buffaloes, cows and others comes to 34,014, the details of which are given in Table No 18.

TABLE No. 18 *

Cattle Census in the Alibag Taluka in 1947-48

Bulls and Cows :		
1.	Breeding bulls over three years	71
2.	Working bulls over three years	12,820
3.	Bulls not in work, not in use	146
4.	Breeding cows over three years	3,851
5.	Cows over three years for work only	34
6.	Cows over three years not in use for work or breeding...	85
7.	Male young bulls under one year	1,242
8.	Female young calves under one year	1,386
9.	Male calves between 1-3 years	1,427
10.	Female calves between 1-3 years	1,336
Buffaloes :		
11.	Breeding stock-males over three years for breeding ...	42
12.	Working males over three years, castrated ...	2,395
13.	Males not in use castrated or otherwise	46
14.	Breeding stock over three years-females	3,592
15.	Females over three years for work only	18
16.	Females over three years for breeding purposes and work	50
17.	Male buffaloes under one year	665
18.	Female buffaloes under one year	881
19.	Male buffaloes from one to three years	623
20.	Female buffaloes from one to three years	944
Sheep and goats :		
21.	Sheep (Total)	2,646
22.	Goat (Total)	4,617

* *Alibag Taluka Administration Report*, 1947-48.

The number of working bullocks, which are over three years, and are highly useful in agriculture and horticulture, tops the list. They are yoked to ploughs, Persian wheels and to the carts that ply between fields and homes. They are also

yoked to small carts, locally known as 'chakadis', with an accommodation for four persons at the most. Racing of these carts, whenever they happen to run in the same direction is one of the most popular pastimes of the agricultural classes of this taluka. For this purpose alone, a number of fine bullocks are imported in the Alibag Taluka from the Satara and Poona districts. These bullocks are tended at the cost of other heads in their cowpens by the farmers. And hence it is no wonder that the number of such bullocks, serving the double purpose of providing a recreation and ploughing the agricultural farms of their master should be the greatest.

Male buffaloes, though found to be more useful in Konkan agriculture and horticulture, run short in number, simply because they are unable to take part in cart-races on account of their sluggishness. She-buffaloes, mainly useful for milking, as they yield more milk than cows, are purposely kept and properly looked after.

Sheep and goats, numbering 7,263, are really speaking not the natives of the Alibag Taluka. Every year shepherds from the Ghatside move in Konkan with their heads of sheep in fair season, where they accrue good income for manuring paddy fields with dung of their sheep.

Public Health

Some sixty persons are believed to have lost their life in 1947-48 as a result of small-pox and other epidemics raging in the Alibag Taluka. No detailed information is available about the exact number of victims of other diseases as most of the village records are handled by a Patil and a Talathi, the former of whom is low-paid and untrained if not totally illiterate and the latter has too many irons in the fire. Fever seems to be the common column to include all sorts of deaths, where diseases cannot be identified. Endemic diseases like diarrhoea and guinea worm pay annual visits to the kharapat, running short of drinking water in the summer months. Malaria and influenza sweep all over the taluka in the months of October and November. During these two months in the year 1947, most of the villages in the northern parts of the taluka bore the brunt of the attack of the influenza fever. In one case in the Kusumbale village all the nine members of a family were laid in bed with none to attend the sick. And persons housed in the neighbourhood were of little use as they also suffered likewise.

There are some twenty-five medical practitioners in the taluka, a majority of whom happens to have settled in the western part. According to the information collected from some of these, alcoholic practices, gone deep amongst the Agris, are creating liver troubles. The rural Agris are apathetic towards alopathic mixtures and doses, partly because of their belief in superstitions and efficiency of their 'Bhagat' or medicine man and partly because of the pecuniary expenses involved in defraying their charges. And many times they go on without medicine solely to be cured by the healer of time. Negligence of ordinary ailments in preliminary stages, sometimes develops into complications, which ultimately proves to be fatal.

A tabulation of 213 cases treated is given below to have an idea about the general health of the Agri inhabitants of the taluka. These cases, coming from Narangi and other surrounding villages, were treated by Datar, a local medical practitioner, who was kind enough to extend his co-operation to me.

TABLE No. 19

Analysis of the cases treated in Narangi and other villages from June 1946 to May 1947

No.	Disease		No. of Patients
1.	Ring worm and Itches	...	75
2.	Malaria	...	50
3.	Diarrhoea	...	25
4.	Enlarged liver	...	24
5.	Piles	...	12
6.	Guinea worm	...	10
7.	Syphilis	...	6
8.	Typhoid	...	3
9.	Pneumonia	...	3
10.	Cirrhosis of liver	...	2
11.	T.B.	...	1
12.	Gonorrhoea	...	1
13.	Meningitis	...	1
		Total ...	213

A glance at Table No. 19 shows that itches, malaria and diarrhoea, which are the usual visitors to these villages, deserve special mention. Ignorance of rules of sanitation,

their habits, filthy and dirty as ever, and scarcity of drinking water, are some of the main causes.

Syphilis and gonorrhoea are imported from Bombay by some of the local people, who live in Bombay for three or four months a year as hired labourers, contact these diseases in bad company and return home to impair the popular georgic life.

One cannot fail to understand that liver troubles are but the effects of drinking. The measures adopted to check it seem to have been ineffective, and an inebriate, who must drink, is able to improvise a substitute if a regular drink be not available.

Education

Education imparted in the Taluka is of two types—Primary and English.

Primary Education

There are in all seventy-five primary schools in the Alibag Taluka under the administration of the Kolaba District School Board. Sixty-two schools out of these admit boys and girls, though they are officially intended for boys alone. Five schools which are specially meant for girls, are situated at prominent places in the taluka. Urdu-teaching schools are only two, as the Moslem population in the taluka in the rural country is negligible. Two schools are specially opened for the 'Adivasis'. The details regarding the number of pupils and schools is given in Table No. 20.

English Education

Prima facie it appears that there are in all six English-teaching schools, a majority of which is conducted by the Konkan Education Society, in the Alibag Taluka. They include two full-fledged High Schools at Alibag and Rewdanda, four middle schools at various villages, and only one middle school for girls at Alibag. Yet, with the salutary exception of the middle school at Poynad, all the rest of the English-teaching schools are distributed in the western part of the taluka.

The premises of 'Vaishya Vidyashram' stationed at Sasawana, once a reputed institution, which passed *pari passu* through a series of fluctuations, was virtually handed over to the present Government to save it from total extinction.

Government have started there a primary training college for female teachers.

Having thus surveyed schools and other educational institutions in this taluka, we deal with the average of literacy known to exist amongst the Agris as a result of the sample survey, which is described fully in Chapter IX.

Table No. 19A gives information regarding the number of literate males and females distributed over 564 families of this survey. Every person who could sign his name, was regarded as literate, though many persons displayed proficiency in reading and writing Marathi.

Further analysis of the data makes it clear that the centre of literacy shifted to the last two or three groups where the percentage of male literate members was as high as 65.4 per cent. It might be ascribed to their cultural contact of those people with Bombay. Only 10.7 per cent of the females were literate.

Young boys and girls of the Agri community are sent to the D.L.B. Schools, where co-education in the absence of any other facility is not objected to by their guardians, till the girls attain 10 or 12 years. The daughters of the houses are denied any further education as their services are indispensable for domestic work. According to the social custom of the Agris the girls get married early in their teens, before which they are given training in the domestic routine work and culinary art. In many agricultural families, where the income is on the marginal level, the boys also are not sent to school after 14 or 15 as their labour is demanded for agricultural work. And it is only in the families which are financially sound that children continue their education till they get a P.S.L. Certificate and even further.

My investigations and the views expressed by the Agris on education lead me to believe that the apathy of the Agris towards the present system of education is due to the fact that they find it unsuitable for their ways of life. Illiteracy, to put their view in a nutshell, has never presented itself as a major obstacle to their agricultural routine, nor has it ever curbed their spirit of self-reliance. They consider the period spent in a school as unproductive and they find that their children are very often thrown in the total darkness of illiteracy after a decade. Improvement in the present educational system by introducing agricultural bias and to arrange for long vacations of the schools to synchronise with the period of major agricultural operations may render the

present system attractive. Mere insistence on getting their children equipped with this 'unwanted literacy' will have little response in the rural Agri population.

TABLE No. 19A

Literacy of 3,290 persons of 564 families at various expenditure levels

Expenditure level in Rs.	No. of families	No. of persons			Literate		Average Literacy	
		Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Males	Females
50 to 100	54	184	197	381	66	12	35.4	6.1
100 to 125	112	372	399	771	151	18	40.6	4.5
125 to 150	124	378	357	735	190	36	50.3	10.1
150 to 175	124	322	311	633	178	45	55.3	14.5
175 to 250	119	288	327	615	170	50	61.4	16.2
250 & more	31	81	74	155	53	17	65.4	23.0
All families	564	1,625	1,665	3,290	808	178	49.7	10.7

Average figure of literacy is 32 per cent.

TABLE No. 20 *

No. of pupils in the D.L.B. Schools of the Alibag Taluka in 1947-48

	Boys	Girls	Total
General	5,596	2,594	8,190
Katkaris	84	42	126
Urdu	69	59	128

* *Alibag Taluka Administration Report*, 1947-48.

TABLE No. 21 *

Information about bazaars in the Alibag Taluka

Bazaar day	Name of the village	Population
Sunday	...	...
Monday	Poynad	998
Tuesday	Kihim	1,401
Wednesday	Ambepur	1,175
Thursday	Nagaon	4,424
Friday	...	...
Saturday	Ramraj	822

* *Village Hand Book*, 1942.

Weekly Bazaars

A list of local villages, where these weekly bazaars are held, the days of the bazaars, together with total population, is given in Table No. 21. The bazaar villages are comparatively bigger villages than those in the neighbourhood with facilities for transport. In the absence of a local market in their own village to dispose of vendible articles at their disposal, these bazaar places are very useful to the agricultural masses in the surrounding villages. Male and female members of a farmer's family frequent these bazaars with whatever commodity they have produced in their farms, which they can sell and purchase with the sum thus obtained their household articles of daily need, e.g. dry fish, earthen pots and the like. As a number of people visit these bazaars, they are a sort of meeting place, where local politics and other interesting problems are discussed and exciting gossip given wide circulation. Next to marriages, fairs and festivals, such a village on the bazaar day creates stimulating interest to the village populace, to whom they are a sort of picnic, a gathering and a place of recreation to spare them from their monotonous agricultural routine. These bazaars further represent a feature of village economy, where the market is limited by the geographical and physical elements and small-scale production. They are also useful as a circulating market for petty traders and vendors, who move between such bazaar places with their cart-loads.

Fairs

During the monsoon months, as agricultural operations are in full swing, a farmer is busy all the while, especially in a region like Alibag Taluka, where rice is the main crop and that too depending *in toto* upon rainfall in absence of any other sources of water supply. With the onset of the monsoon all the lanes and by-lanes traversing across various farms are closed for traffic. When agricultural operations occupy the fields, movements on a big scale are out of consideration. And it is no wonder that besides an occasional courtesy or friendly visit to a neighbouring village no other jaunts are ever thought of. Two or three feet deep sticky soil in the kharlands, exposed shillings on the metalled roads after dust or earth covering them is washed away by heavy monsoon showers—all these render even an ordinary walk far from being a pleasure. Thick mushroom and growth of grass further deteriorates the situation and pedestrian movement is but an onerous affair in the advanced months of the monsoon.

Physically exhausted with wearisome exertions befallen to the lot of agriculturists and involved in pecuniary difficulties as a farmer happens to be in this season, his spirit cannot be apparently so high as to let himself enjoy expensive luxuries. He yearns for a day, that will make his position stable after the harvest is over. And it is only after this harvest season is over and corn, sufficient for the annual home consumption is garnered in his barn, that a farmer ventures to devote some attention to items of luxury. All the tracks and lanes joining various villages and running across agricultural fields are thrown open for traffic, after the crop is removed from the fields. And since this time—November—begins the period of fairs in the Alibag Taluka, which are held at one or other place on some auspicious day from November to May.

These fairs, playing an important role in the village economy, are of a nature far different from village bazaars.

Local people go to these fairs to spend most of whatever little they save during the course of the year. The old people, especially women, go with a sentiment of devotion for the 'darsan of a deity', the youths for enjoyment at various stalls and the youngsters for sweets. I have seen secret gambling going on at these fairs and the agricultural classes getting used to it. A visit to such a fair has a little economic interest for a farmer. It is a generic indication of some luxury in

and Shahabaj are two among such big villages in the Kharapat having a population of the Agris numbering 2,043 and 1,641 [1] persons housed in their 420 and 350 dwellings respectively.

Scarcity of drinking water is a common problem with most of the Agri villagers, as wells which are their common source of water supply and situated half a mile or so from their dwellings, run dry during the summer months. Every female, going to fetch water, has to carry with her a small bucket with a rope to draw water from the well. The environs of these wells, where all the villagers polish their vessels and wash their clothes, appear insanitary as the drainage of refuse water is not properly cared for.

There may be a temple owned individually or collectively by the village inhabitants, which serves as a meeting place for the Panchas and others who gather to settle a village dispute, or proclaim instructions to all the people. In some cases the annual festival (Utsavas) are celebrated at these temples. A 'pir' is also seen in a few Agri villages. It is worshipped once a year, when a munawar or a mo-azien comes for it.

Life in an Agri village on the whole with all our deference to contemporaneous Marathi poets depicting a healthy picture of the life of a farmer, appears squalid to us. Villages are infected by the fleas and bugs, though the heat of the blazing sun is doing its best to render atmosphere free from infection in a place, where elements of sanitation are unknown! Poverty, drinking and ailments are their constant common enemies.

General appearance of individual dwellings and surrounding enclosures is happy, as they are swept and smeared with cowdung, even when supply of water is a problem. But beyond that there is not much cleanliness and when an epidemic breaks out in a village, it takes its worst toll. Villages after villages are infected *en masse* every year by periodical visits of malaria, guinea-worm and diarrhoea! Though the individual houses appear clean, the village as a whole leaves us in doubt whether sanitation is known even in its crudest form! The society has not developed a civic sense, though inhabitants, on the whole, do not neglect the appearance of their individual dwellings. The development of this civic sense is by no means an easy task, where a majority of the populace is buried in illiteracy.

[1] *Village Handbook*, 1942.

Agri Houses

All over the Alibag Taluka the dwelling of an Agri belongs to one uniform pattern with little variation to suit the personal needs of its occupants. For an Agri a house does not mean only a residential place. It is to him a granary, an out-house and a residence, commonly shared with animals other than human beings. An Agri without a dwelling place of his own, however humble, is estimated low in the eyes of other members of the community.

Few stones for foundations, mats made from hay and plastered with thick mud to serve the purpose of walls or partitions and a few wooden poles to support the roofing, are all the accessories, which an Agri needs to raise up a house of his own! Labour is his own except for a little technical work, which is done by a local carpenter, in a short period, who is more often than not a member of his own caste. Considering a house in its primary sense as a place which protects one from sun and rain, it neither needs the help of an architect nor any sanitary engineer to see its construction through! Yet how amazing it is to see it cool in summer, not cold in winter and well-protected in monsoon. It is raised up with most of the material secured from his paddy fields and with his personal labour.

An Agri house is usually a quadrilateral in shape. A few steps from the yard takes one to the 'Oti', fenced on either side by blind walls: a door in front opens on to a central apartment on either side of which lie a kitchen and a store-room. A loft made up of bamboo and wooden poles, extending from wall to wall of the central apartment, holds all the household requirements, such as onions, dried fish, fuel and the like. This central apartment serves a double purpose, a drawing room to receive guests by day and a dormitory for the family members by night. In one corner of this room the annual quantum of paddy is stored in a 'kanaga', a cylinder made of bamboo mat with its opening plastered by thick mud. In another corner, perhaps, a young calf also may be seen. Fowls move freely in the house picking up little grains. Fishing nets, walking sticks, axes, crow-bars and others rest in a corner. An Agri house is almost devoid of any furniture.

Repairing and maintenance charges of his house mean little expenditure for an Agri with a bit of agricultural land at his disposal to procure straw. Every year before the opening of the monsoon old straw is removed from the (thatch) roof and

replaced by new, the whole house being kept uncovered for the intervening period. Before Ganapati and Gouri festivals commence, all the houses are cleaned and plastered with a solution of cowdung and earth, to give the whole house a decent appearance.

An Agri of some means builds his house with baked or unbaked bricks for walls, crowned with a tiled roof, thus saving a good deal of straw required for roofing every year. Such a house, though different in its material, follows the same house plan adopted by the Agris in common !

I have collected plans of twenty-seven houses of the Agris scattered over different villages in the Alibag Taluka. The chief points to be noted are as follows :—

A fire-place in a kitchen room must always face west, though a house may be built conveniently to face any direction. Out of few windows, one is invariably situated near the fire-place. Small earthen pots, manufactured locally for the use of Persian wheels, are buried in walls to be used as niches. Besides an ' Oti ', a central apartment and a kitchen-room there are no other rooms. Usually a poor house is not shared by more than one family. There are no separate rooms for privacy. A stranger is not allowed beyond the ' Oti '. Sometimes a housewife buries her cash just behind the fire-place—a portion called as ' Bhanas '. Annually 800 to 1,200 ' gundis ' or sheaves of straw worth Rs. 25 to Rs. 40 [2] are required for covering a thatch-roof of the house of a medium size. With annual repairs a house stands for thirty to forty years.

An Agri Man

An Agri male, though neither fat nor thin, presents a robust build with darkish pigment of the skin and a pair of lovely eyes. Though pressed hard with toils and suspicion lurking in his heart about a stranger visiting his village, he always has a smiling face. His sun-beaten face covered with beard, allowed to grow at sweet will, displays his pearl-white teeth. His hair is dark though not long : they are usually well-parted and nicely dressed.

After the sportive period of childhood spent in the company of his little friends in his village, he begins to understand the routine that falls to the lot of an agriculturist, as he accompanies his father to the field. Sometimes he carries a bundle of bread for his morning breakfast. He will not put his hand

[2] According to the rate prevalent in the year of survey.

to domestic work which is solely a lot of the fair sex. It is not a surprise to find a little Agri boy five or six years old trodding his way home all alone after dusk hour without any experience of fear. At times he leaves his home in the company of other friends, whose fields lie in the same quarter as his.

It is a free child unfettered by etiquettes of polished society and it is not an uncommon sight, as you pass through an Agri village, in the morning to greet a little boy, squatting on the doorstep of his house, enjoying his breakfast with a little piece of bread in one hand and a roasted piece of dried fish (vakti) held in the other.

After his seventh year he takes charge of the cattle. He starts early in the morning from his home with a bundle of rice-bread to the cowshed on the other side of the village. He takes the cattle out of the shed and drives them to the grazing ground or to the fields where they are left to brouse on the remnants of the paddy tufts or green grass if any. During this hour of cattle grazing, he plays various games like Viti dandu, Ban, Hu-tu-tu and the like in the company of other cowherd boys, who frequent the village pasture ground with their cattle. In a free atmosphere where "nature is an open book" there are no details of behaviour, human or animal, that are not known to him: it is not surprising in the least that he knows sex and its function more than any urban boy of his age. And it is invariably for this and other similar reasons that girls are not allowed to accompany young boys to a grazing ground situated at a distance from the village.

An Agri boy in this stage gets all the chances to acquire habits and practices useful in his future life. He catches crabs in a brook, fishes with a little circular net (Asu) in a tidal creek and swims in big ponds during the monsoon. There is a fairly wide scope to develop all manly qualities till he is fourteen. From his sixteenth year and onwards he accepts apprenticeship under his father or uncle to learn ploughing, to drive a bullock-cart and other main agricultural operations. He feels that he is getting developed as a full-fledged man. Soon after the completion of his teens he accepts all the responsibilities of agricultural operations and household routine. In a few years his parents and relatives discuss hotly his matrimonial prospects and in accordance with an astrological counsel from a local priest, they launch a tour in the villages of their 'Tappa' in search of a suitable bride, till it crystallises in a marriage. Married he must get, however

depressing may be the economic prospects of his family! Marriage is an important event in his life, which is celebrated with all the pomp and grandeur his parents can manage.

As this newly married Agri youth develops contact with his wife, which is customarily permissible soon after she attains puberty, he is carried away by a different sway of sentiments. A little later he comes to decide to have a separate home for himself in view of various complaints warbled by his spouse against her mother-in-law, till he is impelled to a favourable decision. The whole house is divided, feelings of affection and family ties are disrupted throwing the whole family in a jeopardizing situation. And the best way is to part! Though brothers are willing to share a common establishment, it is the heterogeneous element of their spouses who come together from different families with different adjustments, that results in the dissolution of a joint family. A woman is the enemy of a woman! A mother-in-law in her preliminary attempt to regulate the mode of behaviour of the daughter-in-law to suit the pattern of the husband's house dogmatises and snubs her ignoring the feelings and sense of self-respect, which her daughter-in-law possesses. On numerous occasions this attitude of the senior members of the house is the main cause of breaking a joint establishment though financial circumstances also may contribute their share to make this separation complete.

Climate of his native land being very suitable, an Agri does not require much clothing. I have seen on various occasions the Agri males moving in their birthday costume save for a piece of a loin-cloth. Two pairs of loin-cloth, a dhotee, a half-shirt or two, a kabja—a sort of jacket—and a cap are all what an Agri needs. A native blanket, which he always carries on his shoulder, serves him as an umbrella, as a mat and a cover! Half-pants and umbrellas are now seen in his dress in imitation of some urban people whom he contacts. An impression that the carrying of a blanket in a public place is degrading to oneself is gradually possessing his mind. And Agri youth combs his hair neatly and prefers to roam about with a bare head. An Agri is moving fast with the time. He often shows apathy to put on silver armlets or golden ear-rings, partly because they are out of fashion and partly because of his weak finances.

By nature an Agri is sagacious. He is of short-temper and often hot-tempered, in which feat he is prepared to exchange blows with others, regardless of what may follow next. He is

emotional and under an emotional impetus he is apt to forget all the kind treatment shown to him previously. Many times he has no independent judgment, the opinion of his community being his own! He is easily disposed for selfishness. He is suspicious about strangers that visit his village, as most of these visitors like a landlord, a tradesman, a revenue officer and the like are all according to his experience passing birds who come to rob him with little or no care for his personal benefit. As such he cannot let himself mix with them freely to part with all the information about himself, lest he should be deprived of what little he has. He is always given to free fighting and as an antagonist he is but nefarious in his dealings and would adopt any means to achieve success. But at the same time he is very hospitable to his guests and would shower on them dainties of fresh fish known as (Jitada), specially preserved in a pond, and all comforts according to his circumstances. When not disposed to drinking he is religious-minded and spends a few hours by night in listening to 'Pothis' or singing a 'Bhajan', especially during Chaturmasya.

An Agri starts smoking since his fourteenth year or earlier, first privately and after a few years publicly, though he does not smoke in the presence of his older relatives either out of respect for or fear of them. Bidi is his popular smoking, though he may occasionally smoke 'a yellow elephant' to impress others when moving in bazaar villages and fairs. An average Agri smoker requires a *bidi* every hour. To make a bidi he rolls a dried 'Apta'[3] leaf (Bahuinia Racemosa) and puts in tobacco! He does not smoke ready-made bidies. One Bhagwan Patil replied to my query that it is a sort of curb on his smoking habit, otherwise he would go on smoking all the ready-made bidies ceaselessly.

Tea is the most popular beverage of the Agri men. A cup of tea is highly appreciated by them. It is a token of hospitality and friendship. It is sufficient for a gossip at a way-side hotel and a sort of go-getter between co-workers. It may be offered to anybody at any time. A cup of tea in an Agri house is a decoction of tea powder with little jaggery or sugar and less milk, costing half an anna. An Agri man consumes two or three cups of tea every day and many more whenever available. A few of them do not take tea. I asked Chandar Mhatra, a youth of twenty-two years working in his 'Tondali' plantation, as to why he did not take tea. In his opinion, which is shared by others too, tea undermines the sex vitality

[3] Or he uses leaves specially available for 'bidis' in the bazaar.

of a person! Besides, it causes sexual debility which he wanted to avoid as he was recently married.

An Agri is a great lover of a drink. He boozes toddy and country liquor like 'Bewda' and 'Rasi'. It is a habit from which he cannot free himself. Drink he must at any cost! It is indeed very difficult to come across an Agri, who has not sipped a glass of liquor. Some years ago toddy or liquor was freely served at community meetings and at funeral gatherings, expenses in the former cases being defrayed out of the fines levied on the accused and by common subscription in the other. This custom is at present disappearing as many of the literate Agris know what they do is not appreciated by other people.

An Agri addicted to drinking drinks methylated spirit, when liquor is difficult to obtain. I was at a loss to know why at all it is drunk. On my questioning various Agris, they replied that methylated spirit is a good antidote to chronic stomach-ache to which the Agri males are subjected by constant ploughing in paddy fields and digging.

As a result of all these habits, the health of an Agri youth is shattering. His irregular habits, addiction to an intoxicating drink, indulgence in nicotine practices and excessive drinking of tea have together limited his vitality and energy. He is such an addict that in case a regular drink is unavailable he takes any substitute that comes to his hand to tide over the time, irrespective of all its future effects. A slave of drinking as an Agri happens to be, he has learnt to improvise a substitute, whenever a regular drink cannot be obtained. This habit has gone so deep in his blood that the problem of prohibition is a difficult one to be tackled and eradication of his love for an intoxicating drink is not a matter to be achieved in the near future! It seems like a flimsy ideal, that evaporates the moment we make an approach to it. Consequently an Agri suffers from liver troubles, loss of vitality and other diseases allied with it, which tell adversely on his longevity and capacity to work. It appears from my personal observation that education and betterment of the surroundings have not yet been able to suppress this habit. An educated Agri is shrewd enough not to confess that he is given to drinking!

As an agriculturist the Agri has proved to be the best farmer in the Alibag Taluka. Tenacity with which he takes himself to a hard job, capacity to develop and manage new tasks, aptitude to introduce plantation schemes like 'Tondali'

creepers, flower gardens are all, indeed, praiseworthy. I know some Agris who have made a fortune by hard toil, assiduous and ceaseless efforts which they have been able to put in plantations or labour contracts. From the villages in the Kharapat, where the agriculturists have to pass many idle months, the teams of local agriculturists move throughout the western taluka and other places in search of agricultural contracts such as bunding, digging wells, repairing fields and similar works and eke out supplementary income to replenish their households.

Spread of education in the Agri villages had diverted some Agri people from agriculture to service in Primary School Board and Revenue Department where income is regular and sure in contrast to unstable and static economies of agriculture. Some Agris with an adventurous spirit, though not fortunate to hold a Primary School Leaving Certificate, proceed to Bombay to seek employment in Docks, workshops, mills, hotels and the rest to better their financial prospects. Few of them with some capital at their disposal are able to be financially better by running a business of their own, e.g. grocery shop in a village, a hotel by roadside, tailoring and the like. And all these things, wellnigh, leave us under an impression that an Agri is sagacious and endowed with a fair sense of judgment. Besides, a marriage with a teacher-wife enhances the financial prospects of the couple by leaps and bounds, who are thus able to adopt a standard of living definitely beyond the reach of ordinary agriculturists.

With this there arises another problem, namely, as there has surged up a middle-class amongst the Agris, infected with some feeling of superiority complex over the rest of the country-folk, as they afford to lead a higher standard of living and distinguish themselves from the rest of their caste fellows, it is feared that it may not be in the distant future that such Agris forming a group of their own, restricting their marriage within it, with apparent manifestation of an assumed superior social status, will form a sub-caste amongst the Agris! It is an indication that the evolution of the caste-system is still under its way and efforts for its retrogression have not yet met with palpable success!

Agri Woman

The Agri woman like her native sisters is of an average stature, which though not prepossessing is yet striking on

account of the great symmetry of her body, which along with her carriage and the poise of her body, is often the envy of her urban sisters. Her height is usually between five feet to five feet and four inches and limbs are proportionately developed in keeping with the contour of her body and seldom leaves an appearance of being neither obese nor lean and which could be properly described as being resilient if not stout and her limbs are kept well in shape and vigour by her regular routine throughout the year in her home and the field, which calls for much exercise of the limb. The general glow of health maintained throughout presents an attractive appearance if not exactly beautiful. The pigment of her skin is darkish which in a way may be confused with the pigment which we associate with the Dravidians. The sparkle of her teeth and the lustre in her eyes make her smiling face all the more impressive.

The sariterial outfit of an Agri woman is neither elaborate nor cumbersome and is seldom ostentatious. She usually puts on a sari that measures seven to eight yards in length of one uniform colour in which she clothes herself in a peculiar Agri fashion with the garment clinging very close to her limbs and reaching up to her knees. A dozen years ago the modern bodice was unknown to her but with the infiltration of a certain section of the Agris who migrated to the urban area, a variation of some sort of bodice—called as choli—came to be used gradually, which though not covering upto the waist yet covers the upper portion of her body ending just below the bust. Even today we are not unfamiliar with the sight of old women going about without bodice. Unlike the Maratha woman she does not cover her head with one end of her sari but leaves it completely uncovered, showing a coiffure of the hair bedecked sometimes with country flowers as the crowning glory of her attire! Even amongst the Agris a good *coiffure* of the hair is a matter of pride which is appreciated by both the sexes alike, which shows us that they are not devoid of any aesthetic sense. As she is required to move about in the open and to do all sorts of labour, her personal ornaments are a few—the most prominent of which are a pair of ear-rings called as Ganthyas, a nose-ring known as Moti and a necklace of auspicious threads woven with black beads and golden beads called as Manigal-Sutra, which must be always displayed on her person. A couple of silver bangles accompanied by a pair of glass bangles are usually put in her hands in addition to some more ornaments like a necklace of golden

beads, golden bangles, pearl ear-rings (Kudi) which the womenfolk of the rich families put on while attending social functions in emulation of the higher classes.

After the first few years of her childhood are over an Agri girl spends the following couple of years in pastimes and in play that are usually confined to the children of her age. The period of blissful childhood terminates abruptly to begin in a round-up task and the duties which are usually her lot for the rest of her life in the Agri community. Her first task between the years of seven to eight belongs to her younger brother and sister whom she is expected to look after or nurse during the absence of her mother, who attends to her fields or who is otherwise out of the house on various errands, like bringing firewood from the hills or fetching water from the well which is always more often than not a good distance away from the house.

The daughter of the house soon learns to follow the footsteps of her mother, when she puts her hand at the family cooking and cases are not wanting to show that even girls of eight or nine years are quite adept in the culinary art of preparing meals for family members. By the age of eleven or twelve she is able to do all the household work with the responsibilities which are no less than of her mother or a grown-up woman. She fetches water from the wells far away, brings firewood from the forest in company of a number of other womenfolk of her village and also indulges not with the very enviable task of working hard in the fields during the sowing, harvesting and similar periods. And one is not left any more to wonder why an Agri woman desires her first issue should be a female child when we observe that a woman is economically a great household asset in the Agri community working from the early ray of the dawn till late in the night with seldom any leisure hours during the whole day to afford her any physical relaxation or any sense of relief.

An Agri girl is married soon after she comes in her teens or before she attains puberty, though there are cases where the marriage is delayed for a few years more, for example the man on whose behalf an offer is made is not agreeable to her parents or when in the opinion of a local priest the particular year is not astrologically favourable for her marriage.

As the question of personal selection of her partner in the life is hardly known to her—for it is not in the nature of their community customs to allow the exercise of this right either

to the prospective bride or the bridegroom—the problem of modern love marriage has not yet dawned on the social horizon of the Agris, though such a phenomena is not at all unusual amongst the more advanced and educated families. The bridegroom has usually to pay the dowry known as 'Deja' to an amount which is traditionally fixed to the bride according to the customs of their marriage. Nevertheless, I have come across a few instances of parents offering a dowry to the bridegroom with a view to secure a rich or well placed partner in life for their daughter.

"Man and woman are complementary and not rival organisms"[4] of an Agri family and a wife is very often a pivot of the family economies, who has to adjust her family budget according to the earnings of her husband and supplementing them often with her own labour according to the circumstances. Unlike her husband who spends a good deal of his earnings in a toddy-shop or at a hotel notwithstanding his family responsibilities, she meticulously carries on her household expenditure saving every item, if possible. Thus a good wife is a boon to the Agri family, though her personal economic position is far from satisfactory. She cannot get a share in her husband's estate according to the law and custom of the community and has no right in her father's estate, though she continues to get during the whole period of her life her required quota of copra-oil, combs, tins of 'kum-kum' and cloth for bodice (khana for her choli) from her father or brother from year to year.

Traditionally there are certain taboos attached to her taking up her particular vocations and for employing herself in particular occupations. Like 'the Jath woman'[5] she does not plough or drive a cart but there is no other form of agricultural labour, which she does not practise and ordinarily adorn. She is not to visit when the paddy is being measured out in a barn-yard or to take any active part in the caste meeting, unless she is personally involved in the matter under consideration. She is not to become a Bhagata nor a Mantrika, which vocations are the monopoly of their men. An Agri woman of the Kharapat area of the salt paddy fields of the Alibag Taluka must cover her head with a blanket of indigenous manufacture known as khonda, which reaches her up to waist, whenever she leaves her house. A woman with-

[4] *Position of Woman—Ideal and Actual*, p. 153.
[5] Mukerji R. K., *Rural Economy of India*, p. 71.

out a *khonda* is looked upon by them as a 'lady of no etiquette'.

An Agri woman may marry a second time, after her husband's death, one, who, also in his turn, must be a widower. A widow with grown-up children does not often entertain the prospect of a second marriage, having experienced the married life with her first deceased husband, which is no more a happy episode in her life, worth recollecting, much less going through it again! Thus her prejudice against a second marriage is further strengthened by the loss of her freedom which a marriage necessarily entails, especially in the community where the man plays a predominant role in the destinies of the home and the family. One finds a number of Agri women in their villages who are not very happy to harbour a thought of second marriage and prefer to go without it, especially when she is a mother, for the rest of her life, for the spirit of self-respect and independence is not foreign to her. An Agri woman has a potential urge to be self-assertive, which is gradually subdued down by the overwhelming social stigma and her inherent physical limitations. A widow remarrying again is not very particular in bedecking herself with the 'kum-kum' mark because nobody else pays much attention to her personal appearance, she being regarded in her own ways, as well as in the eyes of those around her, as socially low, which sentiment is as much felt by them as it is never expressed! Her developed physique and matured nature coupled with an outlook in life and long experience and skill in the arts of household and agricultural affairs are the main attractions for men, to whom she would serve as a ready hand-maid, who are therefore eager to marry her. Besides, her services are secured through a medium of matrimonial obligations which are difficult to be obtained by economic considerations.

When a husband and wife cannot agree with each other they can get a divorce according to their customs in the Kusumbale area after making a declaration to that effect in a caste meeting, specially summoned for that purpose. The matter of divorce under these circumstances becomes though formal a summary procedure and the father is given the custody of the grown-up children while the mother is permitted to take the minors with her.

With the gradual infiltration of primary education in their villages, where the people are not apathetic towards the education of the 'fair sex', a number of Agri girls avail them-

selves of this facility and some have even fortified themselves with a Primary School Leaving Certificate, which secures for them easily a post of a teacher in a local District Local Board School. This employment goes a long way in effecting an easy marriage for the girls, especially in a community where the men are seldom better qualified. Besides, this post means economic independence and freedom from the drudge of the work of an agriculturist's wife, which is usually the lot of an Agri woman and gives further lease of life to her latent urge for self-assertion and tends to cultivate in her a dislike of the joint family system, where her individual personality is curbed by the domineering influence of the 'older set'. And the day is not far away, when in the social life of the Agris, there will arise a middle-class of idle, urbane and pleasure-seeking persons with a questionable nature of education and vices that go with landlordism—all of which is none too happy an omen for the future of the community.

What an Agri eats

An Agri begins his day with a cup of tea, without which he will not apply himself to any work. Sometimes he takes his tea in a tea shop, when his economic circumstances do not permit him to make this beverage available to all the members of the family.

At about eight-thirty in the morning, after he has put in work for an hour or so, he sits down to take his breakfast brought to him tied in a bundle by one of his children. It consists of one and a half piece of their soft bread prepared from rice flour with a little ball of chutney or some roasted dried fish.

He resumes his work immediately after his breakfast and works for two hours more. Then there comes a break at noon time, when he returns home, bathes and takes his seat to have his noon-day meal served by his wife. His is not a very dainty meal. He sups down some handfuls of rice in his stomach mixed with some pungent fish curry. He may take an onion, or a chilli or some pickle as a relish. The fish curry serves his purpose of 'kalvan' and 'suki bhaji'.

After a short siesta he leaves his home again at three in the evening for his fields, or for any work for which he has hired himself for the day, as the case may be. He may or may not have his tea at this time. He returns home at about seven in the evening, having worked for three hours. After a while he takes his evening meal which is more or less a

repetition of the noon-day meal, rice and bread supplementing each other according to the quantity of rice grains available at his disposal.

His curry is always a fish preparation as he has cultivated a taste for fish like crustacea and others, either because they are abounding in his country creeks around him or because of the absence of any other choice left for him in this matter of food. There are about seventy varieties of fish included in the menu of an average Agri, which I have been able to collect.[6]

For days and months together, his menu remains always the same with no variation in his diet to develop his tastes. A child, a sick man or an expectant mother are all given one and the same meal. On occasions like holidays he may venture to flatter his palate with a few chosen delicious items.

Uniform manner to prepare the curry, spiced with a powder of condiments all over the taluka, makes a little change in an Agri diet, wherever one may go ! A little tamarind and salt are added to the curry in addition to some quantity of sweet oil according to one's economic circumstances.

A closer examination of the problem explains the view of an Agri housewife according to whom the peculiar tastes of the particular fish, a list of which is mentioned separately, has solved her difficulty to a certain extent. Details of fish preparations are given separately.

In poorer homes especially during the monsoon, when the stock of paddy is exhausted, a kind of rice soup known as *kanji* is prepared and served as a last resort, a substitute for rice and bread for maintaining the family. It is just a little way to keep the wolf from the door. There is no special diet to feed a young child, a sick and convalescent person or a woman in pregnancy. Children when one or two years old start nibbling at a morsel of bread and begin to take rice. Milk is not given to the children, because it cannot be had ! And even when it can be had, it is not always within their means to buy it. After all milk and curds are regarded as luxury of the rich.

Mutton soup or stew is seldom seen on his table, fowl preparations and other dishes being more common on festive occasions. An Agri adult refuses to take milk in any form and betrays a dislike for sweetmeats or preparations made from sugar.

[6] *Vide* Appendices--the List of Fishes.

Seasonal fruits, which grow wild, are eaten without attaching to them any nutritious value or recognising their intrinsic merits, but simply because they are available at hand. Mango, 'papaya', 'sitaphal', 'bor', 'jambhul' and 'karand' being the most common seasonal fruits available for him. My personal observation goes to show that next to a cup of tea, an Agri prefers to have 'shev', 'chiwada' and 'bhajia' for which there is a good demand in tea shops in the Agri locality.

USUAL MENU OF AN AGRI

A cup of tea in the morning at about six.

Chota Hazri at about eight-thirty in the morning. Made up of
- — one and a half piece of bread.
- — with chutney and at times roasted dry fish as a relish.
- — Dal or vegetables are served, when no fish is available.
- — During the agricultural operations (i.e. in June and July) the adult male members require fish or some meat for their breakfast as a relish.

Noon-day meal consists of
- — Rice.
- — Fish curry and optionally.
- — vegetable or chutney or roasted dry fish.[7]

Evening meal consists of
- — Rice with or without bread.
- — Curry.
- — Chutney, papad or roasted dry fish.

DETAILS OF AN AGRI MENU

(Required for an adult)

Chota Hazri
- — One and half a piece of bread, made up from rice flour weighing 21 tolas.
- — Pieces of dry fish roasted, weighing one tola.

Noon-day meal
- — Rice .. 34 Tolas
- — Masala .. ¾ Tola
- — Salt .. 1 „

[7] In addition to this diet some Agri males have a snack at about 3 p.m. during summer months, when days are long, before they leave home for their work. Remnants of the noon-day meal, which are usually lying cold in pots, are served.

	— Vegetable	..	3 Tolas
	— Dry fish	..	2 „
	— Sweet oil	..	½ Tola
Evening meal	— Rice	..	34 Tolas
	— Masala	..	¾ Tola
	— Salt	..	1 „
	— Sweet oil	..	½ „
	— Fish (dry)	..	5 Tolas
	— or (fresh)	..	11 „

How rice is prepared

There are two ways of preparing rice, namely, (1) 'Yelanu' and (2) 'Baitha'.

'Yelanu' way of preparing rice

In a pot of boiling water the rice grains, after they are washed, are poured and stirred with a spoon. After little time (say 8 to 10 minutes) when the rice is ready, the pot is removed from the fire. A small basket is then placed on the mouth of the pot and the pot is turned upside down, all the extra water being allowed to pour out. The basket is then removed and over the pot, a metal plate full of burning charcoal pieces is kept.

'Baitha' method

The other method known as 'Baitha' is comparatively easier than the first one and as such is now adopted by almost all the Agri housewives. And also it is more healthy, as the nutritive elements, that were thrown, are conserved. Rice grains are poured in a pot full of boiling water, when the rice gets ready, a plate is placed on the mouth of the pot which is now taken down from the fire. The rice cooked in this way remains soft and sticky. Many Agri women told me that they were required to cook rice in the 'Yelanu' way for their father-in-laws, who liked to have the rice grains clean and hard and dry.

Preparation of bread

Their bread is prepared in two ways. These are known as (1) 'Khoitawanyachi Bhakar' and (2) 'Ukadichi Bhakar'. A handful of rice flour, weighing about 6 ounces and a little quantity of water go to make one round piece of bread.

'Khoitawanyachi Bhakar'

This bread is prepared in the following way. Rice flour is added to boiling water in an earthen pot and kept stirred. When it is thoroughly cooked, the pot is taken down from the fire and the whole mixture is then stirred and left to cool off. The paste then is emptied in an earthen dish (Jogli), then kneaded and rolled into balls. Each ball is then flattened out on the palms of the hands into thin soft circular paste and baked in an earthen pot into bread. Flattening of this paste requires some skill and experience.

'Ukadichi Bhakar'

In this case the dish (Thavala) with rice flour is placed on the mouth of an earthen vessel, which is kept on the fire until the water boils. Then the dish with the hot flour is taken down. It is then mixed with boiling water in proportion. The flour afterwards is kneaded, rolled into small balls and the bread is prepared in the way mentioned before.

Various preparations

The Agri housewife does not observe the method known as 'Phodani ghalane'[8] in cooking vegetables, i.e. to put condiments in boiling oil and then add vegetables to it. She uses her masala every time she cooks her pungent meals. She may use a little oil if available but that too as a luxury.

Fish preparation

1. A fish is cut into small pieces and mixed with condiment powder, salt and tamarind. If the occasion permits sweet oil is put in an earthen pot, until it is hot and the mixture is poured into it. The whole thing is then cooked into some sort of curry, dilute and pungent as ever.

Any kind of fish may be cooked into curry this way.

2. A fish, cut into small pieces and mixed with salt, condiment powder and tamarind, is added to sweet oil in a frying pan. A little quantity of water is added and the whole thing is cooked without stew. A few garlic bulbs may be mixed to add to its flavour and taste.

[8] Oil heated with mustard seed, etc. as a cooking sauce for vegetables —Molesworth.

'Bombil', 'Sargutla' and similar varieties of fish are cooked in a sort of fry in the same way.

3. Dry fish like 'Sukat', 'Vakti' and 'Bombil' are roasted and served as a relish.

4. Dry fish cut in small pieces may be cooked in a curry or a fry, both the preparations being served in one and the same meal.

5. '*Repedya*'—Thread-like variety of fish known as 'Repa' are mixed with salt and tamarind. The mixture is well kneaded and beaten into small flat round pieces to be dried in the sun for two days on 'Bhendi' leaves. The pieces are preserved in small earthen pots. They are roasted or fried and served as a relish at the meals.

'Chimani', 'Jitadi', Gurali' are some of the varieties of fish popular amongst the Agris.

Egg preparation

— Eggs are eaten raw.
— Omelette of a crude kind is prepared from eggs.
— Four to six eggs go to make a nice omelette.
— Eggs are cooked along with onions and potato chips.
— Eggs are also put in dal or fish curry.

Fowl and mutton preparations

Fowl and mutton preparations, though not uncommon, are cooked only occasionally by an Agri housewife.

Pieces of fowl or mutton are cooked into a fry or curry, both the dishes being served in one and the same meal. Pieces of potatoes or 'suran' are added to this dish to add to its quantity and taste. The method of preparing these dishes is the same as fish preparations, besides a special 'masala' added to their usual condiment powder. Half a tola of cinnamon, a little asafoetida, one measure of roasted copra and two roasted onions, ground on a pressing stone, go to make this special 'masala'.

Flesh of a wild hog

For an Agri youth, who loves to hunt a wild hog that abounds in the forests amidst the spurs of the Sahyadri mountain, scattered over the taluka, pieces of a hog's flesh roasted

in a fire, make a palatable dish. Besides roasting, a hog's flesh may be cooked like other mutton preparations by an Agri male far away from his residence, as an Agri wife usually refuses to partake either in its preparation or of its taste.

Flesh of a hare

Flesh of a hare, which is also cooked like other mutton preparations, is a popular dish amongst the Agris.

Special preparation on holidays

As a result of traditions that permeate through their community a uniform system of preparing special dishes on specific holidays is closely followed by the Agris, some details of which are given below.

Ganesh Chaturthi

Mixture of jaggery and copra scrape is rolled in balls, made out of thin white paste of rice flour cooked before. These balls, when cooked in a closed vessel, are known as ' Modaks '. They are served in meals on the Ganesh Chaturthi day, which occurs sometime in August or September.

Gauri day

Eating a non-vegetarian meal, as long as the image of Ganapati remains in one's house, is a taboo. After the immersion of Ganapati, eating of meat is sanctioned during the Gauri festival according to the traditional belief of the Agris. So Gauri days are a great festival for them. Their most favourite dish—Vada (rice cakes fried in sweet oil) and mutton preparation—is eaten voraciously by all on that day.

Diwali

During the Diwali festival, occurring in November,

' Shingadya ' — Mixture of jaggery and copra scrape mixed together rolled in thin pieces of paste of wheat flour and fried in oil or ghee.

' Modaks '— Wheat flour, coconut scrape and jaggery is cooked together and rolled in balls. These balls are called as ' modaks ' also

are common preparations in every Agri house.

Meat is eaten on the ' Bhau-bij ' day, when a brother visits the house of his married sister and makes her a present of

'Khan'—cloth for blouse—and a four-anna piece, after she has waved Arati around his face. His sister prepares a special dish of 'puris' and a meat curry for him. She has to take precautions about the family traditions of her brother, as in many cases eating mutton is a taboo!

Following is the order of preparing dishes on three consecutive days beginning from Holi, occurring in February or March :—

'Modaks' on the first day,
'Puran-poli' on the second, and
'Meat curry' and rice cakes on the third.

MASALA OR CONDIMENT POWDER

(Used by the Agris)

Almost all the dishes made by the Agris are very spicy and pungent, as they use large quantities of a variety of condiments. These condiments are ground in a fine powder and stored in various bottles, so that the powder may not be affected by changes in the weather. The powder is conveniently used in the preparations of vegetables, curry, meat and fish without involving much labour in cooking. The following are the ingredients of the 'Masala' for a family of about two adults and two minors to last for a year :—

Marathi name	English equivalent	Quantity
Jira	Cumin	2 seers
Rai	Custard	3 „
Bhobhi	Coriander	3 paylees
Dalchini	Cinnamon	1 seer
Lavang	Clove	¼ „
Miri	Pepper	¼ „
Halad	Turmeric	3 seers
Hing	Asafoetida	2 ounces
Shahajira		4 „
Jayapatri	Mace	½ seer
Badishop		½ „
Nagkeshar		½ „
Majira		½ „
Mirchi	Chilli	½ maund

At first chillis are roasted and then pounded into a fine powder with other ingredients mentioned above in a wooden pounding pot (Ukhal). Three women are employed for the purpose of pounding and the payment made to them is about Rs. 2-8-0. The total cost of the 'masala' powder comes to, say, twenty rupees for the quantity of condiments mentioned above according to the prices prevalent in the market during the period of survey.

CHAPTER V

THE AGRI DIALECT

It is the articulate speech which differentiates a man from other bipeds and quadrupeds. This speech develops of itself as a general medium of exchange of thoughts after a series of experiences and adjustments in various human stocks until it settles down as a form of language. Thus a language happens to be a social institution, which reflects upon a human mind in working. It helps us to understand tradition and data of the society. A language is both a common and social heritage of a particular group as well as a concern of an individual member.

Various dynamic factors like social, cultural, geographical and others blend together its further development during the course of social evolution and expansion. Some natural limitations like rivers and mountains and other like professions and those that mainly owe their existence to various human activities, outline a local variation of spoken language, which we term as a dialect. It varies from time to time and place to place. Hence the well-known Maratha proverb " the dialect changes after every twenty-four miles ".

The present form of Marathi, as a spoken language, is a unit composed of a number of other regional sub-groups like Varhadi, Khandeshi, Konkani and the like, notwithstanding its general standard as a form of written Marathi. The Konkani standard of Marathi dialect is again ramified in various smaller sub-groups, the individual names of which may be territorial, cultural or professional according to a specific trend developed therewith.

The Agris, as we have seen so far, who inhabit their native land exclusively by themselves with a little scope for social infusion with any other foreign element, have evolved a dialect of their own, which though a form of Marathi, has well-nigh, a peculiarity of its own ! The name of the dialect owes its name to a profession, since it is spoken by Agris, which means workers in ' Agar '. It is current in central and northern part of Konkan. This Agri dialect according to Grierson belongs to the Konkani standard of Marathi group in the family of the Indo-Aryan languages. The Bruhan Maharashtra

Karyalaya of Sangli locates the whole of present Konkan in Madhya-Konkan, in sub-groups of the Marathi-speaking belt.

The Agri dialect betrays no affinity to any other foreign element as its home-land is surrounded by the Marathi-speaking belt. There is no written material available to gauge the various stages of the development of the Agri dialect from the historical period as most of the old works, available at present, are the standard of Marathi as a literary activity mostly represented by the cultured classes. Hence a small attempt is made to study some part of formal grammar of the Agri dialect as prevalent at present in the Alibag Taluka.

The dialect of the Agris has a peculiarity of its own. Though it differs from the dialect of other agricultural classes like the Marathas, Kunbis and others of Konkan, it betrays some resemblance to the dialect of the local fishermen, who sometimes share their association.

Hurried articulations and peculiar expressions mingled with colloquial Agri phrases of the dialect of the agrarian Agris, situated beyond an easy approach of the urbane social contact, present all the while a hard nut to crack for a novice to follow what an Agri speaks. It takes some time for a local non-Agri person to understand *in toto* what the Agri woman speaks, if he happens to overhear a conversation at a public place or a village well, as an Agri woman is still a repository of the traditional Agri dialect.

An Agri is sentimental and when excited his anger finds ventilation in abusive language and hence a rural Agri speech often bristles with typical abuses. But these words are taken only at their face value and nobody thinks to go behind them to search out what they exactly mean. These words merely occupy their places and do no other work. They are at times like a burden of the song. Even though they are solid in expression, they are hollow in their sense.

Some peculiarities

The word 'बोलू' often frequents an Agri speech especially in the western part, e.g. असा बोलू करावा नाय.

त्या बोलू जमाचा नाय.

An Agri will invariably say

उंबय for मुंबई.

He often substitutes

इ for वि e.g. इमल for विमल
र for ड e.g. होरी for होडी
ल for ळ e.g. सकाल for सकाळ
न for ण e.g. मानस for माणस

Some peculiar sentences from the Agri dialect, with which most of other people are unfamiliar, are given below.

Agri	*Marathi*
कांड्यावर उधव.	बांधावर चढ.
टोटी दरी कला आलीस ?	नळाजवळ कशाला आलीस ?
मीनी तुमच्या अंगावर सकालची आलतू नाय ?	मी तुमच्याकडे सकाळीं आल्ये होत्ये नाहीं ?
ती बोलू डोल काढतय.	तिला डोहाळे लागले आहेत.

It has been found that linguistic usages closely follow the corresponding changes in social status and customs. And very often an educated Agri speaks Marathi fairly accurately, not to refer to his standard of writing which he perfectly masters.

The words देव (god) गाय (a cow) and the pronoun मी (I) are declined on page 81. A further scrutiny of their forms makes it clear that the forms of: (1) accusative singular, (2) instrumental singular, (3) genetive singular, (4) genetive plural, and (5) vocative plural, are quite different from the regular Marathi forms of these words.

Various forms of verbs are given on page 82 in two moods and four tenses. All these forms are typical and differ from almost all the regular forms of Marathi verbs.

Some 118 words peculiar to the Agri dialect have been enumerated with their corresponding Marathi and English equivalents, which I have come across during the period of my association with the Agris. Though I have made every attempt to collect as many words as I could, yet I do not claim the list given as a complete one.

The words like मेर, पात usually heard in common dialect, besides others like रावळ, उंडा and बनकर* found in their songs,

*रावळान रावळा गो हिंडली.
मना दे लोन्याचा उंडा भाजूनी.
"बनकरी पुसूं लागल देवा तुमचा कुठवरी येना ?"

are the remnants of old Marathi language as found in Dnyaneshwari and Mahanubhav literature. These words have disappeared in the advanced Marathi-speaking classes.

The words like पत्रास, डेवणे and तलई are current in the Konkani dialect of Goa, a Portuguese territory in India.

A list of the Agri terms used for various relations is given on page 83. The affix स is found to have been applied in a number of cases, a tendency which is often marked in Mahanubhav literature. The word फुईस which means the sister of a father or mother is almost a common term in Northern India. डोक्की आय, डोक्का बाबा (which literally means 'old mother' and 'old father') are the descriptive terms referring to one's grandmother and grandfather respectively.

On page 80 are given some 35 words, which we come across the Agri dialect in relation to agricultural operation. Almost all these are local Agri words, most of which are obsolete in other parts of Konkan.

Some of the peculiar Agri phrases are enlisted on page 87. Some of them are natural expressions, and may create a sense of vulgarity in the cultural strata of the society. The phrase दांडीपाठ पाठविणें which means 'to send an invitation' takes us back to the Maratha regime, when a palanquin was sent to the person invited as a token of honour.

Text of the passage of an Agri dialect as preserved by Grierson in his Linguistic Survey, Vol. VIII, is reproduced with the corresponding text of the passage as it would be spoken in the present Agri dialect of Alibag Taluka. From this it appears that the dialect of the Agris is not static but always changing in response to the social and cultural influence of other classes with whom they come in contact.

About 200 dialogues were collected from nineteen different villages in Alibag Taluka to get a proper perspective of the Agri dialect. An attempt was made to represent various scenes from the Agri life, the topics included being, a domestic quarrel, a visit to a sick man, a guest, bride-price, irregular rainfall, bull, ghosts, a theft, a landlord's share, and so on. They come from various places such as a house, a cowshed, a village lane, a motor stand, a marriage booth, and many more.

They represent some 525 persons, out of whom 261 were men and the rest women.

Out of these 205 dialogues, few are reproduced with details about the place, persons and topics involved therewith and their translation in English is given in the Appendices.

Method followed

Having studied closely the dialect of the Agris for more than a year, an attempt was made to record some conversations as the parties involved continued to speak. This was repeated till I was confident to pick up any piece of conversation and to record it in privacy at the first opportunity. The parties involved were never given to understand what was being done nor were given a chance to suspect in the least that they were being observed or carfully listened to. This has helped me to collect their natural expressions, free thoughts and genuine experience in life.

WORDS USED IN AGRICULTURE

बाहेर काटा : outer bund that protects agricultural land from sea water.

पेंड : clod of mud—with this the outer bund is built.

पेणसन : a wooden implement with which clods of mud are dug up--It is of the shape of a cricket bat.

उघड उघडी : wooden door at the entrance of the field which prevent salt water from getting in the field during high tidal hour and let water from the field go in sea during low tide. This is generally fixed in the outer bund.

नेऊर : a marine creature, that digs hole in the outer bund.

हंडी : a hole created by नेऊर in the outer bund.

गुहळ : if the हंडी runs across the bund, it is known thus.

पाला, किंकणी, टिवरा : acquatic trees grown in the salt mud outside the outer bund.

मखेल, माचेल, डावली : varieties of natural mushroom or grass grown on the outer bund, which prevent it from getting washed away.

कांड : small bunds that determine the limits of fields. The plural is कांडी.

खैस : a cut in the fields to let salt water go to the estuary.

चाळ : a cut nearly four feet wide and six inches deep, that runs all along the bunds of the field from inside.

विंधी काढणें : to dig out sods of clay in the field.

कांडवणी : removal of earth from a high level portion in a field after it is washed by rain-pour.

भात पेरणीं : paddy seed thrown in dry land.

रोह् करणें : paddy seed soaked in water for a couple of days is thrown in a foot deep water to raise seedlings.

आवटणी : to distribute equally small paddy seedlings by up-rooting and transplanting them.

बेणणी : to remove weeds, etc.

ह्वर : trickling of sea water through the bund.

हांदा : co-operative agricultural work.

पडकेल : exchange of agricultural labour.

जोळ : joint repair of the outer bund.

तलइ : a small pond in a field where fishes are preserved.

टाच : a cut dug in the field to remove salt water.

पदमूळ : the wooden base of the doors of culvert.

फळा : a plank used as a bridge.

वळ : agricultural land surrounding village.

पात : a line (of agricultural workers).

आवणे : to transplant.

आईन्ज, आव : transplantation.

लानी : harvesting.

मदत घेणें : to employ agricultural labour.

गव्हना : a cut in the field to let water go.

खोसा : a piece of agricultural land of a small measure.

दिवात : feast given to labourers in the field during transplantation.

DECLENSIONS OF NOUNS IN AGRI DIALECT

Person	देव Singular	देव Plural	मी Singular	मी Plural
प्रथमा	देव	देव	मी	आमी
द्वितीया	देवासनी, देवाला	देवांना	मना	आमासनी, आमाला
तृतीया	देवानी, देवाही	देवानी, देवाही	मीनी	आमी
चतुर्थी	देवास	देवाना	मज	आमासनी
पंचमी	देवाहून	देवाहून	माजाहून	आमाहून
षष्ठी	देवाचा, सांचा	देवांचा, सांचा	माजा	आमचा, आमासांचा
सप्तमी	देवांशी	देवांशी	मजशी	आमापाशी, आमशी
संबोधन	देव	देवांनू		

गाय

Person	Singular	Plural
प्रथमा	गाय	गाया
द्वितीया	गायला, गाईसनी	गाइसना, गायाना
तृतीया	गायनी	गायानी
चतुर्थी	गायला	गाईसना, गायांना
पंचमी	गाईपासन	गायापासन
षष्ठी	गायचा, गाईसांचा	गायांचा, गायासांचा
सप्तमी	गायशी, गायपाशी	गायांशी
संबोधन	गाये	गायांनू

Verbs

Person	Indicative mood Present tense Singular	Indicative mood Present tense Plural
प्रथम	मी खातय	आमी खातूय
द्वितीय	तूं खातस	तुमी खाताव
तृतीय	तो खातय	ते खातान

Imperative mood

Person	Singular	Plural
प्रथम	मीनी जावा	आमी जावां
द्वितीय	तुनी जा	तुमी जावां
तृतीय	त्यासनी जाव दे	त्यांनी जावां

Continued present Tense

Person	Singular	Plural
प्रथम	मी जेवत असत	आमी जेवत असतं
द्वितीय	तुनी जेवत असतस	तुमी जेवत असतांव
तृतीय	तो जेवत असतय	ते जेवत असतान

Past Tense

Person	Singular	Plural
प्रथम	मीनी खाल्ला	आमी खाल्ला
द्वितीय	तूंनी खाल्लास	तुमी खाल्लांव
तृतीय	त्यानी खाल्ला	त्यांनी खाल्ल

Imperfect

जाणें

Person	Singular	Plural
प्रथम	मी जात व्हतूं	आमी जात व्हतूं
द्वितीय	तूं जात व्हतास	तुमी जात व्हतव
तृतीय	तो जात व्हता	ते जात व्हत

जाणें

Person	Singular	Plural
प्रथम	मी गेलतूं	आमी गेलतूं
द्वितीय	तूं गेलतास	तुमी गेलव
तृतीय	तो गेलता	ते गेलन

PECULIAR AGRI WORDS

Agri	Marathi	English
आयो	सुवासिनी	Married woman
अतरंग	फाजील	mischievous
आथां	आतां	just now
उकलणें	भांग पाडणें	to part hair
उपट	फटका	a cut, a blow
ओइयांशीं	जोरानें	with force
उखाऱ्या	खारटण	marshy soil
उसाण	पूर	flood

Agri	Marathi	English
उमतारा	उंबरठा	a doorstep
कंदालकी	खोडी	a trick
कणा	रांगोळी	....
कुरकुला	बारीक टोपली	a wicker
कडतवणी	आधण	boiling water
कडका	सुगावा	trace
कोला	कोहाळा	pumpion gourd
काडा	सुगावा	search
कांचवा		jacket
कबजा		jacket
खुर्ज्या	खिरापत	small chips of copra
खैस	खोडी	mischief
खैसाड्या	खोडकर	mischievous
खोइटवणें	आधणांत घालून पीठ घाटणें	to add (flour) to boiling water and stir
खिरणें	शिरणें	to enter
गोदा	पराणी	needle-pointed bamboo
गिनगिना	चक्कर	giddiness
गुरुल	चूळ	mouthful water
गोत	नवऱ्याबरोबर येणारी मंडळी	party of the bridegroom
गुरारणें	गुरगुरणें	to snarl
गोड	गूळ	jaggery
घोळवा	जाळें	a fishing net
घसणें	घासणें	to rub, clean
घुबाडणें	वर झुबका होणें	....
चाकोली	चकली	*chakli*
चोपा	फटका	a blow
जोगली		an earthen pan
जुरूसा	जरासा	a little
जापणें	बोलणें	to speak
जुडणें	झटणें	to work hard

Agri	Marathi	English
झोलणें	मासळी मारणें	to fish
ठावला	ताटली	a plate
डुखा	डांस	a bite
डेपिशन	बयाणा	deposit
डेवणें	ठेवणें	to lower down
तलई		a small pond
थापणें	थापटी मारणें	to slap
थोपणें	थांबणें	to stop
दिवात	लावणीचें जेवण	meals during transplantation
दरी	बाजूला	by the side of
धरपा	फडका	a piece of cloth
धारक्या	वाढणारा	a waiter
गोऱ्या	नारळाचें गूळ घातलेलें सार	a preparation of coconut juice and jaggery
झेंझाटणें	आंग मोडून येणें	to get pains in one's body
डोंवणें	ढवळणें	to stir
घवणें	सांपडणें	to find
बोट कोंडली	तांदुळाचें पक्वान्न	a preparation of rice
वाऱ्हाणें	बोलावणें	to call
फायजे	पाहिजे	to want
मुटकी	उकडलेले गोळे	boiled flour balls
निसोट	कालवणांतील पाणी	washy substance of curry
सांचा	संध्याकाळीं	in the evening
रुमाल	रुमाल	loin-cloth
खोंडा	खोंडा	a small blanket or apparel to cover one's head and back
धुंदारणें	दिशा धुंद होणें	to get dark on all sides
धवणें	धुणें	to wash
नामचंद	उत्तम	excellent
नखुंसा	थोडा	a little

Agri	Marathi	English
नुंगत	नुकताच	just now
पत्रास	रोट	boasting
पडका	बदली	a substitute
पाटका	टोपलें	a wicker
पुंजा	पूजा	worshipping
पात	ओळ	a line
पोळा	घावन	an omelette
बांव	मासळी	fish
बेल्टा	डोकें	head
भोमी	धनें	corriander
भुरगुल्या	लाह्या	parched grain
भुतारा	केरसुणी	a broom
भाणस		a place between two fireplaces
मावरं	तांबड्या रंगाची मासळी	fish
मेर	बाजूं	side
मिरधूळ	तिखट	chilli powder
मोरली	विळी	a curved knife
मनेत्री	मनस्वी	exceedingly
येरती	वेगळी	different
वायला	निराळा	separate
लडणें	रडणें	to cry
लांगी	किनारा	shore
लव्हार	लोहार	an ironsmith
लैंसा	फार	much
वइसा	वास येत असलेला	giving out bad smell (used with reference to fish)
वलफा	आडोसा	a shelter
वंडाऱ्या	उथळ	shallow
शिंगडी	करंजी	'karanji'
शाय	साय	cream
श्या	शिव्या	abuses

Agri	Marathi	English
शेट्टक	खेळकर	frolicsome
सस	नरडें	throat
सराव	मातीचें भांडें	an earthen vessel
सडक	दोरी	a piece of rope
सारख		a garment used for girls
सुकती	ओहटी	low tide
सोयान	स्वाधीन	under control
सईच	खरोखर	really
सोई	नीट	carefully
सपसल	पातळ नाहीं दाट नाहीं	neither thin nor thick
हलीम	आळीव	lipidium sativum
हेडकी	उचकी	belching
हिला	कापडाचें जाळें	a net made of cloth
हानणें	आणणें	to bring
हिलगणें	हालवणें	to shake
बटाटणें	ओरडणें	to cry, to speak loudly
इस्चान	व्यंजन	
बंदोबस्त	वाळीत टाकणें	social boycott
पिऱ्हा	पाट	wooden plank
चुकी	दण्ड, दंड	fine

AGRI WORDS USED IN RELATIONSHIP

डोक्री आय	आजी	grandmother
डोक्रा बाबा	आजोबा	grandfather
आइसा	सासू किंवा आई	mother or mother-in-law
बाईसव	जाऊ	husband's brother's wife
वंजिसा	ननंद	husband's sister
फुईस	आत्या किंवा मावशी	father's or mother's sister
भनशी	बहीण	sister
मोठ्या	मोठा भाऊ	elder brother
भावोजी	बायकोचा भाऊ किंवा बहिणीचा नवरा	brother-in-law

Agri	Marathi	English
सूनस	सून	daughter-in-law

SOME PECULIAR AGRI PHRASES

दांडीपाठ पाठवणें	बोलावणें	to send an invitation
बेणा पडणें	बाहेर येणें	to come out in the open
बाजू लोटणें	पुढें जाणें	to overtake (especially used in cart racing)
घाटी लावणें	सूर धरणें	to keep up the tuning
पुताचं कर फेडणें	मुलाचें लग्न करणें	to get one's son married
झाड्याला जाणें	परसाकडेस जाणें	to go to stool
इरक्तिला बसणें	लघवीला बसणें	to pass urine
चपटा होणें	वाटोळें होणें	a term of abuse
ठावला करणें	पानें घेणें	to lay dishes for meals
धरण बांधणें	जाळें लावणें	to spread a net across a river
गुरें वळविणें	गुरें राखणें	to tend one's cattle
हळद लावणें	संपविणें	to finish with
डोळे काढणें	डोहाळे लागणें	to get the longings of a pregnant woman
गांड फाटणें	अमांश होणें	to suffer from dysentery
डोई करणें	हजामत करणें	to get shaved

SOME NAMES OF THE AGRI MALES

The names of the Agris usually prevalent today are as follows :

जाख्या	जवऱ्या	झावऱ्या
जोम्या	हल्या	काळू
पोश्या	लोखंड्या	भुरु
नाग्या	लागऱ्या	कातळ्या
गोम्या	रड्डू	चिंध्या
बाम्या	डुकल्या	बोंब्या
उंदऱ्या	बेंबूट	लडग्या
चंदऱ्या	शिमगा	आवलू
आल्या	काथोर	पदम

मसण्या	जोगी	बारक्या
माणक्या	उटया	चादू
हिऱ्या	कबा	झक्या
चाया	कोल्या	झिट्या
गिरम्या	माया	घाया
लिंगमू	हासू	वेटू

The names like

नारायण, महादेव, गोविंद, रामचंद्र, जनार्दन, कृष्ण, शंकर, काशिनाथ, etc. are also found.

In educated element the names like तानाजी, शिवाजी, सुभाष, जयप्रकाश and others are also met with.

NAMES OF THE AGRI FEMALES

Generations

1st	2nd	3rd
चांगी	गणी	सुजाता
देवू	सखू	सुगंधा
रमी	ठमा	वत्सला
लाडकी	सावित्री	इंदिरा
चंद्री	गंगा	विमल
सुंद्री	नर्मदा	निर्मला
जमनी	गोदी	नीरा
बामी	किष्णी	
पोशी	भीमा	
राधी	चंद्रभागा	
माणकी	अंबी	
हिरी	द्रौपदी	
धाकटी	काशी	
सुकटी	भामा	
धोंडी	सीता	
महादी		
जोमी		
धाकली		
पावशी		

These three groups of names of the Agri females come from three different generations. The names in the first group are all peculiar to the Agris. The names are suggestive and at times convey a good deal of meaning.

चांगी means 'good', लाडकी means 'pet', जमनी is named after the river Jamuna. पोशी is so called, because she would support all. माणकी and हिरी are named after ruby and diamond respectively. धाकली is one who is born after or one with a small physique. सुकटी means as thin as a dried fish. धोण्डी conveys the sense of a stone. पावशी is so called because of her being born in the rainy season. Most of these names are descriptive in nature.

The names of the females from the second group show a different tendency. The daughters of the house are named somtimes after the Indian rivers, all regarded as sacred by the Hindus. Some of these names are found in Puranas, while ठमा is archaic. गणी is the female form of गणा, i.e. गणपति.

The names of the females in the third group are advanced in their appearance and synchronize with the development of the present generation.

At present all the names from these three groups are current amongst the Agris, in accordance with the status and social contact infiltrated through their association with various people.

AGRI MARATHI KONKAN STANDARD

Passage No. 20—Indo Aryan Family

Text of the passage by Grierson

येका गिरिस्ताला दोन सोकरे हुते· त्यानचा धाकटा बापासला बोलला. बाबा जो इसूकाचा वाटा मना येण्याचा तो देस· मंग त्यानी दरव्या त्याला वाटून दिला. मग थोरक्या दिसानी धाकटा पुतुस सगला कवलून दूर मुलकास जेला. आन तथां उदलेपना करुन आपली दवलत उरइली. फुरे त्यानी सगले उरइल्यावर त्या देसान मोठा दुकाल परला. त्यासाठीं त्याला अरचन पराय लागली. तवा तो तेथल्या एका सावकाराकड रेला. त्यानी त्याला आपल्या सेतान डुकरा चरयाला घारला. जी साला हुकरा खात त्यानच्यावर त्यानी आपला पोट भरावा. असा त्याचे मनांत आयला.

The above passage in the Current Agri dialect of Alibag Taluka is given below :

येका ग्रस्ताला दोन सोकर व्हत. त्यानचा धाकला बापासला जापला. बाबा जो इस्टकीचा वाटा मना यावाचा तो देस. मंग त्यानी पैसा त्याला वाटून दिला. मग थोरक्या दिसानी धाकटा सोकरा सगला कवलून दूर मुलुकास जेला. आन थतं उदलेपना करुन आपली दवलत उरवली. पुर त्याना सगला उरवल्यावर त्या देसान मोठा दुकाल परला. त्यासाठीं त्याला अरचन पराय लागली. तवा तो थतल्या येका सावकाराकड राला. त्यानी त्याला आपल्या सेतान हुकरां चरयाला घारला. जी सालां हुकरा खान त्यानच्यावर त्यानी आपला पोट भरावा असा त्याच्या मनांत आयला.

The changes have been underlined.

CHAPTER VI

OPERATIVE FOLK-LORE AND BELIEFS

ALL over the world man has watched with interest how the cycle of the seasons moves all the year round, how it brings about the changes in the weather and different phenomena at different times, e.g. the trees shooting up blossoms, the birds appearing in variegated colours, the sky appearing full of clouds and so on. He has also watched the conditions in the period before and after the monsoons and has formed his own impressions on the various repercussions in nature. When all such impressions were sufficient enough to be translated in a somewhat systematic way, he put forth his own set of experiences, based on observations and judgments, with a special reference to real life to serve his practical needs. Such judgments are a peculiar product of the area and are useful there. The local people, when they find them useful, handle them carefully from generation to generation. It is a mere collection of experiences and knowledge of various persons and not a system of hard-and-fast rules to be followed *in toto.* There are additions and subtractions to get the matter adjusted to their living. Such are the ways of life of the agriculturists from the Kharapat region of the Alibag Taluka.

In spite of the fact that the Agris have Hindu Almanac, it is but the unrefutable truth that he has his own system of experiences in agriculture, which is his main walk of life, as will be clear from the names in the Agri dialect corresponding to the various constellations of the monsoon period. He hardly worries himself to know the other details in the Hindu Almanac. The rain is the essential need of his agriculture and he restricts his information to it only. He need not know other constellations and as such they do not find any corresponding names in his dialect.

The following table gives the list of the monsoon constellations :—

Names of Constellations

Hindu	Agri
मृग	मिरिग
आर्द्रा	आरदा
पुनर्वसू	पोरे

Hindu	Agri
पुष्य	म्हातारे
आश्लेषा	कोळणी
मघा	मघा
पूर्वा	पूरवा
उत्तरा	उतरा
हस्त	हत्ती
चित्रा	चित्ता
स्वाती	सवाती

It should be noted that the पोरे (the youngsters) come first and the म्हातारे (the old men) follow them.

A decade or two before the local priests used to move in the Agri population from door to door to inform the residents of the particular days of importance, e.g. Full Moon and New Moon days, days of religious importance, and would receive a handful of rice in return. A majority of the Agris could not read nor write at that time. But the gradual spread of primary education has enabled a good number of the Agris to read and write. Besides, the Brahmins also would not choose to be beggars for a handful of rice in these days.

An Agri has his own calculations based on usual observance and experience. He has fixed his time-table for his agricultural operations and will try to arrange his schedule in consultation with his neighbours or priests about the prevalent constellation during the monsoons.

What really matters with the Agris living in the salt paddy lands—a region otherwise known as Kharapat—is the rain and the flood of the high tides on the Full Moon and New Moon days. These salt paddy fields situated by the sides of the arms of an estuary are protected by a big mud wall known to the Agris as 'Baher-kanta'—an outer bund—which stops the flood of the tide to rush in the paddy fields and spoil them. The outer bund stands in a great danger on the New Moon and Full Moon days and two or three days more in each case, when the flood of the tide dashes against the bund. A single breach in the bund will admit sea water sufficient to submerge rice fields and render them completely useless to raise any crop for years together. Such an event is always expected in the Kharapat agriculture.

During this period, i.e. from eleventh or twelfth of every

lunar fortnight to the end of it, residents of the Kharapat villages keep a watch in turn by day and night over the rising flood of the estuary, while the rest of the residents are alert in their houses in the adjoining village, prepared to rush to the scene as soon as a call is made upon them. All of them have to go and they go. What is needed in such an emergency is a quick and well directed co-operative action, the failure of which will bring starvation to a number of families in the area. It is thus no wonder that they must be very particular to know this phenomenon and they must have kept a close observance and collated their experiences together. There is always a unity when the interest is common, which directly calls in co-operative action. The result of their experiences in this branch may be summed up as follows :

(i) If the flood of the highest tide reaches its maximum during the months of harvest, i.e. 'Kartika', 'Margasirsa' and 'Paus' (November, December and January), the conditions of the rain in the following season will be satisfactory, especially during the opening when seeds are sown.

(ii) If it reaches its maximum during the months of 'Magha' and 'Phalguna' (February and March) the average rainfall during the next agricultural season will be satisfactory.
This rain is very suitable for the paddy plants, newly transplanted during this period.

(iii) If it does so in the months of 'Chaitra' and 'Vaishakha' (April and May) there will be ample rainfall during the next agricultural season. It will be a period of rice grains and there will be a bumper crop.

(iv) If the floods of the high tides are maximum on the New Moon days in the first three years, they will be so on the Full Moon days during the next three years.

(v) If all the periodical floods of the tide reach their maximum limit, the next season shall be prosperous for agriculturists.

(vi) If a previous flood fails to reach its maximum, the following one is sure to make up the deficit.

(vii) If the moon shines brightly, if it looks bigger, the flood of the Full Moon will definitely reach its maximum.

CALCULATIONS ABOUT RAINFALL

The area of the salt paddy fields is a mass of silted deposits, washed by the streams in the rainy season as they glean forth from the adjoining hills. The whole area is covered with thick mud very soon after the monsoons break up and it is impossible to make movement in the knee-deep mud, which extends for miles without a gap. Strangers are not able to walk there a few furlongs even. It requires peculiar practice and stamina to cross such muddy tracts. All other communications practically come to an end. And the Agris must store fuel, provisions, cover the roof of their houses with straw and make up all the necessary preparations for the monsoon period before it actually starts. They therefore must be able to know the exact approach of the monsoons. They being as intelligent as anybody else in the region, have their own observations and calculations. They have studied the natural phenomena and are often confident about their judgment. "The spectacle of the great changes which annually pass over the face of this earth has powerfully impressed the minds of all ages." [1] And the Agris are no exception to it.

Their observations, which I have collected throughout the length and breadth of the taluka are laid down as below :

INDICATIONS OF THE APPROACHING MONSOON

1. Black clouds begin to appear in the sky.
2. New leaves begin to cover the tree — especially 'Chincha' (Tamarind) and Pimpal (Ficus Bengalensis).
3. The soil appears to be wet, if dug a foot or two below the general level.
4. Bluish flowers float on the sea, which are washed ashore.
5. Grass-hoppers, glow-worms and red little locusts known as 'Bembay' visit the area.
6. Red ants become winged.
7. Peculiar mosquitoes, bred in the salt marshy land, spring up. They perch on the cattle and sting them.
8. Huge swells in the estuary of Rewadanda dash against the sand bar, the noise of which is heard far away.
9. Particular butterflies, black in colour, fly in clusters from south to north.

[1] J. Frazer, *Golden Bough*, Vol. I, p. 3.

10. Birds do not fly very high in the sky.
11. Fishes come close to the shore. Fishermen catch them close to the shore.
12. Throats of lizards and sparrows become tawny.
13. Frogs become yellowish.
14. People from Kusumbala area watch for little springs that flow in the bed of a local brook.
15. Blossoms on certain tamarind trees warn of a heavy rainfall.
16. A good mango crop is expected to be followed by a good rainy reason.
17. A famine may follow if tamarind trees yield ample fruit.

All these are their observations from nature. But when the monsoons fail, rainfall becomes scarce, water is not sufficient for agriculture and when all the prospects for the season are doomed, Agris have their methods to deal with such irregularities of nature.

One of them is 'Pavashi Devi Ceremony'. It is a 'rain-making' ritual. A huge stone image of a goddess placed in a corner in the temple of Shankar, called as above, is taken out of the temple by a local headman, is placed in a palanquin and carried to a local village tank in a big procession accompanied by musical instruments and attended by all the village folk. As the palanquin draws near the tank the image is taken out and carried on his head by the headman, who places the image at a marked spot in the tank, submerged in water, whence it is lifted up and carried back to its original seat after the rains have started in right earnest.

Another measure adopted, which is common to all the Hindus, is to get the altar-room of the temple of Shiva filled in with water till the image is submerged and kept in the same condition, till the desired result is achieved.

They have a way also to deal with excessive rainpour. They invite a few persons for meals in honour of the rain. The feast is held on some bund or a similar spot. It is customary during the agricultural season, especially when transplantation is carried on, to serve the agricultural workers with meals, and few of these are termed as 'in honour of the rain'. As the meals are being served the host prays the rain to stop and gives thanks for the kindness shown so far. He does it with a desire to check the excessive rainfall.

TYPICALITY OF THE TIME-TABLE

—Seeds are sown during the period of Rohini Constellation.[2]
—Transplantation is carried on at the end of the period of Magha Constellation. (They plant salt-lands when they are full of water.)
—The harvest period comes to an end by 'Pushya' Constellation.[3]

INDICATIONS WHICH DECLARE THE MONSOON TO BE OVER

—Appearance of mist at dark hours.
—The wind now changes its direction. It blew so long from the southern direction. Now it blows from the north.
—Rainfall approached from the east with a thunder.
—The last constellation in the monsoon line is 'Hasta'.

MEDICAL CULT

"It has been argued that no more than ten per cent of the population of this vast country have access to the western scientific medicine and that the remaining have to rely upon the old systems in some form or other and on the indigenous materia medica.[4] Similarly, their apathy towards the costly alopathic drugs prescribed by an unfamiliar doctor, their financial inability to meet the demands made by him in his every visit and their faith in the treatment of local 'Bhagata', are some of the factors that account for unwillingness of the Agris to seek medical help of the doctors. Moreover, culturally isolated from a city with meagre means of conveyance as these villages are, only 'the oldest and least well-educated doctors' have settled in this area. "Doctors and dentists and nurses and hospitals can exist where they can be supported."[5] And they do not exist where there are only poor people. For these reasons the Agris seem to depend upon their medicine men, who practise the prevalent medical cult based upon a general study of the indigenous materia medica. These medicine men, who have based their knowledge on experience and casual observations made in their day-to-day life have exploited a number of natural resources available in the flora and fauna of their area and a number of variegated fishes from

[2] Taurus.
[3] Corvus.
[4] Chhopra, *Medicinal and Economic Aspects of some Indian Medical Plants*, p. 8.
[5] *Medicine Today.*

the local estuaries. Their information is based on the process of association of particular effects with particular herbs and experiments in their common life. "Certainly environmental conditions have determined to a large extent the pattern of medical and health needs, as well as their relative urgency." [6] Their medical cult, which is always guarded as a secret, which passes from generation to generation, is never disclosed to a stranger. In a village we may come across a few persons, who are the repositories of this traditional knowledge to whom the villagers approach for advice and treatment.

Their preparation of a drug is simple. In one case these medicine men prescribe juice of some fresh leaves crushed between the palms; in the other, they advise to pulverize pieces of some roots. They prescribe liquid extract to be mixed in water or milk and do not worry much about the precise measurement of the doses to be taken. They know the use of some pieces of roots (which are rubbed on a piece of stone till they are ready as an ointment) for external application. They are not familiar with the Ayurvedic system of preparing decoctions with various details nor are they dependent on various alopathic medicines for their guidance. They use their medicine in their treatment, which costs nothing to them and are, very often, easily available in the area. Their medicine looks mainly to curing rather than to the prevention of ailments.

"Man is a panicky animal as well as a rational being and his mind is so constituted that in a crisis to call for action is more tumultuous and urgent than the mere imperative necessity of undertaking the situation." [7]

Many times it happens that a farmer, who accidentally gets hurt while working in his field runs to his medicine man for treatment. This medicine man runs to the hedge by the side of his house, collects some fresh leaves of the 'Pangara' tree (Erythrina Indica), crushes them between his palms so as to let their juice fall in the wound and asks the farmer to resume his work. That is his treatment! It is so simple and yet so wonderful in effect! But one fact is clear. The medicine loses its effect if it is disclosed to or identified by others. Efficacy of his medicine lies in its being a secret! The faith with which these medicine men preserve their secrets does impress upon the observers that these medi-

[6] Chhopra, *Medicinal and Economic aspects of some Indian Medical Plants*, p. 125.
[7] A. Sorsby, *Medicine and Mankind*, p. 132.

cines must have been a result of matured experiences and must have been in vogue for a long period. And it is no wonder that in a region, where a doctor is rare, where no other assistance is available and where life is an adjustment to one's surroundings, it is a natural corollary that they have to adjust their living to whatever measures and knowledge they have at their disposal.

I have collected from the Agri medicine men nearly seventy-five medicines, which come from the plant life in this belt. After all "Human life is almost everywhere on this globe interwoven with and to a great extent dependent upon plant life".[8]

MEDICINES FROM PLANT LIFE

Treatment for Mayelgia (Vata)

1. The fresh leaves of the Solanum Melongena (Vange) or brinjal plant are crushed with a little salt added to them. This juice gives relief by external application.
2. A little powder of Asafoetida (Hinga) rolled in cotton wool is inserted in the cavity of the ear as a remedy against delirium.
3. A piece of the creeper, known as 'Ghanasuli' is rubbed and mixed in water. This mixture is taken orally as an internal remedy for mayelgia.

Treatment for the bite of a scorpion

4. In case a scorpion bites the fresh leaves of the 'Erand' plant (Euphorbiaceae) are crushed between the palms and merely pressed against the part of the body where there is a pain.
5. If one becomes senseless as an effect of the scorpion-bite, a heated bundle of rice is applied to the head from time to time.
6. A person, bitten by a scorpion, is asked to stand in front of a medicine man, who takes in his right hand little twigs of the 'Sitaphal' or 'Anaval' plant (Anona Squamosa) and passes them on the corresponding part of his own person, as a patient starts indicating that a scorpion bit such and such part of his body and the effect of it has reached such and such a part. He then passes the twigs over the person of the patient from the head to foot and thunders

[8] Krappe, *The Science of Folk-lore*, p. 230.

a volley of names of deities. There is no fixed order nor formula. He repeats this till the remedy is found to be effective.

7. A piece of the root of the 'Karavanda' plant (Carissa Carandas) is rubbed on a piece of stone till it is ready as an ointment. It is then applied to the part, which is bitten by a scorpion.
8. A piece of the root of the 'Rui' plant (Calatropis Procera) is rubbed on a piece of stone till it is ready as an ointment. It is applied to the part bitten by a scorpion.

Some Tonics

9. A table-spoonful of pulp of a piece of the root of the 'Tripani' creeper (Caldenia Precumbens) is mixed with powdered sugarcandy. The whole mixture is added to a cup full of milk. Some grains of 'Jira' (Cuminum Cyminum) soaked in water for twenty-four hours are added to it. The whole thing is to be taken early in the morning.
10. Powders of the roots of Talimakhana (Hygrephila Spinosa) creeper and of the 'Kavachabij' creeper are mixed up with a cup full of cow's milk. The whole thing is to be taken early in the morning.
11. The powders of the dried bark of the 'Pandhari Sambar' tree (Erivendron Anfractuesum) and the pieces of 'Kali Musali' (Carculigi Orcioides) and 'Sapheta Musali' (Asparaguo Ascendens) plants are taken in equal proportion and mixed in the fresh milk of a cow. The whole preparation is to be taken in the morning.
12. A few chips of onion are eaten with jaggery (solidified sugarcane juice).
13. A piece of the root of the 'Pitakiri' creep is pulverized and mixed in water. The preparation is to be drunk before one goes to bed. This prevents spermatorrhoea also.

Treatment for Sprain

14. Fresh leaves of the 'Ningadi' plant (Vitex Nirgundi Trifolia) are beaten in a pulp, which is applied on the part where there is a sprain.

Treatment for Piles

15. A little powder of the 'Ganja' (Cannuabis Indica) is mixed in ghee, prepared from a cow's milk, and stirred till the preparation becomes dilute. It is kept for a night. Next morning pieces of charcoal are taken in a dish and the solution is poured thereon so as to emit smoke, which is allowed to escape through a hole in an empty coconut shell placed on the dish (to collect the smoke) to the anus of the patient, who sits upon the hole. This is a remedy against the swollen vein. It gives relief from the pain also.
16. Chips of about three white onions are added to a quarter of a seer ghee (prepared from cow's milk). The whole mixture is allowed to remain for a night. Next morning the mixture is beaten till it becomes a paste. This paste is also allowed to remain for about 12 hours. It is then eaten before one goes to bed. It gives some relief from the pain caused by the piles. This has a cooling effect in the abdomen and one gets a natural motion.

Treatment for the Venom of Reptiles

17. Small pieces of the roots of the 'Kala Kuda' plant (Wrightia Tinctoria) are dug out and beaten in a pulp before the sun rises on a Sunday. Half a seer of the liquid extract of this pulp is given in case of a person bitten by a snake. It causes the patient to vomit and thus gives him relief.
18. A pod of the 'Chapha' tree (Mesua Forea) is rubbed on a piece of stone and the paste mixed in water. The mixture is prescribed for a serpent-bite.
19. Few pieces of the 'Nagadavana' creeper are also similarly given in case reptiles other than a serpent have bitten.

Treatment for Abdomenal Pains

20. Half a cup of juice extracted from the 'Alusatana' creeper is taken orally to stop pains in one's abdomen.
21. Half a cup of juice extracted from the 'Derashinga' creeper, preferably fresh leaves, is a good remedy against stomach-ache.
22. Pulp of fresh ginger mixed with a little salt is also similarly effective.

23. In case the abdomenal pain becomes unbearable a little powder of Hinga (Asafoetida) is placed on a heated copper pice and the whole of it is dipped in a cup full of water, which is then to be drunk without a pause. The pice is not to be swallowed.
24. A cupful of 'Bewada' (country liquor) with a little powder of 'black Miri' (Piper Nigrum) added to it stops stomach-ache soon.
25. One should fix copper or silver rings to the first toe of one's feet in case one gets continuous pains in his lungs.

Treatment for Enlarged Liver

26. They use the juice of the fresh leaves of the 'Dindi' creeper (Macro Phylla) against an expanded liver. Half a cup of this juice is to be taken continuously for three days.

Treatment for Ear Diseases

27. A little powder of roasted alum is put in the cavity of one's ear if it pains and discharges.
28. The juice extracted from the fresh leaves of the 'Zendu' plant (Calendula Officinalis) is poured in the cavity of an ear to stop the pain therein.
29. A part of the leg of a peacock is boiled in groundnut oil. The oil is then poured in the cavity of the ear to stop the pain.

Treatment for Icteriosis

30. One or two seers of toddy should be taken in the morning for four days, when a patient suffers from jaundice.
    They brand a particular vein in one's wrist with a heated copper pice.

Treatment for Rash

31. A mixture of milk, sugarcandy and a little juice of the fresh leaves of the creeper known as 'Agapana'.

Treatment for Cramp

32. In case one gets cramps in his legs and feet, he should take a vapour wash of hot wash with turmeric powder.

33. Little juice of the 'Ranakeli' plant (Musa Superba) is taken orally as an internal remedy.

Treatment for Fever

34. In case of Malaria two or three teaspoonfuls of juice extracted from the fresh leaves of the 'Nim' tree (Azadirachta Indica) is to be taken orally daily till the fever subsides.
35. In case of chronic malaria, a patient should sleep on a country cot, wrapping himself firmly in a blanket. A little fire is placed below the cot to warm the patient. Due to the warming, he gets excessive perspiration. This gives him a relief from the attack of the malarial fever.

Treatment for Worms

36. Two or three teaspoonfuls of the juice of the fresh coconut copra is given to the children who suffer from worms.
37. A little juice of the fresh leaves of the 'Karanja' tree (Pongamia Glabra) or of the 'Kadunima' tree (Azadirachta Indica) is poured in a red-hot iron spoon. A little powder of Asafoetida is added to it. This is given as a remedy against the worms.
38. Little lather of the fruit of the 'Ritha Tree' (Spindus Trifoliatus) is rubbed on the head and stomach of the babies when they suffer from worms.

Treatment for Boils

39. A piece of the root of the castor oil plant (Euphorbiaceae) is rubbed on a piece of stone till it is ready as an ointment, which is applied to a boil to get it subsided.
40. Similarly, pieces of the roots of the 'Kavali' (Viscum Album) and 'Kardoli' (Musaceae) are prescribed to get a boil subsided.
41. A fresh leaf of the 'Bhenda' tree (Thespasia Populnea) is placed on a boil to get it subsided.
42. The juice of a twig of the Banian Tree (Ficus Bengalensis) is applied to a boil to get it subsided.

Treatment for Asthma

43. The pill of 'Rasashendur' is rubbed on a piece of stone. The paste is mixed with the juice of the 'Maka' (Wadelia Calendulacea) or of 'Kali Tulas' (the black Ocimum Sanctum) plant. It is given to the babies suffering from Asthma.

Purgative

44. A piece—nearly 4 inches long—of the root of the 'Undi' (Calophyllum Inophyllum) plant is pulverized and mixed in water, which, when drunk, acts as a good purgative.

Treatment for Retention of Urine

45. Fresh leaves of the 'Karadu' (Celosia Argentea) plant are squeezed The juice is to be taken orally in case the urine is retained.
46. A bandage of pulp of the fresh leaves of the 'Palas' (Butea Frondosa) tree is fastened on the umbillicus in case the urine is retained. There is a quick discharge.

Treatment for Eye Diseases

47. Early in the morning a little water is sprinkled in an eye, which has a cornial ulcer, with a flower of the 'Champa' (Mesua Ferrea) tree. This treatment is to be continued for seven days.
48. The juice at the stem of the fruit of the 'Amba' (Magnipara Indica) tree is applied to the stye.
49. When one finishes his meals, he picks up a few grains of boiled rice and applies them to the stye, before washing one's hands.
50. The liquid extract of the 'Gulavel' (Tinspora Cardifolia) creeper is mixed with honey and applied to the eye to enhance its lustre.

Treatment for Guinea-Worm

51. Fresh leaves of the 'Ningadi' (Vitex Nirgundi Trifolia) plant, 'Erand' (Euphorbiaceae) plant and the 'Champa' (Mesua Ferrea) tree are pulped together. The pulp is bandaged on the wound of the guinea-worm.

52. Liquid extract of the fresh leaves and the bark of the 'Pangara' (Erythrina Indica) tree is heated in an iron spoon and is taken orally as an internal remedy against the guinea-worm.
53. Pulp of the fresh leaves of the 'Rui' (Calatropis Procera) plant or of the 'Dhotara' (Dhattura Alba) plant is bandaged on the wound of the guinea-worm.
54. A piece of the root or the seed of the 'Kuda' (Holarrhena Antidysenterica) plant is rubbed on a stone and mixed with water. It is drunk as an internal remedy against guinea-worm.
55. The juice of the fresh leaves of the Euphorbia Antiquorum plant is applied to the wound of the guinea-worm.

Treatment for Wounds, Bleedings, etc.

56. The juice extracted from the leaves of the 'Pangara' (Erythrina Indica) tree or from the twigs of the 'Perakali' is applied to the wound to get it healed soon.
57. Fat of an iguana is applied to the wound for a similar effect.
58. Powder of the bark of the 'Pipal' (Ficus Religosa) tree is spread over a wound for three days in succession.
59. Juice of the 'Kela' (Musa Sapientum) plant is poured in a wound caused by some weapon.
60. Whitish dust on the outer part of the 'Bamboo' (Bambusa Arundinacea) plant serves the same purpose.

Treatment for Skin Disease

61. Juice of the fresh leaves of the 'Kadunim' (Azadirachta Indica) tree is rubbed all over one's body, when there is an itching sensation.
62. A piece of the root of the 'Karavanda' (Carissa Carandas) plant is rubbed on a stone till it is ready as an ointment, and applied to itches or ringworm.
63. The seedlings of the 'Jambhul' (Eugenia Jambolina) tree are rubbed on a piece of stone till they are ready as an ointment, which is applied to the small pimples on one's face. It renders the skin smooth.

64. Juice of the roasted piece of the 'Perakud' (Euphorbia Antiquorum) plant mixed with a little turmeric powder is applied in case there is inflammation of the skin.
65. Juice of the same plant is applied to a swollen part to get the swelling absorbed.
66. Juice of the fresh leaves of the 'Karadoli' (Musaceae) plant is applied to the swollen part to get the swelling absorbed.

Treatment for Burning, etc.

67. A piece of root of the 'Bhenda' (Thespasia Populnea) tree is rubbed on a piece of stone till it is ready as an ointment which is applied to the wound caused by burning.

Treatment for Diarrhoea

68. Juice of the fruit of a 'Jambhula' (Eugenia Jambolina) tree preserved in a glass bottle buried beneath a doorstep for two or three months at least, renders relief from diarrhoea or vomitting.

Treatment for Bile

69. The dried nuts of the fruit of 'Avala' (Phyllanthus Embelica) tree are a very effective remedy against bile.

Treatment for Evil Eye

70. Fresh sprouts of the tamarind tree should be tied round one's neck to ward off the effects of evil eye.

Treatment for Coryaza, etc.

71. Juice extracted from the fresh leaves of the 'Adulasa' (Adhu Toda Vasica) plant or the 'Korantaki' (Barleria Prionitis) plant is given orally in case of coryaza.
72. Two or three tolas of jaggery mixed with a few grains of 'Methi' (Trigonella Foenum Oroecum) are eaten in the opening period of the monsoons to prevent cold.
73. A piece of the 'Shingamooli' (Cosmostigma Racemosa) creeper is rubbed on a stone and mixed in water to be drunk as a remedy against coughing.

Other Useful Medicines

74. A piece of the root of the 'Pitakiri' creeper is rubbed on a piece of stone and the paste mixed in water. It is taken to prevent nocturnal discharges (spermatorrhoea).
75. A piece of bark of the 'Vavara' creeper is tied round one's girdle in case of Nephrites.
76. A herb known as 'Hadasandhi' is pulverized and the pulp is bandaged on a fracture.
77. A seed or two of the 'Saga' (Tictona Grandis) tree should be swallowed when one passes hot urine.

MEDICINES PREPARED FROM FISH

1. The liver oil of Jitada fish (Lates calcalifer) is a good tonic prescribed in convulsion.
2. The Nivata fish (Boleophthalmus sp) when eaten in ample quantity serves as a good antidote against diabetes.
3. A crab from fresh water is boiled and the decoction is prescribed for malaria. It is also a good tonic.
4. Fat of two varieties of fishes (Gobins sp and Boleophthalmus sp) known as 'Kharabi' and 'Nivata' is used in cooking as a prevention against sun-stroke.[9]
5. Fish oil which is sticky is rubbed on the body of cattle to prevent flies and mosquitoes from stinging it.

MEDICINES PREPARED FROM FOWL

1. Very small pieces of flesh of a fowl are fried in ghee, spiced with saffron and then boiled in three gallons of water, till the whole mixture is reduced to about two cups of water. (This process takes nearly ten to twelve hours.) This soup is given to a patient in the last stage of consumption.
2. One tola each of honey, ghee, milk and sugar are mixed in a quarter of a cupful of brady and prescribed for general weakness after severe sickness.
3. The white of an egg mixed with a little turmeric powder, alum and jaggery is prescribed when one gets pains in his chest, as a result of carrying heavy loads.
4. Many Agris take the following preparation as a protection against the weather of the changing seasons, twice

[9] The Agris say that this cooking medium makes them immune to the scorching heat of the sun.

a year, first before the breaking of the monsoons and second in October.

After all the feathers of a lapidated fowl of a medium size are removed, it is cut in two or three pieces which are then battered and squeezed. Half a cupful of this liquid extract, spiced with one tola of asafoetida, cloves, pepper and turmeric powder, is heated in a little pot containing two teaspoonfuls of ghee. It is then taken at about eight in the morning.

The rest of the mutton is cooked in a sumptuous dish to be eaten with a piece of bread or two. A patient is to swallow the whole of it by instalments in case he is not able to do so all at once.

After this he is not to expose himself to outside weather. He covers his ears and head with a piece of cloth. He is not to go out of his house for three days. He is not to take any stimulative drink for four days.

TREATMENT FOR CATTLE

Having seen so far the medical assistance rendered in the Agri houses, we now deal with veterinary treatment given to their cattle. "Cattle when duly cared for and fed seldom become ill, while they are liberally or improperly fed or more or less starved they become unhealthy and suffer from disease."[10] And the cattle in the Kharapat area are neglected, as ploughing is not necessary for tilling the soil. They are valuable to the extent they can be milked. Even milk was not regarded as a necessary commodity in their daily life. It was rather a luxury. But the spread of tea as a drink, which is taken at all times and at all places and which is the cheap usual method of welcoming a guest or a visitor, has made milk an indispensable factor. A cup of tea without milk is rather unpalatable to an Agri. The scarcity of water is again a raging problem in the area, which makes the maintenance of cattle more difficult. And it is a fact that Indian cattle are obliged to drink the most foul water, because they cannot obtain pure water. Disease is very often engendered from such mismanagement. These cattle graze on the green pasture on the salt marshy soil by the side of the estuaries in consequence of which their milk is unsuitable for digestion for a stranger.

Forms of the disease of cattle known in the area are:

Foot and mouth diseases.

Anthrax.

[10] J. H. B. Hallen, *More Deadly Forms of Cattle Disease in India*: Introduction.

Impeded respiration.
Sceptic wound, and others.

The treatment for the forms of the disease is rather unsatisfactory, which is shared by secret formulae or charms and medicines chiefly promulgated from the indigenous herbs. It appears unscientific. Yet it serves their purpose. It is the only course open for them as no veterinary surgeon is easily available.

Except the milch cattle and the bullocks, the cattle are starved or underfed for eight months in a year. No special precautions are taken, where " ordinarily the native who lives on a meal of rice and perhaps a few herbs to season the same with, expects that his cattle will, in like manner, pick up what they can in the way of pasture about the village or its adjacent lands so that he never troubles himself to grow green food or prepare dry fodder for them. The same crop which supplies him with grain, feeds his cattle also with its straw ".[11]

All day the cattle forage in the surrounding area and return home with their stomach as empty as when they started, to receive perhaps a few handfuls of straw or rubbish just sufficient to sustain life.

The life of these poor creatures is cheap, the treatment may cost something but it seems that these cattle would cost less. They are a victim to the ravages of nature. Under these circumstances they can do their best to die. That is the only alternative left for them.

Whatever medicines for cattle they have, they are cheap and available at all places. The preparation is not complicated. The treatment though simple rather tends to be brutal.

Of all the cattle the bulls share the worst of the lot. Races of the bullock cart form the most popular pastime in this part of the country. For this purpose the Khilari bulls are imported from the Satara district. Leaflet No. 16 of 1926 (Department of Agriculture) says: " It (Khilari) is very fast and can travel miles in a day without showing signs of fatigue ". The bulls are fed nicely—there is a diversity of attitude towards this. Some do, others do not. But all of them agree in piercing their innocent, helpless bulls to the best of their ability and ferocity with the needle pointed bamboos, while making every effort in a blind passion to overtake the rival cart. Others are no exception to this. What is said about the Agris is true of the rest of the people in the taluka. As a result of all this treatment the bulls die a pre-

[11] Gunn, *Cattle of Southern India*, p. 2.

mature death, though they are not to be given any heavy agricultural work, such as carrying heavy loads and the like, as they would be useless for cart races.

CATTLE DISEASES

Treatment for sceptic wound

1. They tie a root of the 'Caranda' (Carissa Carandas) plant with a thread round the neck of a cattle to prevent it from getting a sceptic wound.
2. An iron rod heated in fire is inserted in the opening of the sceptic wound of a cattle, if it is visible.

Treatment for poison

3. In case of a snake bite a seer of juice of the leaves of the 'Nigad' (Vitex Nirgundi Trifolia) plant is given through the nose of a cattle—called as 'Natha Dene'.
   Note.—There is a special code of behaviour prescribed, when the fresh leaves are picked out. One must not let his shadow fall on the plant. And as he picks, he prays "Oh Datta Guru, May this herb serve my purpose!" "Oh Kal Bhairav, May this herb serve my purpose!"
4. When it (a cattle) is bitten by an unidentified reptile half a seer of the liquid extract of the 'Garavela' (Tinespora Cordifolia) creeper is given orally.
5. Bark on the root of the 'Ambatvela' (Vitis Trifolia) creeper is pulverized and mixed with water. And it is given orally.
6. A part of the 'Adheli' creeper which puts on red flowers is battered and mixed with water. It is given as an antidote against the general effects of poisoning.
7. In case a cattle is suffering from the sceptic effect of a wound caused by a horse bite, about five tolas of the juice of the leaves of the 'Karanja' (Pongamia Glabra) tree mixed in sweet oil is given orally.

Treatment for impeded respiration

8. A cattle is branded with a heated crow-bar on certain parts, when it gets respiration impeded. This is a skilful job and specially experienced people alone can undertake it.

Treatment for anthrax

9. Some roots of the Phoenix Sylvestris tree are battered and mixed with water.
10. The fresh leaves of the 'Agapan' creeper are crushed and mixed with equal quantities of water and milk. A part of it is to be given orally.
11. Two cupfuls of the fresh juice extracted from the leaves of the Gmelina Arborea tree is to be given orally.
12. The juice of the fresh leaves of the creeper known as 'Dhayati' is mixed with water. The mixture is given orally.

Treatment for foot disease

13. When there are no signs of getting it cured, ¼ seer of ghee of a cow's milk is given orally to give stamina.

13A. A little denatured spirit or coal tar is applied on the wounds.

14. One takes a root of the 'Karanda' (Carrissa Carandas) plant, a part of the 'Dhayati' creeper and a part of the bark of the 'Apta' (Bauhemia Racemosa) tree. He twists and binds them in a string. He is to use his left palm and left thigh only. He fixes seven different knots in the string, and inserts either of these roots in each of them. He burns 'Uda' (Styrax Bengoin) and 'Dhupa' in front of the new string. He offers a little prayer. He then ties it round the neck of the cattle. The limit for cure is seven days.
15. A root of the Calatropis Procera plant is tied in a long bark of the Bauhemia Racemosa tree on Saturday. It is then to be tied round a cattle's neck. The limit for cure is three days.
16. The empty cup of a coconut fruit is burnt. It gives out some oil. It is applied to the wound in the hoof.
17. They chop the part of the hoof spoiled by the wound with a heated sickle and apply coal tar for fomentation.
18. The fresh leaves of the Anona Squamosa plant, a little 'Camphor' (Cinuamonum Camphora) and crushed dry leaves of the Nicotiana Tobacum plant are all powdered together. The cuts in the hoof are filled with it and the hoof is bandaged with a piece of cloth.

Treatment for Abortion

19. A root of the Calatropis Procera plant is tied round the neck of a cattle.

Treatment for Evil Eye

20. They take a stone found on the joint of the branches of some small trees, get it heated in fire and try to sharpen a knife with it. As he does so, he utters the names of the persons whom he suspects and abuses them.

Treatment for a Cow that cannot be milked

21. They rub pieces of the 'Ranati Surang' (Amorphophallus Companulatus) fruit against the udders when a cow or a she-buffalo is found difficult to be milked.

BELIEFS AND SUPERSTITIONS

Supernatural world of an Agri includes a number of ghosts. They are :

1. Herali — Ghost of a woman who dies of an accident.
2. Mhasasura — Ghost of a buffalo which dies of an accident.
3. Zotinga — Ghost of a man who dies of an accident.
4. Jakhina — Ghost of a woman who dies in delivery.
5. Kapari — Ghost of a man who is drowned.
6. Munja — Ghost of a dead Brahmin.
7. Maharbhuta — Ghost of a dead Mahar.
8. Babar — Ghost of a young child.

and the like

They haunt lonely places, fields, public squares and always lie in wait to lay their hand on anyone who can be within their reach. There are some remedies to get rid of the harm caused by them and their appearance is by no means uncommon to Agris.

Once an old lady who happened to go from her village to another, situated some two miles away, late in an evening, saw a cat going across her way two times which she overlooked. But a third repetition of the cat's behaviour, however, roused her suspicions and fear and she immediately prayed to that Babar—the ghost appearing in the form of a cat—to forgive her for any wrong done by her and further

added that she would offer it all its dues after she returned home, if there would not be any more trouble to rouse her suspicion by similar presentations. The prayer was not without its effect and the woman encountered no more further troubles on her way.

Another time all of a sudden a young boy of ten years began to cry at mid-night and soon got a high fever, which caused anxiety in the family. In the opinion of the old members of the boy's relations it was an effect of wrath of the ghost, who haunted a Banyan tree, situated by a large track of land frequented many times by him. Next morning a male member of the family was sent with a coconut fruit to the Banyan tree with instructions to break it into two and offer half of it to the ghost with a prayer to pardon the young boy, who must have done wrong to it through ignorance and that was their remedy for cure.

Sometimes an Agri believes, a ghost assumes the form of a serpent or a scorpion, the bite of which is bound to be fatal if not attended by a Mantrika.

In his opinion a Mantrika need not be afraid of them, as he knows how to control them. A Brahmin need not be afraid as he has his sacred thread. But an Agri has no such protection and he is exposed to danger. He is easily susceptible if he is unclean or without a bath ; that is why an Agri takes a bath before he proceeds on a journey.

He goes and consults Bhagata to seek his aid when he is not able to identify the particular ghost after the effects are visible, nevertheless many old people from a village know the spots and the particular ghosts haunting them. This Bhagata is a commanding personality in a village, who wields influence and attends every call made upon him to guide the villagers to ward off the evil effects of the ghosts.

A farmer has to kill every year a fowl, a goat or offer a coconut according to his family tradition in honour of the ghosts haunting his fields to keep off their trouble for the whole year, a failure of which is bound to result in some unforeseen calamity. Some particular ailments may also be cured through a Mantrika, who marshalls favour of various deities through holy formulae. In case of sickness a Bhagata is also very careful to get it cured with divine aid. And very often we find that 'Folk remedies for sickness and pains are very frequently of a purely magical character'.[12]

[12] Hadden A. C., *Magic and Fetishism*, p. 46.

Thus we find that with Bhagats there appear Mantrikas and medicine men who form a trio to offer a magic-cum-medicine service to all villagers. These are separately dealt with in the following pages. The office of a medicine man is not exclusive in its existence which is shared commonly some time by a 'Bhagata' or a 'Mantrika'.

BHAGATA

A Mantrika is taught and anybody may become one, whereas a Bhagata is very often self-made and his office is usually hereditary. He acts as a mediator between a local deity and the villagers.

When a new Bhagata is to be selected there is a sort of examination with some indications prescribed for it. When the local villagers decide to select a Bhagata which is called by the Agris 'rousing the Gods' (Deva uthavine) all the male members of families bearing a common surname meet in a house, where the images of the family deities are maintained and go on beating tom-toms and a drum first slowly and then very loudly till the musicians are exhausted. They come to a sudden stop. After a little break this is repeated till the desired effect is achieved. The beating of the tom-toms creates a wave of inspiration, and someone who is so inspired begins to hum, dance and roar with peculiar violent physical motions till his body is shaked to exhaustion. When the members gathered agree as to the effect, the sound stops and this man sits down completely exhausted. They now begin to test him and identify the deity, that has taken his possession. One of them holds different flowers in his closed palm and asks him which flower the questioner is going to offer to a particular deity. If the reply is satisfactory, all of them agree. There may be a few repetitions to prevent dishonesty and different men may be asked to carry on this test. When a would-be Bhagata answers to the satisfaction of all he is automatically elected. Pretenders and rivals are tested with assiduous tests till a right man is chosen.

After the death of a Bhagata usually some male member of his family, preferably from the next generation, e.g. his son or his brother's son, is elevated to this post. One of them is bound to have such an inspiration. Sometimes a Bhagata considers himself unable for his office because of his old age, physical inability or for some other reason, and willingly vacates his post and confers it on some member of his family with a general consent and a proper test.

This Bhagata works as a mediator between a deity and various persons who wish to win its favour through him. The needy people approach him for various reasons, e.g. to seek a lost article, to get rid of a particular difficulty, to get sickness cured, to adopt measures when epidemics break out, to get a desired object, to tackle a general calamity and so on. It is seen very often that a number of people divulge all their secrets in an emotional mood to this Bhagata which they would be very reluctant to do even to their own relatives under forced conditions. Consequently this Bhagata is a reservoir of many individual secrets and wields a powerful influence. Sometimes he is supposed to know what lies in the womb of futurity, when he is requested to look into the prospective effect of a particular action. He is then regarded as Joisi (Joshi) or a wise man.

When someone approaches him for treatment in sickness, he sits in communion with the deity in the temple and finds out a loophole in the routine of the applicant after the latter has furnished him with all the details. He would rather ignore any other causes responsible for the sickness. He then prescribes a particular offer to a particular deity sometimes at a particular place and fixes a time-limit for the required effect. A black fowl, a goat, a little rice, a coconut or some such things are offered. In case the offering is not found effective the Bhagata extends the period from time to time till a complete or a partial cure is obtained for which he may or may not be responsible or till the patience of the applicant or the patient himself comes to an end. In such circumstances the applicant resorts to some medical aid being rather helpless in the matter in which case a doctor comes to watch the lingering death. And naturally an Agri endorses "How would a doctor cure him—a thing which our erudite Bhagata failed to achieve ?"

MANTRIKA AND SECRET FORMULAE

We often associate some magic codes with types of people we are dealing and also some knowledge of secret formulae possessed and zealously guarded by them. Those initiated in secret formulae and magic seldom disclose their secrets to the strangers and therefore the task of the research worker becomes all the more difficult, though fortunately I have a few of them from the Agris.

The 'Mantra', i.e. the secret formulae are the result of "the belief in the virtue of mystic phrases, faith in whose efficacy

would seem to be increased in the degree that the utterer does not know their meaning".[13] These secret formulae are uttered by the 'Mantrikas' in such a quick haste and without any stress on the text so as to render them completely meaningless to an unwary uninitiated stranger. Many times these 'Mantrikas' make the most of their art by accompanying their utterance with various contortions on their faces and physical actions so as to create suitable atmosphere under which influence the patient feels being cured, and the bedside observer completely overawed.

The Mantrikas attach some sanctity to these secret formulae and they make no attempt either to go behind the words or to understand the meaning, a further scrutiny of which may lead to the dissipation of their efficacious power. It seems however that the strength and the virtue of the secret formulae welded with the quality of their secrecy alone helps to maintain the dignity and integrity of the form. As a rule these formulae are never divulged to a stranger under the special instructions of the special guide (spiritual teacher) who alone is entitled to teach them to others. In cases when a new member is to be admitted into this secret body a special initiation ceremony is held, when 'a few oblations are thrown into the kindled fire' and this constitutes a sufficient qualification. The spiritual teacher whispers the formulae into the ear of the initiated man, who alone is then authorised to use them. Any male member not initiated or unauthorised to use them exposes himself to a calamity that may be visited upon him. Many times it would be merely a matter of coincidence that misfortune befalls the person who has temerity to use these secret formulae but it would nevertheless be traced to this unauthorised expression and use of these formulae. The Mantrikas who are authorised to use these formulae are to abide by a rigid code of behaviour and the efficacy of each individual 'Mantram' is solely governed by their adherence to this code.

The Code of Behaviour

The Mantrikas must neither hear the speech of a woman when in her monthly course nor the sound of her glass bangles, when they are taking their daily meals. At the same time they must always avoid the noise of a sweeping broom and also the sound of a pitcher full of water being emptied. They have

[13] Clodd, *Magic in Names and Other Things*, p. 164.

to give up their meals and rise up at once, if a sweet oil lamp is blown out, while they are supping, and have to take their meals exactly at the same time next day after observing a complete fast for the intervening period! In some cases the Mantrikas have to take a special bath in addition to the common procedure of washing the hands and feet regularly prescribed for them all, before they actually commence the recitation of the formulae.

These 'Mantras' or secret formulae are the monopoly of a few, who are entitled to pass them to others. They are known as 'Gurus' or spiritual teachers.

Spiritual Teachers

Spiritual teachers are known as Buvas or Gurus who hail from the Ghatside, who pay annual visits to their disciples, known as Chelas, from place to place. Their 'Chelas' receive them hospitably and offer them some Dakshina (fees) the amount of which is never known to a third party. At times this sum may not be even a few annas.

A teacher has to hold a little ceremony called Bhandara when the new admissions are to be made to his fold, i.e. when his secret formulae are to be taught to new men. He whispers the formula in either of the ears of the disciple in consequence of which he is often known as the one "who blows in the ears"—'kana phykya'. As a rule men alone are admitted to this fold and not women.

As the spiritual teacher goes back to his home he leaves behind him his seat (known as Gadi) which is respected as his personal emblem by the disciples, in some central village where they hold their annual gathering on the Naga Panchami day. This function is held at a spot, away from human habitation and roads, attended by the men of the fold. They take with them vegetables, porridge (prepared from milk and rice). After finding out an ant hill or a hole, known to be occupied by a snake, on the spot, they remove its frontal portion to make the hole visible. One by one they pour a little milk in it. All of them wave lights round it and go in a line round and round the ant hill repeating all the formulae known to them. A new admission, if any, is made on this occasion. They then enjoy a feast at which liquor and meat dishes are taboo. They return to the village carrying with them some porridge specially kept away for this purpose and place it in the house wherein the seat is kept. There is a break for the day now! All of them again gather at this house in the evening to share

this porridge which is supposed to be the Prasada of their spiritual teacher. They celebrate that night with prayers and Bhajans till very late and then disperse for their homes.

We have seen how the Mantras are imparted to a disciple, their code of discipline, and now we come to the text of the Mantras.

CLASSIFICATION OF THE SECRET FORMULAE

The secret formulae of the Mantras may be classified as below :

1. Mantrams of Daily Routine.	— They are recited while saluting the 'Tulsi' plant and the sun.
2. Mantrams for curing Ailments.	— They are uttered to cure pains in stomach, lumbago and lungs.
3. Mantrams used to prevent the effect of poison.	— They are uttered to remove the effects of poisons of a scorpion, a snake or a reptile.
4. Mantrams to heal wounds.	— They are recited to heal the sceptic wounds of the cattle.

Text of the thirteen Mantrams—secret formulae—is given separately (*vide* page 121) while their translation and other details are given in the following pages to get some idea about them.

The Translation of the Magic Formulae

1. "Let the Agas pam grow old. May the mother cow munch green grass. May Govar rise up. A navatak (one-eighth of a seer) of water. The ashes from the pitcher. Lady Parvati secured all that. Siva Har Har Mahadev ! The darling of the Almighty ! Come along. You formula. The formula of (my) teacher is nice."

Note.—One repeats this formula during the course of his bath in the morning.

The formula when saluting the 'Tulsi' plant

2. "Inside is the Ocimum Sanctum plant. Inside is water. It is the incarnation of Brahma, Vishnu. Even the Lord Narayan falls at her feet. Oh you Ocimum Sanctum plant (we are your) younger offspring, who have planted you. The pit around is cool. Your roots have gone deep in the earth."

Note.—After a bath one goes in the courtyard, where the 'Tulsi' plant is placed. He goes round it three times —at least once—and offers this prayer to it as he stands in front of it with his hands folded.

The formula of the sun

3. " Vaghana Sura Wajara Tura. All the nine continents on the earth have put on a bright appearance. (He has) a sword in his hand. (He has) round his neck a necklace made of wind. Ridhi and Sidhi. Oh lord Sun ! Victorious be Siva. Oh Hara Hara Mahadev."

Note.—One stands in his courtyard after his bath and repeats this with his hands folded and his face towards the Sun.

The formulae on the human pains

4. " What is this sprain due to ? Is Masanashura the cause of it ? The Dhavari root which supported it ? The wet head gear (used as a buffer to carry a load on one's head) ? The spit of a cat, a new necklace ? The coils of a serpent, the tail of a dog or the hoof of a cow ? Where were you ? You were here. You were there. Where did you go to the abode of a Cheta ? The water from the cheta's house is pure. The pain will disappear. Your pain in the body. Get you gone ! You rascal ! Get you gone. Oh sinful one ! If you do not (go away) the God Kalabhairav will curse you. Chaturbahiri will do so. Sudha bahiri will curse you. And it will be in your life after life. The Lord Datta will curse you and so also will my teacher do ! "

Note.—The Mantrika repeats this formula with the ashes of the paddy-husk in his closed right palm. After the recitation of the charm or formulae is over he applies the ashes to the forehead of a man. If the patient happens to be a woman, he will hand it over to her with an instruction to apply it to her forehead or to the part concerned.

5. " Two sages—a father and a son—these two went to a forest. As they were eating the roots in the jungle, they got a sprain. Shall we remove you wet ? Shall we remove you dry ? We shall take you even from the hair on the head. We shall pull you out from the hair on the body. We shall take you out from the nail of a leg. If you do not come out, Rama and Sita will curse you. I and my teacher also will curse you."

Note.—As the charm is being repeated, the Mantrika holds the ashes in his folded right palm and goes on sprinkling it on the part of the person concerned.

6. "A black cow. A group of lotuses. Go away you pain. If you do not go away, Rama and Sita will curse you. My teacher will curse you."

Note.—As this formula is being repeated the Mantrika turns his third finger of the right hand in a circular way on the left palm. He applies the ashes to the forehead and to the part concerned and blows away the first ashes.

Charms against poisons

7. "Kali Kali. Oh Mahakali! The daughter of Brahma, the sister-in-law of Vishnu, first in the world below! Wander you Sai! Suva and Mahasuwa.

Note.—One says this as he drinks a glass of water or some drink at a strange place. This will nullify the effect of a charm which might have been impregnated by other 'Malik'.

Charm against a scorpion bite

8 "'Akha san with a good speech (I say on oath. I swear by). The 'Anangpir', the 'Shek', the snake. My teacher, my mother, 'Shesar', 'Dev Kudal'. I shall store all the kinds of fire in my box. I shall carry it to 'Hanuman' (the offspring) of 'Anjani'. Thither was 'Khetrapal'. He was digging and digging 'Valad' till it was noon. If (it has) gone to the firmament, we shall pull it down. If (it has) gone to the world below, we shall dig it out. My arrow will not miss (its aim)."

Note.—As he repeats the formulae he holds a twig of the Vitex Nirgundi Trifolia plant in his right hand and passes it over the body of the person who is bitten by a scorpion.

Charm against a scorpion bite

9. "Where were you, Oh scorpion? Zire, mire. Your residence was in some dung. You do not obey when you are ordered to go away. Shri Bhavani and Shankar will curse you. Oh my Bhagat! Oh my Teacher! Complete is my formula. Complete is my speech."

Note.—The Mantrik repeats this formulae with ashes in his hand when the recitation is over, he applies it to the part bitten by the scorpion.

Formula against the venom of the snake

10. We shall utter the lore one by one
We shall utter the lore two by two
We shall utter the lore three by three
We shall utter the lore four by four
We shall utter the lore five by five
We shall utter the lore six by six
We shall utter the lore seven by seven
We shall utter the lore eight by eight.

Some eight 'Ghonas', some nine snakes, the 'Dhaman', the 'Naneti' and others with mouths full of poison! Thitha went Mankasura. The Mankasura had a 'Kanhera' (of the Cerberathevetia) staff. He ran after the poison then. If it has gone to the firmament, I shall pull it down with a curved Bamboo stick. If it has gone to the world below, I will dig it out. I will bring the poison and massage it on the head. The formula is over. The speech is over. That is the Lord's speech.

Note.—As the Mantrika repeats this formula he takes the ashes in his folded right palm and goes on sprinkling it on the part of the body bitten by the snake. He continues till the remedy is found effective.

Charm against the venom of the snake

11. "In a dried tank there is a smooth pillar. The moon and the sun have granted us a dish. Get yourself dislodged. Get yourself dislodged, Ye venom. Come down, come down, you venom. If you do not go out to whom will you surrender? To the Sovran Bahiri of the world below? From the world below has arrived the Sovran Bahiri. In his hand he carries a pitcher full of nectar. He empties it in the opening of the wound. Lower yourself you poison! Get you gone, you poison. If you do not go away, I shall get for you the curse of 'Kal Bahir', of 'Chaturbaheri', of 'Shid baheri', of the king 'Jalmajay', of the sage 'Agastak', of the juggler from the forest, of 'Valhya Koli', of mine, of my teacher. Certainly I shall press all these curses against you. The charm is complete. This is God's expression. The charm of the Teacher is over."

Note.—As the Mantrika repeats the formula he takes the bunch of the twigs of the Vitex Nirgundi Trifolia plant in his right hand, brandishes it round himself and

strikes it on the ground five times. He takes the ashes in his folded right palm and applies it to the forehead of the patient.

Charms against the diseases of the cattle

12. "Black blue water. May the insects (in the sceptic wounds) of a cow and a horse die away. Ye worms, die away. That is the desire of the Almighty. Come you formula. The formula of the Teacher is Genuine."

Note.—As one utters the formula, he takes a pebble and throws it at the sceptic wound of a cattle. This way he repeats the formula and throws the pebbles seven times.

13. "Oh Blackie! If there be worms (in your sceptic wound) the crows will pick them to eat. The insects will vanish away. (Oh wound) if you do not go Rama and Sita will curse you. My Teacher will curse you. There will be the curse of the Lord Shiv."

Note.—When any call is received the Mantrik starts in the house concerned. he picks up seven pebbles on his way. He utters the formula, spits on one of the pebbles and throws it away. He treats all the remaining six stones in a similar way.

The formula against Anthrax

14. "This night on the previous day--(waving the lights). Arathi—Arathi. You Hanuman. You alone should go to the Durnagiri mountain. We shall get from that place sixty and a hundred herbs We shall batter them on a stone. We shall squeeze them on the pain of 'Pandya'. Is it paining? Is it swelling? Oh 'Pandya'. It would not. Ye pain and swelling, I shall bring for you the curse of Laxman, Sita, Janaki, of Dadi Dharata, of the sage Astika and of my Teacher."

Note.—When an invitation is received to give treatment to a cattle, the Mantrika takes his bath and repeats the formula. What he requires is to learn the name of the cattle. He need not go to the cattle personally.

मंत्र

१. स्नान मंत्र—

आगास पानी जरो. गायत्री माता चरो. चरो गोवर. करो नवटाक पानी. घटीकी इभूत. पार्वतीनी छेल्ली. शिव हर हर महादेव. ईश्वरी बच्चा. चला मंत्र. गुरुका मंत्र अच्छा.

२. तुळशीचा मंत्र—

आंत तुळुस. आंत पाणी. ब्रम्हविष्णुरुपायि. गुरु नारायण लागे चरणी. तुळशी तुझी तान्ही बाळे. त्यानी लावले. शीतल आले सप्रे डाळे. भुई शिराळी मुळे.

३. सूर्य मंत्र—

वधन सूर. वाजरां तूर. नवखंड पृथिवी. प्रगटला नूर. हाती खड्ग गळ्या पवनकी माला. ऋद्धि शिद्धी सूर्या देवा. जे शिवा हर हर महादेवा.

४. रेस मंत्र—

हा रेस कशाचा? मसन चुराचा. घरले घायरीचा. वले चुंबलीचा मांजराच्या लोहेचा. कोऱ्या हाराचा. सर्पाच्या सोयेचा. कुत्र्याच्या शेपेचा. गायचे खुराचा. होता कुठे? अवरे होता. गवरे होता. गेला कुठे? चेटागरा? चेटागरचे पाणी चोख उतरेल. अंगचे रोग उतर. चांडाला उतर. पाप्या नाय तर तुला आन कालभैरवाची. चतुर्बहिरीची. शुभ्र बहिरीची. जल्मो जल्मीची. दत्त गुरुची. माझ्या गुरुची

५. ऋषी हे दोन बाप बेटे. हे दोघे गेले वनी. वनीची मुळें खातांना भरला रेस. सुका काढूं. ओला काढूं. डोकीचे केसांतला काढूं. अंगाचे लवतला काढूं. पायाचे नखांतला काढूं. नाहीं निघशील तर तुला आण रामसीताची. माझी. माझ्या गुरुची.

६. सलक मंत्र—

काळी गाय. कमलका फूल. वीट सूल. नाहीं निगशील तर तुला आण रामसीताची. माझ्या गुरुची.

७. मंत्राची सिद्धि होण्याचा मंत्र—

काली काली महाकाली. बर्माकी बेटी. इष्णुकी साली. पहिला पाताल फिर. सई. सुवा महासुवा.

८. विंचू मंत्र—

आखा सन्. बरं वाचा. अनंग पिराच्यान्. शेकाच्यान्. नागाच्यान्. माझ्या गुरुच्यान्. बाईच्यान्. शेसरेच्यान्. देव कुडतान् अग्नि विकारा भरीन पेटारा. नेऊन टाकीन अंजनीच्या हनुमाना. तेथ होता खेत्रपाला. बलद खनतां झाली दोन पहार. आकाशीं गेले तर धरुन पाडूं. पाताळांत गेले तर खणून काढ. नाय आपना तीर बान.

९. अरे विंचवा होतास कुठे? जिरे मिरे. शेणाच्या पुरे. उतार म्हटला उतरस नाहीं. श्री भवानी शंकराची आन. श्री रामाची आन. मेरे भगत. गुरु सगत. पुरा मंतर. पुरा वाचा.

१०. सर्प मंत्र—

एकेक विद्या बोलूं. दोन दोन विद्या बोलूं. तीन तीन विद्या बोलूं. चार चार विद्या बोलूं पांच पांच विद्या बोलूं. सा सा विद्या बोलूं. सात सात विद्या बोलूं. आठ आठ विद्या बोलूं. नऊ नऊ विद्या बोलूं. आठ दन घोनसा. नऊ दन सर्पा. घामण नानोटी. विषामुखा. टाकीत गराला. तेथे पावला संकासूर. मंकासूराच्या हातीं कण्हेर काठी. तो लागला विषारा पाठी. आकाशीं गेले आकरीन ओढीन. पाताळी गेले खणून काढीन. आणीन वीष. रगडीन माथा. पुरा मंतर. पुरा वाचा. ईश्वर वाच.

११. आटोला तला. नितोला खांब. चांद सूर्यानी दिली परात. उतार उतार विख. डेव डेव विखा. नाहीं डेवशील तर शरन कोणाला जाशील? पातालच्या बहिरमू राजाला? पाताळशी आला बहिरं राजा त्याचा हाती अमृताचा कलश. तो घाली डाखाच्या मुखा. उतार विखा. पल विखा. नाहीं उतरशील नाहींतर तुला आनेंगा काल बहिरीची शिद बहिरीची. जल्मोजय राजाची. अस्तक ऋषीची. जंगल्या गारुड्याची. वाल्हा कोळ्याची. माझी. माझ्या गुरुची. आनेंगा पुरा मंतर. ईश्वरी वाचा. गुरुका मंत्र सुवा.

१२. किवण मंत्र—

काला निला पाणी. गायका घोडेका आसाडी झरुन जा. किडा मरुन जा. ईश्वरी इच्छा. चला मंत्र. गुरुका मंत्र सच्चा.

१३. काल्या किडे पडतील. कावल टिपून खातील. आसाडी झडून जाईल. नाहीं मलशे तर तुला आणूं गा राम सीताची. माझ्या गुरुची. ईश्वर वाचानम शिवा.

१४. फाशीचा मंत्र—

आजचे रात्री. कालचे दिवशी. आरती आरती. तेच जावे हनुमंत दुर्णागिरी पर्वत. तिकडून आणू साठ शंभर औषध. ती वाटूं पाळ्यावर. ती पीळूं पांड्याचे* दुःखावरि. दुःख करि. फुट करि. पांड्या* नाय फुट? सुजे. तुला आनेंगा वान लक्षुमणाची. शीता जानकीची. दादी† घरत्याची. आस्तक रुषीची. माझ्या गुरुची घालीन आण.

* Name of a cattle.
† Name of the Guru.

THE EFFECT OF EVIL EYE

Another factor which we have to deal with now is the effect of evil eye.

"Overlooking may be intentional, but it is believed that many persons, without intention and even against their own will, by the glance of their eye have caused injurious effect. The belief in the eye is not only widely spread, but extremely ancient, and in some places is still firmly rooted among the folk." [14]

The cases of effects of evil eye are numerous and well spread over the household life of Agris. They believe that some persons are supposed to possess evil eye and their glance at a particular object will spoil it. This peculiar quality to be seen in some persons if the effect of inauspicious stars that were prevalent at the time of their birth, which is merely a coincidence.

If one is exposed to evil eye, he may lose his health whereas a dish may lose all its taste under the same effect. Effects of evil eye may cause cows and she-buffaloes to stop giving milk. Especially children are supposed to be easy victims of the effect of evil eye who, when thus exposed, go on crying ceaselessly or refuse to be fed and cause all sorts of anxiety to their mothers. Such examples are in no way uncommon in an Agri life.

One evening an Agri mother who found it rather difficult to appease her baby which kept on crying continuously, though she fed him, sang the lullabies and rocked the cradle, called in her bewilderment an elderly lady in the neighbourhood to seek her advice. This elderly lady, who had dealt with a number of such cases to her credit, could not arrive at a satisfactory conclusion, though she went through all the details. The baby's cry was naturally regarded as an effect of evil eye and immediately a little salt, a few mustard grains and seven pieces of chillies were waved round the baby's face and thrown into the kitchen fire to stop it from crying.

Last year a loving mother-in-law found that a special dish, which she personally cooked in honour of her new son-in-law, did not satisfy the family members, who complained that it was not as sumptuous as it should have been. The lady could not find any mistake in her cooking though she recalled again and again. Suddenly she remarked that it must have been the result of evil eye of her next-door

[14] A. C. Hadden, *Magic and Fellishism*, p. 33.

neighbour who dropped in her house to have a glimpse of the new son-in-law and to ask about the particular dish being served in his honour.

In another case a child refused to be fed with a number of persuasions and threats and its mother regarded it as an effect of evil eye of a hungry kitten that watched at the baby's plate with greedy look. The helpless kitten was pelted away to let the child enjoy its evening meal.

One lady kept her new sari neatly folded in a bundle after displaying it to a number of women in her neighbourhood who praised the garment and remarked that she was, indeed, lucky to have it. After a month when she desired to put it on during the Ganapati and Gauri festival she found the sari was torn in the middle. This lady was really moved with the sight and cursed herself for making that display as there was a woman whom she could regard as one possessed of evil eye, who was the sole cause of the present calamity with the remark "It would have been better if I would not have shown it to her."[15]

Measure to remove effects of evil eye

1. A little salt, a few grains of 'Mohari', seven pieces of chilli are waved round the face of the animal or the person concerned and are thrown in the hearth.
2. A potsherd is heated till it gets red hot. One then spits on it and utters the name of the person whom she suspects to have the evil effect. She repeats the process with different names. In case a person is identified the potsherd becomes red. She dismisses the affair with a lot of abuses to the party concerned.
3. Three pebbles from three junctions of the roads are brought. They are waved round one's face and thrown away.
4. Seven pebbles from three junctions of the roads are brought to be thrown into a kitchen fire. A child (who is suspected to be suffering from the effect of an evil eye) sits on the floor with its face to the fire. A brass plate is placed in front of the child. A little water is poured in the dish and a little turmeric powder added to it. One by one all the seven hot stones are picked up from the fire with a pair of tongs, waved round the face of the child and dipped into the water. The solu-

[15] त्या मसणीला दावलां नसतां तर बरा झाला असतां

tion will turn red if there is really an effect of somebody's evil eye. And it simultaneously disappears.

5. A few grains of salt are waved round the face of the child and thrown into the fire. The black ashes from the hearth is applied to the forehead of the child.
6. Seven pieces of chillies, seven leaves of the 'Kalakuda' plant, few grains of mustard, a little salt are all waved round the face of the child seven times and thrown into the fire.

TREATMENT FOR A PREGNANT WOMAN

The Agris impose some restrictions on the behaviour of a woman in pregnancy, with some significance attached to this particular code. Some such restrictions are given in the following para, most of which are strictly observed during the first pregnancy of a newly married girl.

When a woman carries for the first time, all her desires are fulfilled and she is given to eat whatever she asks for after first two or three months. Otherwise, saliva will flow from a child's mouth during four or five months of its infancy.

Eating palm fruits, Jack fruits, plantains and tamarind fruits is a taboo for a pregnant woman. Similarly, she is not allowed to put on green bangles nor to do any piece of tailoring.

During a solar or lunar eclipse the pregnant woman and her spouse sit quietly inside their home Eating and any other sort of activity is a taboo for them during the course of the eclipse.

During the course of delivery a female relative of the patient throws a sod of earth in a well to ensure an easy delivery.

In addition to the above information of the Agri belief and folk-lore, some part of this folk-lore is included in Chapter X under the heading of 'Recreational side of the Agri Life', which contains numerous songs classified under the general scheme of Gouri songs, Shimaga songs, Bhaleryas and Lullabies in addition to the 'Dhavalas' or 'marriage songs' sung mainly during the nuptial celebration. All these songs are the custody of the Agri female folk, except the Bhaleryas, which the Agri males exclusively claim for themselves.

CHAPTER VII

THE LIFE OF AN AGRI AS SEEN THROUGH RITES

BIRTH rites, celebrated within a fortnight since the birth of a child, nuptial rites and funeral rites are important events in the span of the life of an Agri individual These rites throw some light on the Agri mind in operation. An Agri, though he shares Hindu belief and ideas, has his peculiarity in all these rituals which all are conducted by the Agri individuals with an independent code of regulations and customs. A Brahmin scarcely appears on these occasions—only twice in marriage ceremony and about twice during the funeral rites. A 'Dhavalarin' who happens to be an Agri female is the main conductor of Agri rituals of birth and marriage rituals. A 'Guru' is prescribed on the last day of the funeral rites in some cases.

Social regulations have been separately dealt with in Chapter X. His belief and folk-lore with various charms and medicines, the 'gurus' and 'bhagats' have been dealt with in Chapter VI.

A number of folk songs that depict the Agri mind in operation are specially presented in the appendices

In this chapter an effort is made to describe birth rites, nuptial ceremony and funeral rites of the Agris, which I personally observed at various places in the Alibag Taluka. Of all these three the nuptial celebration is the greatest involving a number of social and economic activities. It may be said that it is a social gathering of the Agris, where Agri customs can be graphically visualized. A marriage ceremony is a series of about fifty rituals, most of which are accompanied by 'Dhavalas' or marriage songs sung by a female, specifically known as 'Dhavalarin'.

To start with, a first-hand information of the Agri nuptial ceremony was collected from experienced Agri women, some of whom claim to have conducted numerous marriages. One of them is an old woman, who is known as 'Ramachi Nathi' called after her son Rama, is a repository of various 'Dhavalas' and folk songs. She is able to sing all the 'Dhavalas' without a mistake, though she is unable to read or write.

Collecting details of marriage ceremony and 'Dhavalas' from this old woman and her friends took nearly 220 hours that were distributed over the nights in the monsoon months of the year 1947. All this information was verified thereafter at various marriage rituals, which I personally attended.

Information regarding funeral rites was collected from experienced men and women which was also corroborated by me at various funeral rites where I was present.

RIGHTS PERTAINING TO BIRTH (AND AFTER)

The birth of a child is a matter of joy in an Agri house, however humble it may be; addition of any number is always welcome. A child is but a divine gift and the number of children born to a couple is already included in the 'web of their fate' written by 'Burma' (Brahma). Such is their attitude towards human life. It is not the human agency alone that is responsible for birth of a child, it must be augmented by the divine favour according to the Agri view of life.

The Agri habitation which sometimes rakes in poverty, where no medical aid is easily available, proper assistance being out of consideration, treatment for a woman who is brought to bed is rather crude and elementary. It is usually assisted by an elderly woman in a village, who has some experience of having attended to maternity cases at her disposal, if not the exact scientific information. It is a common observation that an average Agri woman, who enjoys open air life, who toils and moils in the fields, finds her delivery not a case for anxiety as is often the case with her educated and urban sisters with all medical facilities. The cases of abortion or miscarriage, though not totally unknown, are few and far between. The expenses incurred in treating a case of delivery is negligible. It is very often as paltry as two or three rupees.

On making personal inquiries, Raghubai Kadu, who delivered in April 1947, informed me that what she needed was but an old sari and about a pound of ginger. Such examples are not wanting and on the whole a case of delivery does not receive special mention in the budget of an Agri family.

Having thus learnt in short the attitude of the Agris towards the birth of a child, we try to understand in detail the social and religious importance attached to it. It is not an unfamiliar affair to see the detailed rituals keenly followed on the third, fifth, sixth, and tenth days after a baby is born in the Agri houses.

Tijora

Tijora means the ritual followed on the third day of the birth of a baby. On the third day after the birth of a child, in the morning, juice of coconut scrape mixed with levigated pepper is applied to the body of the mother. 'Sopa' which is submerged in water on the previous day is seasoned soft on a grinding stone slab and is cooked in milk with jaggery. The mixture is given for the woman to drink. It is effective in the lactation period for a female. Scrape of the coconut, after getting its juice squeezed, is cooked along with a little jaggery. A little of it is placed on a small circular piece of bread (known specifically as 'Mutka') on a Bhendi leaf. One such bread is sent to every house in the neighbourhood which is called 'Java' to be enjoyed by youngsters.

Fifth Day

On the fifth day juice squeezed from shavings of a coconut is applied to the whole body of the woman. Fresh leaves of Vitex Nirgundi are added to water boiling in a pot above the house fire. It is used for bathing for the new mother.

In the same evening twigs of Vitex Nirgundi, fresh leaves of Rui (Calatropis Procera) and various flowers are brought to the house. At about eight in the evening a 'Kana' (Painting with white ashes of paddy cover) of a square shape is drawn before the cot of the woman. Five betel nuts, five copper coins (of a pice each) and five small pieces of a circular bread are placed on the Kana. Twigs of Vitex Nirgundi are driven into the ground in such a way that they would rise straight above the cot by a span of one's palm. On seven leaves of Rui, 7 images of a doll are drawn of this shape, out of which two are drawn in turmeric, two in kum kum, two in red lead and the last one is drawn in black pigment. All these leaves are arranged in a perpendicular way supported by the twigs of Vitex Nirgundi and facing away from the cot. A slab of stone is placed on the Kana with five little heaps of rice placed in four of its corners and the fifth in its centre. All these heaps are crowned by a betel leaf and a copper piece each. Five 'Modakas' with five sweet oil earthen lamps on their top area are also placed there.

Five 'Modakas' are placed separately on a plate of leaves and earthen lamps are kept on a wooden plank. Similarly, four earthen lamps are placed on four ends of the cot.

When the women from the neighbourhood come there to "fill in the lap" of the woman with a handful of rice and copper pice each, one woman does the ceremony as their common representative, the four women merely touching the hands of the lady to represent their partnership in the affair.

A midwife lifts up the baby and gives it in the hands of its mother. The mother takes her child in her lap, applies a kum kum mark on its forehead, puts a rice grain on the mark and takes the child near a stone slab. She takes the child up and places it down on the floor as an act of prostration. This she does in all three times.

The midwife then takes the baby in her hands and places it on the leaves of 'Ningadi' (Vitex Nirgundi Trifolia) closely strewn together on the floor. Water coloured with turmeric powder, is taken in a shallow water basin. She beats a blade of a pen-knife and a twig of 'Ningadi' on the basin. With them she sprinkles water from the basin on the child's body. This procedure is known as 'vafasavani'. This midwife, while doing so, utters the following words :

> 'Don't you be afraid of wind. Do not get frightened by water. Don't you be afraid to go to the forest. Don't you be afraid to go to the hills.'[1]

The midwife then does the act known as 'Ghati Ghalane'. She takes a little 'vekhand', lavigates it in the milk of the mother and applies the ointment on the throat of the child. She further rolls the baby in a piece of cloth and hands it over to its mother. The women who are present 'fill in the lap' of the mother.

A female relative of the woman, who has delivered, worships a coconut placed upright by the side of the stone slab. Another coconut is broken in its honour, both the halves being further broken into small pieces, known as 'khuradyas'. A small quantity of lintel liquor is poured on it and then the women from the household fill in the midwife's lap with grains of rice and betel nuts.

Twelfth Day

On the twelfth day pieces of a cotton thread are dyed yellow and are rolled into small bracelets for the new baby—twigs of the 'Vitex Nirgundi' are thrust at four corners of the cradle, on the hanging ropes and in four corners of the cot of

[1] वाऱ्याला भिवू नको. पान्याला भिवू नको. रानांन जाशी भिवू नको· डोंगरान जाशी भिवू नको.

the woman. A 'Kana' is drawn below the cradle, another in the front part of the house (Oti) and the third in the courtyard.

A seer of 'Val' is cooked with a little salt but no other condiment. This preparation is called 'Ghugharya'. Several Bhendi leaves are spread around the 'Kana' below the cradle and every one of them is covered with a piece of a small circular bread and few cooked 'Val' grains. Five women fill in the lap of the woman, as she sits by the side of the 'Kana' drawn in the front part of the house.

She takes a piece of cloth on her shoulder and goes to the next 'Kana' in the courtyard. She worships that 'Kana' and presents it a betel nut and a copper pice. She may offer a coconut also. She takes the child in her hands and places it down on the floor by the side of 'Kana' and lifts it up as an act of prostration. She repeats this in all three times and hands over her child to some other woman. She then formally washes the piece of cloth, after a little mark of turmeric is applied to it. The midwife asks her, "What do you wash?" "The clothes of my baby", is the reply of the mother.

The midwife further asks her, "What do you do inside?" The woman replies as before.

Then a coconut is broken and further divided into small pieces known as 'Khuradya'. The mother of the child carries it in her hands and she takes it inside the house from the 'Kana' outside, holding the child in a cross-wise fashion and parallel to the ground, putting the child at intervals on the ground alternately in a straight and diagonal manner.

The baby's head is covered with a hood and the body with a frock. Married women, whose number is not fixed, stand on either side of the cradle facing the other group. A stone roller covered with a piece of cloth is placed in the baby's cradle.

One of the women takes the child in her hands, formally places it in the cradle and again hands it over to a woman standing in the opposite group. She takes the child and passes it to the first woman from below the cradle and utters :—

"Take this Sahadeo and give me Mahadeo."[2]

Different women repeat it as follows :—

"Take this Govind and give me Gopal
Take this Bharat and give me Shatrughna
Take this Ram and give me Laxman."

[2] साहदेव ध्या नि महादेव द्या.

Then they put the baby to sleep in the cradle.

One by one young children present on the occasion go and bend below the cradle and go away with one spring (carrying a leaf which has piece of bread, etc.). Coconuts are distributed amongst all the women present.

The women gathered are entertained to tea and meals and most of them keep a vigil during the whole of the nocturnal hour, singing various songs, specially meant for the occasion. I asked Chandrubai Mhatre the reason for keeping awake on these two nights. She replied that according to their belief a goddess known as 'Satti' comes and writes on the child's forehead "the web of the fate". On the sixth night Barma comes and reads what Satti has written and hence they must keep awake singing, ready to receive either of them at any time.

On the sixth day, early in the morning, the midwife takes 'Modaks' with her when she leaves for her home. In the evening the woman who delivered, worships the goddess 'Satti', the midwife takes her meals, during the course of which every care is taken that the lamp must not be blown out. This night also women are entertained to tea, who keep awake all night singing songs.

In some cases, and especially when it is after the birth of the first child, even male members from the neighbourhood are invited to keep a vigil during the nocturnal hour. They play with 'Songatya' and cards and keep awake for the whole night.

Seventh Day

On the seventh day after her arrival at this house the midwife breaks a coconut, offers one measure to the stone slab and keeps the other for herself. She collects all the articles kept on the slab and takes them away with her. Dried twigs of the Vitex Nirgundi are left at some places on the water-bed of a brook, a tank and so on.

The women gathered on the occasion utter every time the words as a child escapes from below the cradle.[3]

Come! Let us play oh child. We shall partake of your 'ghugharya'. Tea is served to all and this function is over.

The father goes to a local priest on some convenient day during the course of the year to find out the secret name of the new-born child.

[3] चल रे बाला खेलू जाऊ. तुझ्या घुगऱ्या वाटून खाऊ.

MARRIAGE

Introduction

The institution of marriage, which is of primary importance in the study of evolution of the human society, is a focus of various converging interests. Apart from restricting the sexual life to its partners, it prescribes joint responsibility in the economic life as well. The marriage, while perpetuating the carnal relations of the spouses, is a substratum of various activities of the social life. The approved form of marriage, whether polygamy, monogamy or otherwise, is usually adopted to stabilize the existent ratio of males to females. The marriage in each particular form is sanctioned by the teachings and tenets of various systems of belief, propounded by various religious teachers from time to time, though their teachings need not be considered as an absolute truth. Monogamy is the ideal of Christianity, whereas the followers of Mohammed observe polygamy. Hinduism, on the other hand, whilst not disallowing polygamy, places before its followers monogamy as an ideal. With the evolution of the society and the gradual acceptance of individual liberty, monogamy becomes the ideal of the day.

Marriage as a social institution is of fundamental importance to the Agris. Undoubtedly, it is a notable event in the life of an Agri individual, the economic repercussions of which penetrate in the latter part of his life. The form of Agri marriage, as prevalent in the Alibag Taluka, is described in its full detail in the following pages. Though monogamy is the usual practice of the Agris in this region, bigamy is allowed under certain circumstances with the consent of the caste council. Some such cases, where an Agri has taken another wife during the life-time of his first spouse, have been separately considered in Chapter IX.

Marriage restrictions amongst the Agris are three-fold—endogamous, exogamous and others.

Gotras are unknown amongst the Agris of the Alibag Taluka. The exact nature of 'Kulis' as the exogamous units cannot be determined properly either by a common nomenclature of the family deities or by the particular trees worshipped at the time of wedding; and a few common surnames like Mhatre and Patil do not exemplify any clue to such restrictions. The degree of relationship between the particular families with a common surname is determined by the number of days observed in mourning after the demise of a

member in a family. It seems that in a number of families with a common surname separated by generations and distance, and mutually isolated as they become for want of contact, the degree and the nature of their exact relationship fade into obscurity as time rolls on.

Nineteen families with a common surname of Mhatre in the village of Dhokawade have a common set of deities—Khanderao, Bhavani, Cheda, Bahiri, Vakhajay and Baba, the images of whom are transferred to a particular family, which claims to celebrate the marriage of one of its male members and are preserved there till they are demanded by another family in similar circumstances. Obviously, sometime in the past, when some families took up a different settlement in another village, new images of the family deities must have been taken up as an adjustment to their new surroundings. And gradually these families must have evolved as exogamous units with reference to the previous ones. In this light alone we can understand how two Mhatre families from Dhokawade and Kolgaon are related to each other through marriage, though they have common names of family deities and trees worshipped at the time of wedding.

The Agris usually contract a matrimonial alliance within the social limits of their 'Tappa' wherein the number of villages included varies from fifteen to fifty, the Alibag Taluka being divided into five such 'Tappas'. An Agri contracting a marriage with a bride from another 'Tappa' has to give to the Panchas, the leaders of the community, some money by way of compensation or fine in addition to the amount to be paid to the father of the bride, known as 'Dej'.

No Agri is allowed to marry outside his caste and anyone violating this rule is excommunicated.

Marriage ceremonies are celebrated during the ancillary period from November to April after the major agricultural operations are over, when the barns in the Agri households are full and economic position well augmented. Marriages do not take place during the monsoon season, as there is no auspicious day (Muhurta) for the celebration of a marriage according to Hindu religious traditions. A few people venture to undertake the performance of wedding ceremony during the hot months of summer in the arid region of the taluka, where the scarcity of drinking water is a great stampede in entertaining a large number of guests. An Agri marriage means mostly a gathering of all the relatives usually distributed within a radius of ten to fifteen miles as a result of the

Agri practice of selecting a bride as far as possible from a village in the vicinity.

The rigid working of the social regulations of the Agri community, strictly watched by various local leaders, distributed in various villages, makes it incumbent on the head of the bridegroom's family to incur a huge expenditure on the marriage ceremony, which includes a feast to members of his caste in the village and all the relatives gathered on the occasion, notwithstanding the economic position of his family. In some cases the parents of a bridegroom spend lavishly on the wedding of their son as it is, in their opinion, the only important event in his life. Such expenditure on marriage has far-reaching repercussions on the economic station of a family. The amount of the unproductive loan taken from a 'sowcar' for celebrating the marriage ceremony in addition to the sum of unpaid interest on the loan swelling every year, notwithstanding an increase in the family budget due to the new members gradually added to the house, upsets the whole order of its routine. The happiness derived from marriage abruptly melts away and clouds of anxiety cast their shadow on the house. The income of the family mainly derived from a small piece of land, which is at the mercy of the freakish monsoon, is always uncertain. This state of affairs worsens its position getting it drowned in economic depression. And it is a hard task for the head of such a family to raise his head above the surface. My contact with a few Agris, with whom I discussed the probability of curtailing the heavy expenditure on marriage ceremony, impresses me that they hold their view firmly in the matter and are not prepared to modify their social tradition. They say, after all a marriage is a social function. It is the only occasion for feeding the members of one's community and it must be done. In some villages, like Hashivara, the local leaders are so meticulous that they fix up different days for marriage feasts in case there be more than one on the same day. "The caste dinner represents the close connection between the family and the caste. It is indeed the symbol of supremacy of the caste, of the predominance of the social ideal sanctioned by religious decrees." [4]

The members of the caste reciprocate this by offering their free voluntary services for erecting marriage booths, breaking fuel for the marriage ceremony and by contributing a little sum in a 'Kanyadan' rite, details of all such sums being recorded for future reference. Such and similar actions cement

[4] Mukerji, R. K., *Foundation of Indian Economics*, p. 59.

with among the agricultural classes of Mysore.[8] The bride is impressed every time that she is subservient to her husband, who will share his pattern of behaviour beyond whom there is no other authority.

A Brahmin priest plays no important role in conducting the ceremony. He appears only on two occasions :

1. Daivat Thapane.
2. Mal Ghalane.

All other rites and rituals are conducted by ' Dhavalarinis '.

Importance attached to astrological guidance

Children of the Agris have two names. One is conventional and current in daily routine, the other is astrological, worked out by a local astrologer (who is also their Brahmin priest) whose calculations are chiefly based on the date and time of a child's birth. Astrological[9] advice from a local priest is a guiding principle in quest of an Agri bride. As the parents of a boy decide to get him married, coinstantaneous with the financial management is the astrological advice by their priest as to whether a particular year is suitable for performing his marriage. And, if so, after further consulting his almanac and the astrological name of the boy, he remarks that a girl whose secret name starts with a particular letter. (If it is 'च' then a name should be 'चांगी-फी' or 'ब' then it should 'बाली-मी' and the like) will make a suitable bride for him.

The traditional form of an Agri marriage is observed today in the Zirad, Bamangaoes and other Tappas in the Alibag Taluka except in the Shirgaon and Parahur Tappas, where under the influence of urban Agris, they have started performing the wedding ceremony in the ' Vedic form '. Orthodox Agris, however, refuse to give up the traditional form of an Agri marriage and closely stick to it. It is this traditional form of the marriage, that it is proposed to be described in this chapter. It includes some forty items distributed over five days. These items may not follow the same sequence and may get shortened or trimmed to be suitable for the occasion. It all depends upon the time and persons available.

DETAILED ITEMS OF AN AGRI MARRIAGE

When a local priest has given his astrological advice, the father and other male relatives of the bridegroom launch a

[8] Shriniwas, *Marriage and Family in Mysore.*
[9] This astrological name is always secret.

marriage campaign in search of a suitable bride in the villages of their Tappa, leaving their homes every day in the morning and returning late in the evening, spending lavishly in a tea-shop or liquor house. After they have been able to gather a definite information about a particular girl to be married, they proceed to a neighbouring house in the locality with a request to the neighbour to intervene in the matter and to carry their proposal to her father. The neighbour when fully acquainted with all the necessary information about the boy in question, proceeds to the house of the father of the girl and conveys the message to him. The father of the girl, if he is satisfied with all the minute details of the boy, discloses the astrological name of his daughter to his neighbour as an indication of accepting the proposal. In case he does not approve of the match, the girl's father makes some prevaricated statement: "I do not wish to get my daughter married this year" or some such thing. He must not venture to make an open refusal of the particular offer, as such a statement is considered as an insult to the party involved and might get the father of the girl trapped in a serious trouble according to the *modus operandi* of the Agri pattern of social customs. The matter would be taken to the Panchas in a meeting, specially summoned to deal with the violation of the custom and to punish the delinquent in an appropriate way.

After the disclosure of the astrological name of the girl by her father, the neighbour, who acts as a go-between, returns home with a smiling face and informs the guests of it. If the bridegroom's people find the name suitable, all of them including the neighbour, make a move to the house of the girl's father, where they are received with greetings and requested to take their seat on a blanket spread in the front part of his house. After a cursory talk of preliminary etiquette, which is always brief, a senior member from the boy's party tactfully opens the subject with some questions like "Do you wish to get your daughter married this year?" "What is her name?" and so on. The answers to his questions are all anticipated before. In short, the whole talk is a rehearsal of a settled affair! They then land on the important problem of 'Dej'.

The 'Dej' or the 'Bride-price' which consists partly of grain and partly of cash, is always a fixed item, within the limits of a particular 'Tappa', irrespective of the status of the family of a bridegroom or the bride. The exact amount and other details of the 'Dej' are determined at a meeting of

the Panchas with special reference to social needs and economic resources of an average Agri family. In rare cases there is an extra payment which is variously called as 'Pan-Supari, Hat-dabani, or Kur-lipani" with every precaution to keep in secret such underhand dealings, according to the peculiar circumstances of the families involved, such as the poverty of the bride's father, the matured age of the bridegroom and so on.

The settlement of the problem of the 'Dej' marks the close of this meeting and after a cup of tea the relatives of the bridegroom return home with gratifying news to all.

On a mutually fixed day a few senior members from either family come together to proceed to a local priest to ascertain his astrological sanction and to search for an auspicious time (Muhurta) and day for the celebration of the marriage ceremony. The priest writes down on two slips of paper, after he has worked out by calculation the day and time of the wedding ceremony, to be given to both the parties. All the astrological procedure to scrutinise the details of the bride and bridegroom, aimed to ensure a happy married life is known as "जातकान काकणान जमणे". Both the parties leave the priest's house, after they have paid his fees, to a toddy shop, the bill of which is equally shared by both. With a few sips of toddy, in token of the marriage being settled, the members return to their respective homes.

The bridegroom's people intimate the bride's relations about the day and time for celebrating the first rite of the marriage ceremony, known as 'Sakharpuda'. From this time onwards begins the busy and slipshod programme of a marriage ceremony extending for five days covering forty different items to be performed one after another according to the time available, a continuous order of which may be broken here and there. Almost all of these items are conducted by female singers, known as 'Dhavalaranis' who have at their finger's end the sequence and details of all the items and the songs associated with them called 'Dhavalas'. A detailed reference to these songs is made in "Marriage songs" in the Appendices.

SAKHARPUDA

The opening ceremony of the nuptials known as 'Sakharpuda' takes place in some evening at the house of the father of the bride two or three days before the day of marriage. On that day four to six senior male members from the bride-

groom's family, accompanied by some female member, preferably a younger sister of the bridegroom, drive to the house of the bride in a bullock cart. This female member carries with her in a bundle the following articles :

A necklace for the bride.
Few handfuls of rice grains, one coconut for 'filling in the lap' of the bride.
Few almonds and walnuts.
A braid of flowers.
A cup of dried copra.
A small quantity of sugar.

In response to a general invitation circulated amongst the Agri inhabitants of the village to be present at the 'Sakharpuda' function, almost all the houses send at least one representative each to attend the function held in a marriage booth at the house of the father of the bride. Young children inducing each other with "लगनाची साकर खावाला चला" (Come, let us go to enjoy the sugar of marriage !) swarm the booth.

As the party of the members from the family of the bridegroom arrives at the entrance of the booth, they are greeted with salutations by the father and other relatives of the bride and courteously ushered to their seats in the midst of the gathering.* One of the male relatives of the bride waves an 'Arati' around their face as a token of honour and hospitality. The guests so treated place a few coins (four to eight annas) in the dish of 'Arati', containing a sweet oil lamp, two cups of turmeric and kum-kum powder, in acknowledgment of the treatment given to them. He puts the money in his pocket and places the same dish on the floor in front of the guests, who put in it three rupees as their apportionment for the purchase of jaggery for distribution at the meeting. The father of the bride then sends somebody to a grocer's shop to bring jaggery also contributing his share to make the sum sufficient enough for the purchase of the required quantity.

A little sugar is distributed amongst a few older people, after it is first served to the bridegroom's people. Then follows the distribution of jaggery amongst all those present, during the course of which some of the people assembled ask the reason of distributing it. One of the distributors says that

* The younger sister of the bridegroom leaves her party and goes inside.

it is being distributed because the daughter of a particular man is to be married to the son of a particular man from a particular village.

The younger sister of the bridegroom proceeds directly inside and joins the womenfolk, encircling the bride, who is seated on a wooden plank in the best of her apparel. With preliminary greetings she makes a direct move to the bride, applies a kum-kum mark on her forehead, 'fills in her lap' (ओटी भरणें) with various things she has brought with her, presents a blouse piece to her and puts the necklace round her neck. This necklace marks the reservation of the bride for the proposed bridegroom. All the women now stand around the bride and a Dhavalarin conducts a little ceremony known as "तांदूळ फोकणें" reciting two Sakharpuda songs (*vide* marriage songs). The following is the substance of these songs :—

"There has been an offer for our daughter as destined in the Heaven. Senior members in her family are, therefore, requested to grant their approbation to the match and urged to make all the marriage preparations."

The songs reiterate the belief of an Agri person in predestination.

The bride then leaves her seat and with a copra cup full of sugar, given by a Dhavalarin, moves in the circle of the females, all of whom in order of seniority take the cup from her, put a little sugar in her mouth and give it back to her. They have a look at the necklace and criticize it according to their taste. When the whole round is over, the bride passes the copra cup to her mother to be preserved by her.

Tea is served to all the relations of the bridegroom and the function comes to a close. The guests drive back to their village. The villagers disperse as soon as they get their share of jaggery.

2

THE 'DEJ' OR BRIDE-PRICE

The 'Dej', as we have seen before, is the bride-price, which is made up of paddy and a sum of money together to be paid to the father of the bride as soon as the marriage is settled in view of the fact that he will be using this amount towards the expenses of his daughter's marriage. Ten maunds of paddy and forty rupees constitute the 'Dej' amongst the Agris of Alibag Taluka. With a previous word to the father of a

bride about the day and time for paying the amount of the 'Dej', a party of four or five senior male members from the family of the bridegroom drive in a bullock cart for their destination. The gunny bags of paddy, that are sent earlier, are decorated with a few mango-twigs as an indication of the auspicious nature of their purpose. The guests are received with salutations by the bride's father and requested to take their seat on a blanket spread out for them. A young woman or a grown-up maiden waves 'Arati' around the faces of the guests and place the 'Arati' plate in front of them. They put in a two-anna piece in it. The female then goes inside with the plate.

The male relatives of the bride put forward a brass plate for the amount of the 'Dej' and instead of accepting the amount in full return a rupee to the guests by way of concession. They offer tea, bidis, and betel nuts to the guests. The male members from both the parties then leave the house together for a toddy shop to booze a few happy glasses in adumbration of the [illegible] of their youngsters, a major portion of the expenses being borne by the bridegroom's people. This drinking confirms the sponsalia. The members of both the families then disperse for their respective homes.

The bride's people return a small quantity of paddy received from the other party by way of remission. They receive this paddy without any further ceremony.

3

THE SOBAN ON THE MARRIAGE FUEL

Quantum of fuel required for cooking meals during the period of a marriage ceremony, known by the specific term of 'Soban' is not to be purchased according to their custom. It comes as a voluntary allocation from relatives and friends and nobody refuses it if asked for. A mango tree, conspicuous by the intrinsic value of auspiciousness attached to it, gets the primal honour of being felled for the 'Soban'. Then comes the turn of other miscellaneous trees. The felled trees, cut in suitable logs, are carried home and stored in a corner of the courtyard. On an auspicious day like Monday, preferably Thursday, a general invitation is extended to all the Agri houses in the village for breaking the logs into faggots. Every house is expected to depute one man at least. After the job is complete a few fuel pieces are thrown on the thatch-roof of the marriage house as an indication of the auspicious cere-

mony to be celebrated therein. They are taken down for making fire when the rice cakes are to be fried.

The men gathered for breaking the fuel receive conventional amount of one rupee in common to be spent after jaggery or liquor and a cup of tea for each one of them.

4

MASALA (CONDIMENT POWDER)

On some day few women in the neighbourhood call at the marriage house for pounding various condiments into powder. When the required quota is ready, the powder is stored in bottles. The women gathered receive only a cup of tea.

A list of the ingredients of the Masala is given on page 73.

5

HUSKING THE PADDY

As boiled rice and cakes made from rice flour are the two main dishes to be served at the daily meals to all the relations gathered at a marriage house and at the caste dinners given to the members of their community, great quantity of rice is required for an Agri marriage. The quantity of paddy to be husked exceeds a 'Khandi' even.

Some evening, previous to an auspicious day like Monday, a senior married woman—Ayeyi Nari in the language of Agris or Suvasini in Marathi—from a marriage house extends a general invitation to all the Agri houses in the village to depute some female members to be present at the marriage house next morning to carry out the co-operative job of husking paddy. Next day as a female representative from each house, who may be a Suvasini, a widow or an unmarried girl, comes to the marriage booth, a senior Suvasini from the house prepares a 'kara'—a coconut and a few mango leaves put upright over the mouth of a brass water pot (Tambya) (the opposite page gives an illustration)—and places it in a nitch in the front part of the house (Oti). It is an emblem of commencement of a marriage to be kept at the same place intact throughout the marriage ceremony. By the side of the kara is also kept a plate containing 'Arati' equipment. All the Suvasinis and unmarried girls that visit a marriage house apply a kum-kum mark on their foreheads from this plate before they start husking the paddy.

Five betel leaves, five arecanuts and a coconut are spread on the floor in the centre of the marriage booth as a seat for a pair of grinding stones. A garland of flowers and five mango leaves, rolled separately in a bundle each, is tied round the upper grinding stone to signify the auspicious event in progress.

With both of his palms joined together and facing upwards the bridegroom shovels some paddy in the opening of the upper grinding stone to make a beginning and then goes away. The women gathered for husking the paddy, who watch him from a distance, come forward and begin their work.

A number of songs specially meant for the occasion are sung by these women containing references to the leading members of the family in the previous generations, the fortune of the family, some criticism of the marriage being settled early, the arrival of the son-in-law and so on.

Husked rice is pounded at the same time.

At the end of their work the coconut fruit under the grinding stone is broken and distributed as 'khirapat' to all. A few rice grains are preserved specially known as 'Muhurtache Tandul' to be mixed in the quantity of rice to be cooked on a marriage-day. Distribution of 'Pan-supari' and a cup of tea to all the females present marks the close of the 'Husking the Paddy' function.

6

GRINDING THE RICE GRAINS

Rice cakes fried in sweet oil and a jaggery or mutton curry is a toothsome dish in an Agri marriage feast. A big quantity of rice is to be milled in flour for preparation of the cakes. It is in no way a light task, and demands co-operation from many hands.

A senior 'Suvasini' from a marriage house extends a general invitation to all the Agri houses the previous evening to send some lady for milling the corn next day. Accordingly the womenfolk from the village, one from every home, call at the marriage house and collect all the (broken) rice to be milled in bamboo baskets. Then they go together to a village tank or a well and get the rice cleansed with water. Five of the baskets containing rice are placed on a small piece of land in the vicinity of the tank cleansed with cow-dung and decorated with 'Rangoli' (white powder obtained by burning paddy husk). The women apply turmeric and kum-kum

marks on the baskets (out of which four are placed close in a square, the fifth being on their top and supported by them). This signifies their worship. The women then disperse for their homes, after carrying the baskets to their destination, to return the next morning for getting it milled. The people from the marriage-house spread the cleansed rice on the floor, collect mill-stones from the neighbouring houses and make other preparations for the next day.

The women then return next morning to mill the rice for the whole day. The flour is stored in gunny bags and baskets on a loft.

The women gathered on the occasion are entertained to a meal, besides an occasional cup of tea.

7

ERECTION OF THE MARRIAGE BOOTH

Really speaking, the erection of the marriage booth is a very formal affair. The booth is constructed soon after the betrothal of marriage, and the people gather at the house concerned to give a final touch to it. This is a matter to be done by men. In accordance with a previous intimation of the leading member of the marriage-house one male member from every house presents himself at the appointed hour at the marriage booth. An auspicious start is to be made and as such, Muhurta or 'an auspicious time' pronounced by the local priest is not allowed to escape. At the appointed hour, the men gathered begin to decorate the marriage booth with the required material kept ready in a corner. Two plantain trees bearing bunches of plantains are put upright at the entrance of the booth. Fresh mango leaves arranged in a square form called as Toran are hung against the ceiling. Under this canopy the bride and bridegroom have to take their seat throughout the nuptial ceremony. The booth is enclosed on all sides by mats made from bamboo and grass.

As these men start decorating the booth outside the house, some of the womenfolk gathered inside sing in chorus a couple of songs specially intended for this occasion. In one song they implore God Gajanan to grant his blessings for the successful completion of the wedding ceremony. In the other they describe various parts of the booth with suitable comparisons and attributes to deities with an attempt to impress the sacred nature of the wedding ceremony.

8

APPLYING THE TURMERIC PASTE

Various items of the marriage rites mentioned so far are executed within two or three days, trimmed or curtailed with the co-operation of the people concerned. We are gradually getting close to the main item of the nuptial ceremony.

Early in the morning the bridegroom, after he has taken his bath and dressed in decent apparel, leaves his house in the company of four or five maids of honour called 'Karavalyas' and proceeds to a village temple and rub them with turmeric paste from a brass cup. This is a submission to a local deity seeking permission for the marriage ceremony and to ward off impediments. After their return some of them decorate a part of the floor with 'Rangoli' decoration (called by the Agris 'Kana ghalane') in the central apartment of the house. They place two pieces of wooden plank and cover them with a garment and strew some flowers. Perfumed sticks (Agarbatti) are lighted and the bridegroom sits by them. A young girl, preferably his younger sister, takes her seat to his right. Some five or six 'Suvasinis' (married women) from the group, gathered at the marriage-house, then apply the turmeric paste to the body of the bridegroom as they follow in chorus a Dhavalarin who sings a special turmeric song. This one is a lengthy song running over hundred lines, the recitation of which requires at least an hour. It starts with the morning routine of the wife of a gardener and describes how she serves her husband with his morning breakfast, departure of the gardener to the forest to secure suitable wood for his plough, his arrival from the forest, his visit to a carpenter and a smith, ploughing his field, sowing turmeric plants and their nursing, and carrying the pieces of dried turmeric from bazaar to bazaar to effect a sale until they are purchased by the father of the bridegroom—such is the portrayal of this turmeric paste that is being applied to the body of the bridegroom.

During the programme of this ritual, a female member of the house applies the turmeric paste to the main doorstep, the main door and the household deities and strews a few rice grains over them. It is a submission to the family deities guarding their household to bless and vouchsafe the marriage ceremony.

Some marriage cakes—vadas—are distributed amongst children, who accompany their mothers, as a token of the

commencement of the marriage ceremony. These cakes are fried only in the morning and the task is assigned to the women from the neighbourhood.

Till about a few years back the following custom prevailed though today it is no longer observed. A part of the turmeric paste was sent from the bridegroom's house to the bride's house to be applied to her body. Five maids of honour, accompanied by a band of musicians, carried with them 'Kara', 'Arati' equipment to fill in the lap (oti bharane), and a new sari known as Tel-sari to be presented to the bride. After their arrival at the bride's home, the bride took her seat on a bundle of rice (about three paylees) brought for this purpose specially. The maids of honour waved light round the bride's face, and presented her the new sari. The bride left her seat to display the new sari to be criticised according to the individual taste by the womenfolk present on the occasion. The paste was then applied to the person of the bride with a great pomp amidst a gathering of women, specially invited for the occasion, who were to be all properly honoured with a present of a betel nut, a betel leaf and kumkum mark. The party of the bridegroom was entertained to a feast before they departed for their home.

9

DAIVAT THAPANE

After the noon-day meals are served to the relatives and the guests at the marriage house, the floor in the booth is swept and cleaned with cowdung solution. A local priest comes at an appointed hour, performs a small sacrifice and enchants some formulae from 'Sudra-Kamalakar'.[10] The bridegroom and his parents are to be present on the spot when the priest recites his formulae. Two small branches of banian and mango trees are tied together and fixed in the ground in the eastern corner of the booth. They are jointly known as 'Muhurta Medha'. A pair of coconuts, representing a human couple, is hung thereon.

There are no 'Dhavalas' sung on this occasion as the details of it are solely entrusted to a Brahmin.

This closes the first day's rituals.

[10] A scripture containing marriage mantrams in the nuptial ceremony of the members of the castes not entitled for Vedic mantrams.

10

CHOUK

Chouk, otherwise called as 'Magha-vagha' is an opening event on the second day of the marriage ceremony. Vagha-magha is performed early in the morning before the bridegroom takes his bath. Some womenfolk draw a 'Kana' in the central apartment, dividing it into five parts, which run from east to west in a line. In each part 'Papad', 'pheni', rice cake, betel nut, dried date and copra are placed on a plate of leaves. A sweet oil lamp stands in a corner.

The bridegroom taking his seat on a wooden plank in front of the 'Kana' with his face covered with a counterpane by women, so as to make him oblivious of what goes on before him, tries to feel for one of the leaf-plates. He then invites one of the women, present there, to accept his present, after she has uttered her husband's name. He repeats this four times, making a present to a new woman every time. Women present on the occasion sing in chorus a special song five times with variations, invoking five different deities.

Then one of the women removes the counterpane from the face of the bridegroom and sings a couplet which includes her name. The rest of the women sing it, in case she goes on prevaricating to utter her husband's name.

The head and the face of the bridegroom being covered once more, the whole item is repeated four times. Thus the bridegroom is required to make twenty-five presents in all. In the absence of sufficient women on the occasion, the gift may be repeatedly offered to one and the same woman.

11

GOURICHA PATA

After a little while a kana is drawn again in the central apartment around a stone slab. Five heaps, each consisting of a rice cake, papad, pheni, dried date and a copra measure, are arranged on the stone slab, four heaps in four corners and the fifth in the centre. On this central heap is placed a hanging brass lamp (Laman diva). The bridegroom takes his seat along with the five maids-of-honour on a blanket spread before the 'pata'. And the Dhavalarin sings a special song followed by the rest of the womenfolk in chorus. The song refers to Gouri, the presiding deity of the ritual. In her

honour blankets are woven out of the wool obtained from five hundred sheep belonging to the shepherds who come from ghat-side, and leaves and flowers are stored by the host, so that his line of descent will continue through the favour of Gouri.

As this pata ceremony is being performed, a woman who is supposed to be possessed by some spirit, begins to feel that she is being possessed and moves all around the place in a dancing posture. When she is shaken to exhaustion by the vehement physical jerks, during two or three rounds she takes, she occupies a seat by the side of the bridegroom. She is supposed to represent some spirit that may be lurking at the marriage-house eager to seize an opportunity to lay its hand as soon as it finds a loophole. The mother of the bridegroom makes a submission to the spirit through this female agency in this way, " Please pardon us, if we have committed any mistakes. If there be any error during the course of the year, I again pray we may be forgiven for it ! We shall follow your instructions here and now, whatever you are pleased to ask us to do ". The lady again implores her favour to see the ceremony goes to its end without any obstruction.

The woman possessed by the spirit then directs the mother of the bridegroom to wave a coconut around the face of the bridegroom's father and throws it away. This is by way of doing homage to the spirit concerned and all the instructions are carried out implicitly. The representative of the spirit gets herself satisfied with various questions and cross-examination of the persons involved, to avoid any disturbance in the nuptial celebration. And according to her impressions the female agency may direct the members of the bridegroom's family to offer some article at a particular place in honour of a specific spirit, e.g. she may order to throw handful of rice into the well by the side of a particular tree ; place rice and milk on a leaf-plate under the ' Kalya ' (black) mango tree, and so on. The woman possessed by spirit keeps on humming till one by one all the women have carried out her orders. After she gets satisfied that the spirits concerned have been appeased, she blows some air into the ear of the bridegroom and passes some incogent and incoherent remarks. That finishes her part and she retires in some corner. With the distribution of pieces of copra from a coconut broken by the woman concerned amongst all those who were present, the ritual of ' Gouricha pata ' comes to a close.

12

OILING CEREMONY (TELAVANA)

After the end of the last rite, the bridegroom takes his bath, while the womenfolk gathered at his house carry on preparations for the ensuing rite of Telavana or 'The Oiling Ceremony'. They place five heaps, each heap consisting of vada, pheni, papad, betel nut, copra and jaggery—four in four corners and the fifth in the centre—on a wooden plank, that is surrounded by drawings of 'Kana'. Four earthen sweet oil lamps (Panati) top the four heaps and the hanging lamp stands on the central heap. The bridegroom takes his seat on a blanket spread before it. One of the married women from the gathering advises him to look steadily at the flame of the central lamp, lest his wife should often run away from him.

As in the previous rite here also a woman, accustomed to be possessed by spirit, plays her role and commands that a handful of rice be thrown at a particular spot, to ward off the wrath of a particular spirit concerned. Then four of the women execute the 'oiling ceremony' under the guidance of a 'Dhavalarin', one of whom holds in her hand a mango leaf rolled into a cup, the other performing the mimic details of pouring oil into it by a match-stick, assisted by two other women. The whole group visits various parts of the marriage-house in the order of the list sung in the mellifluent song of 'Telavana', meant for this occasion. (Refer to marriage songs). It consists of an invocation to various deities like Khandoba, Kolsari and the other for the successful completion of the marriage ceremony, and also a humourous description of the overfed guests and the pomp of the marriage booth.

13

GOUR NHANA

The rite of Telavana is followed by the ceremony of the nuptial bath, otherwise known as a Gour Nhana. A 'Kana' is drawn outside the marriage booth on a surface extending on the courtyard, with four brass vessels (Tambyas) full of water at four corners and a wooden plank in the centre as a seat for bathing. As the bridegroom takes his seat on this plank five women come out of the marriage booth to bathe him. While one of them stands just behind the bridegroom with her palms unfolded, facing upward, on his head, another

stands in front of him to pour water on the palms of the first woman. The water poured thence falls on the head of the bridegroom, the three remaining women merely touching the hands of the second woman as an indication that they are also sharing their part in the bathing ritual. All of them burst into a song, as they start pouring water on the head of the bridegroom. The song contains a reference to the holy bath of the bridegroom, the water of his bath passes through a cut to coconut trees, the fruit of which are used in preparing the marriage cakes. After he has wiped his body with a towel offered by one of the women, the bridegroom puts aside his loin cloth in the corner of which one anna piece is tied. A young boy, who watches him from a distance, steps forward as soon as the loin cloth is removed to take it away with articulations of 'caw caw' in imitation of a crow. A young woman, present at the spot, chases him sprinkling water on him till he is overtaken, who ultimately surrenders the loin cloth keeping its contents for him.

The bridegroom then puts on a dhotee, coloured all red and yellow with turmeric paste prepared in oil and presented to him by his maternal uncle. One of the women leads him to a corner in the marriage booth, where a big basket containing 'Ahiris', earthen vessels of various sizes, covered with a piece of cloth, is kept by the side of the 'Muhurta Medha'. He continues to stand by and look at the basket, till the women finish a 'Dhavala', describing how and whence these 'Ahiris' were obtained. He uncovers the basket and applies a few pinches of kum-kum and turmeric powder to Ahiris. The maternal uncle now appearing on the scene, leads him inside the central apartment. The womenfolk bring all the 'Ahiris' inside, pile them one upon another in four groups, supported by four bamboo poles in a corner of the central apartment.

14

GHANA BHARANE

A bamboo basket containing two pestles tied together with a little thread and decorated with a garland of five rolls of mango leaves, and a handful of rice, is placed in a corner of the central apartment. There the bridegroom goes up accompanied by his sister, her husband and a maid of honour. His sister formally pounds the rice, her husband touching her hands showing his co-operation. All the three go round the

basket. as the bridegroom's sister formally continues to pound the rice. Women sing a song specially meant for this.

When one round is finished, the sister stops pounding, picks up a few grains in a winnowing basket and requests the bridegroom to inspect them with a question, " Are they ready ? " In case of his refusal, they repeat the whole action some three or four times till the bridegroom is satisfied to make a reply " Yes, the rice is ready ! " The husband of his sister takes the basket, the sister carries the pestles. Both of them go near the " Muhurta Medha " to keep the basket and pestles in a corner.

15

UDADA MUDID

After a while some women bring a pair of mill stones and keep it at the same place, where the previous ritual was performed. The bridegroom's sister and her husband bring some paddy to be milled (or husked) The sister formally goes through the action of milling, as her husband puts in a handful of grains in the opening of the mill stone. The bridegroom supervises and directs their work. The whole action is repeated five times, without the accompaniment of any marriage song After the ritual is over both the bridegroom's sister and her spouse carry the mill stone near the ' Muhurta Medha '.

These two rituals of husking paddy and milling corn are a ceremonious symbol of the household responsibility that demand the attention of the bridegroom.

16

" TYING KANKAN "

After some time begins the ritual of ' Tying the Kankan '. The bridegroom and his maternal uncle take their seats on two pieces of wooden plank. They sit one behind the other facing one and the same direction. Four maids of honour hold ' Palav ', i.e. a dhotee, at its four corners, stretched above the head of the bridegroom and his uncle. Few rice grains, cumin seeds, a piece of copra, a silver armlet and a kankan are thrown on this ' Palav '. Two or three betel nuts, a turmeric piece, two ' bidis ' of mango leaves are fixed to a wooden fibre removed from a blanket are all that go to make this kankan.

Women present on the occasion sing a marriage song of 'Kankan', which contains an advice to the mother of the bridegroom to prepare a tiffin of rice and curds for her brother, who is going at a distance on the mission of 'kankan'. The song further mentions the villages visited by her brother in the search of a 'kankan' and terminates with the name of the village of the bridegroom, where he is able to find the 'kankan'. The song may be repeated with the names of various villages for a number of times according to the time at their disposal to commence the next ritual (*vide* marriage song of 'kankan').

After the recital of this song he puts his hand on the 'Palav' and feels the silver armlet. He takes and hands it over to his maternal uncle who again throws it back on the 'Palav'. The bridegroom again feeling for other articles, takes them down one by one to be handed over to the maternal uncle, who again throws them back on the 'Palav'. In the end he hands over the 'kankan' to the uncle, who ties it round the wrist of the bridegroom. The bridegroom shows his deference to his maternal uncle, salutes him and presents him a dhotee.

The rice grains, pieces of turmeric, copra, etc. are all tied at one end of the dhotee, collectively known as 'Lon', which is carefully preserved throughout the marriage ceremony.

A meal is served to all the people gathered at the marriage-house the main dish being rice cakes and a sweet soup prepared from milk, rice and jaggery.

17

NUPTIAL BATH

By this time a local barber arrives at the marriage booth. The bridegroom gets fine tonsorial polish at his hands. The barber receives a seer of rice, a four-anna piece and a piece of loin-cloth.

Some women then proceed with nine earthen vessels called as 'Nanas' to a well close by. They then decorate a little piece of ground with the drawing of their usual 'Kana' and place thereon vada, papad, pheni, a copra measure, rice grains and a little flour. They worship the 'Kana', wash the new earthen vessels and fill them with water from the well. They apply turmeric powder and kum-kum marks to all the vessels arranged in a special order. They then move back with all the earthen vessels full of water to the marriage booth, to place them around another 'Kana' already drawn on a piece

of floor in the proximity of the entrance to the marriage booth. They then pass a cotton thread round the neck of the first earthen pot and pass it to the next till all the pots are covered with thread. The bridegroom, who is accompanied by a number of females, takes his seat on a wooden plank on the 'Kana' to have a ceremonious bath. Here also some six women stand around him as in the ritual of 'Gour Nhana', with a slight variation. In this case a widow stands behind the bridegroom instead of a 'Suvasini'. Other women then empty one by one eight earthen vessels on the unfolded palms of the widow, all the water thence falling on the head of the bridegroom. They empty the last earthen pot on the head of the widow, who is invariably a 'Dhavalarin', the main singer and conductor of the marriage rituals. Some of the women then throw a sari on her shoulder, who then finishes her bath by shampooing her head with roasted copra. This sari is a present to her from the father of the bridegroom, in recognition of her services in the marriage ritual for which she is not supposed to receive any other remuneration.

The bridegroom, who retires inside for a bath, now comes back as soon as possible and takes his seat. Under the 'Toran', in the nuptial booth, soon to be surrounded by almost all the women present in the house, the womenfolk start dressing him enthusiastically to the best of their ability and skill. They apply black ointment (Kajal) to his eyelashes and put a saffron mark on his forehead. He is then decorated with various ornaments used by both men and women, which sometimes are borrowed from his friends and relatives. Necklaces, bangles, and what not, are all indiscriminately thrust on his person. They even anoint his cheeks with turmeric and other aromatics.

They dress him after a historical Maratha soldier with a sort of white loose coat reaching upto his knees. His dhotee is dyed all yellow and red with turmeric powder. He puts on a headgear called as 'Pagadi' with a coronet—the nuptial insignia—attached to it. He carries a dagger in his right hand. When every hand is set to decorate the person of the bridegroom, it is no wonder that such laborious and enthusiastic efforts make the bridegroom rather garish! He then occupies a special chair. Thus garbed in full nuptial costume amidst the smiling murmers of the womenfolk and loud cheers and mirthful conversations of friends and relatives he is the object of curiosity of everybody present in the booth and a cynosure of all eyes. From this time he is elevated to the

position of a deity and substratum of the whole nuptial ceremony. Now he holds such a dignified status that he will not salute any being, human or earthly, except the deities.

All the womenfolk lilt and sing in a joyful mood and the whole booth is resonant with sonorous sound. The singing which is in a low tone at first gradually rises till it bursts into soprano,[11] all the while addressing the bridegroom, e.g. 'Navarya-re-chandar-deva' (नवर्यारे चंदरदेवा). That is a signal to start for all the people, conglomerated at the marriage-house, who are so long resting at neighbouring houses, because they know that 'a woman's work is never at an end'. A horse specially garnished for the nuptial procession and kept ready at the trunk of a tree in proximity is brought at the entrance of the marriage booth. Cartmen yoke their bullocks, musicians harness their instruments, children rouse each other, adults shout for their friends and the whole procession is ready to move. The bridegroom who is given a send-off by his affectionate old relatives with pinches of sugar in his mouth, leaves the house, crosses the booth and reaches its entrance. The musicians hurry up to take the vanguard's position of the procession, consisting of bullock carts loaded with women young or old, married or otherwise and young children. The bridegroom mounts his special horse, led by his uncle, and slowly moves surrounded by few women and maids of honour. Then follows the line of male members which swells at every lane till it reaches the village boundary.

In case the house of a bride is at a distance of eight or ten miles, the whole procession including men, women, children and the bridegroom move in bullock carts.

Women all along their way sing songs specially meant for the occasion. They have a reference to the penance and devotion of the goddess Parvati, who yearned all the while to be married to Lord Shambhu (Siv). Lord Shambhu first appearing as an old man, completely disappoints her mother and ripe man. Lord Shambhu pleased with Parvati's fidelity, refuses to marry any other man but Shambhu, ultimately appears in his genuine young form ready for his wedding ceremony. The songs contain an invocation to deities to be hosts at the marriage booth, and describe the bridegroom proceeding to his marriage under the protection of various deities, are sung on the occasion.

As the procession approaches the outskirts of the bride

[11] Name of the bridegroom.

house, once more the wheels move fast, everybody springs his head up. Musicians play upon their instruments vehemently, the womenfolk sing the songs at the top of their voice till they get exasperated. Thus all together make a tumultuous sound. This uproar plays the part of a herald for promulgating the arrival of the bridegroom and his party in their village, advising all of them to hasten with their preparation and make arrangements to receive the guests.

After the arrival of the bridegroom's party in the bride's village, they all are temporarily lodged in a house nearby where all the preliminary arrangements are made to receive the guests. A worthy neighbour, who receives the bridegroom, is always a willing hand to extend his co-operation in such cases. He provides seats for the bridegroom and senior members of his family. The rest of the party stands outside the house in an open place to watch various demonstrations of dandapatta, charipatta and the like by a band of energetic, skilful youths, who seize an opportunity to display their art. The musicians also do their best and play on their instruments at intervals to maintain the fervour of the players.

In the meanwhile few senior female relatives of the bridegroom visit the house of the bride to wait upon her with a copra measure full of turmeric and all other material required for 'filling in the lap' known at this time by a special name of 'Varanichi Oli'. This being done they return.

After a while few women from the bride's party arrive at the house, where the bridegroom is stationed, with some dainty dishes and articles of confectionery, well covered with a fine piece of cloth in a metal plate. This is known as 'Rukhavat'. A senior female relative of the bridegroom receives the plate and takes it to the bridegroom, who is now surrounded by his friends. All of them pounce upon the plate and finish it in no time. The plate is returned with a piece of cloth—khana —to the woman who brought it. She takes the plate back home.

All the members of the procession and inhabitants of the village, swarm at the marriage booth before the arrival of the bridegroom and get seated in their proper places.

The bridegroom mounts his horse and slowly moves in the company of a few relatives and maids of honour and arrives at the entrance of the marriage booth. And before he dismounts from his charger a young boy of about six years standing on the shoulders of somebody, boxes an ear of the bride-

groom according to the instructions from some elderly person. He receives a dhotee from the bridegroom as a present. The bridegroom then dismounts from his horse. He then cuts with his dagger a piece of thread that holds a ' papad ', ' pheni ' and ' vada ' together and extends between two fructiferous plantain trees. He thus removes obstruction to his entrance and makes a present of those articles to some evil spirit that may be hanging about the marriage booth.

The act of boxing the bridegroom's ear seems to have aimed at the identification of the bridegroom, whose face cannot be easily seen as it is all covered with strings of beads, cornet and the rest. Or it should form the remnant of the resistance offered to the bridegroom, which he easily overcomes.

The bridegroom then takes first seat along with his maid of honour in the line of the sons-in-law of his would-be-father-in-law, who have taken their seats on wooden planks on a ' kana ' drawn at the entrance of the marriage booth. The bride's parents wash the hands and feet of the bridegroom and the maids of honour show similar acts of deference such as applying kum-kum and the rest !

It is at this juncture that the relatives of the bridegroom, when he happens to be the son of a woman by her first marriage, show a prevaricating attitute towards the act of getting his hands and feet washed at the hands of a woman, who is but a widow remarried. Members of the bride's family are also conscious of the fact and act up according to the desire of the bridegroom's relations and carry the ritual in a formal way.

The parents of a bride make a present of a dhotee to the bridegroom and a ' khan ' to his maid of honour. They give a similar treatment to other sons-in-law and make presents according to their financial circumstances. Brother's sons-in-law are invited to the ritual in case the bride's parents do not have any of their daughters married before.

This is over. The parents and other relations of the bride lead the bridegroom to the nuptial altar, where priests and other personnel are ready to receive him. He is directed to stand on the altar facing east and on either side of the plantain leaves covered with a seer of rice each. A square piece of cloth is stretched before him by four persons. The bride then slowly swaggers from within attended by a number of girls of a marriageable age and maids of honour and stands on the other leaf. The old system, according to which a bride and bridegroom stood in a basket full of paddy and a pressing

stone respectively, as observed by Westermark, has lost ground in this community at present. The old people replied to my query that such a custom prevailed amongst the Agris some twenty years ago. They were not able to say why the custom faded away.

The ritual of giving away the bride is conducted by a local priest. It is on this occasion and once more that a Brahmin is seen in an Agri marriage.

This local priest sometimes happens to be a Patash or a Govardhan Brahmin, whose knowledge of conducting a ritual is never emulating. This poor priest, equipped with doubtful knowledge of Sanskrit, hurries over the ritual, the 'mantrams' being treated in a manner as bad as ever it may be. He is all the more hasty when there are many ceremonies, which he has to attend within a prescribed period. He nibbles at the Mantrams, finishes his work with good speed, at the cost of everything else. These Brahmin priests, if they wish to retain their position, must improve upon their method and knowledge of the text of the 'Mantrams', most of which come from 'Sudra Kamatakar'.

He recites 'Mantrams', 'Mangalashtakas' and asks both the bride and bridegroom to garland each other, after the piece of cloth is withdrawn. The people gathered at the pandal throw rice at the couple, which "is a time-honoured institution".[12] The main ritual of the espousal is thus over. The priest temporarily gets aside to receive his gift and other dues. Womenfolk sing two or three songs on this occasion.

Two of the songs commemorate the popular puranic marriage of 'Sita' and 'Rama'. The rest of them are short and do not yield any constructive meaning. These women keep on singing continuously some songs. It is only during the actual marriage rites that they are silent, when the ritual is conducted by the priest.

After some time, as the newly-wedded couple sits down, women and maidens standing in a circle around them, recite songs, some of which are funny indeed! One of them says the maidens of honour have accompanied the bridegroom for the mouthful of stale rice only. The mother of the bridegroom is a subject of ridicule and criticism on the other. Another song describes the haste and confusion of the bride's mother, whose lot is always pitiful.

[12] Charles Platt, *Popular Superstitions*, p. 176.

18

THE MARRIAGE MEETING

We have seen so far that folk-ways are strictly followed in the Agri community and representatives from each house in their villages and relations must be present at the marriage ceremony as a social convention. They all are accommodated in the marriage booth where the actual ritual of the espousal is conducted. Such gathering at the wedding ceremony is an interesting scene in the social life of an Agri, where the advanced and important personalities come from the various corners of the 'Tapa'. After the celebration of the nuptial ritual, as the womenfolk inside sing nuptial songs, preparations are made to distribute pan and supari to all the male members gathered in the booth. In some suitable portions of the booth, all the equipment required for 'Arati' is kept on 'Kana' on either side of which are seated senior male members of both the families to be united by the nuptial tie. A man of honour called 'Dharakya' stands beside the 'Kana'. An aged 'Punch' (headman) asks some youth to be a 'Dharakya', that is the simple investiture of the post.

'Dharakya' now resumes his task. He opens his address to all those assembled in the booth in a distinct and audible manner. "Samasta Kashi Ganga, Gandha veda uchatanyacha hukum haya kaya ?", i.e. "You all caste fellows : Shall I now distribute Gandha and vida ? He repeats the same thrice in a ceremonious way, watching carefully all the people.

An elderly man, a wealthy man or preferably a caste headman rejoins, "Yes, you may !" Only once, that too, after the third address. The 'Dharakya' is permitted to execute his duty.

Some fifteen years ago a 'Dharakya' used to proclaim in the booth : "Is there anybody from the community of the Moghul emperor ?" But this custom was soon given up, as musicians, who would be Muhamadans, would step inside the booth, as recipients of the above honour to the disappointment of all. Further, bitter feelings bud by serious communal riots that broke very often in Bombay gave a death blow to this custom, never to be seen any longer ! The 'Dharakya' then would deliver a long address as detailed below in the same fashion.

"Samasta Kashi Ganga, kona chalun soyaryakadacha parnat haya kaya ? Asalyas bola mana milela"—(Is there

anybody belonging to other caste invited (to the marriage) by the bride's or bridegroom's family ? He should declare his presence. He will get due deference !)

" Is there anybody from Choul Tapa ? He should declare his presence. He will get his due deference ! "

(" Choula tapyatala kona haya kaya ? Asalyas bola, mana milela.")

Thus he goes on repeating the whole address with the other ' tapas ' in the following order :—

(3) Mahim, (4) Shiragaon, (5) Umata, (6) Bamangaon, (7) Khandala, (8) Parhur, and (9) Mahala from Karapat.

Every time the ' Dharakya ' watches carefully all the responses given to his declaration and distributes ' pan, gandha and vida ' accordingly. The order must be followed carefully and the slightest deviation will have to be explained for. He must tender apology in case he commits any mistake.

The concluding address runs as follows :—

" Samasta Kashi Ganga, Sarvana Gandha vida pochala ? na pochalyas magahun ghyava ! "

In the end some betel nuts and betel leaves are set aside in honour of the headmen or the ' panchas ' of various villages, who would not be able to present themselves at the function. The ' vidas ' are sent to the respective headmen per local inhabitants from the villages concerned.

19

KANYA DANA

After the dispersal of the marriage meeting comes the ritual of ' kanya dan ', which is attended by relations and friends and others intimately connected with the families of the bride and bridegroom. The compound ' kanya dana ' is not to be dissolved as ' kanyaha danam ' (कन्याया: दानं.) (as in the case of a form of marriage with the same name) but rather as ' kanyayai danam ' (कन्यायै दानं.) as on this occasion a number of presents are made to the married couple.

The bridegroom and bride are seated on a bench or chairs in the marriage booth attended by respective maids of honour and other women. Generally the couple is never kept alone ! The priest and the people who wish to make presents now come to the couple. They offer whatever presents they have brought through the officiating priest in the ritual, who declares the contents of the gifts and the names of the persons

who present them. *Pari passu* all such details are recorded by two men belonging to either side in view of the social custom according to which a recipient has to return an equal substitute to the person concerned. The gifts include a number of articles, especially utensils that are required to furnish a new home for the married couple. In a good many cases the present may be in pecuniary form, the least sum being four annas as witnessed by me. The relatives and others before making a present sprinkle water on the gift to be presented, to confirm the renunciation of their right over it.

When the list is completed, the priest makes preparation for the next ritual of ' Lajja Homa '.

20

" LAJJA HOMA "

The priest places whatever ornaments that have been purchased or assigned for the bride by her parents-in-law on a folded new sari and hands them over to the bridegroom to pass them to his bride. The bride, as soon as she receives them, hurries into the central apartment of the house, where her female relatives and other interested members are anxiously waiting to have a look at the ornaments and apparel assigned for their daughter !

Some ten years ago the female relatives of the bride would criticize the quality and price of the articles, thus provided, in very disparaging terms, because women as such they were not able to curb their sentiments and control their tongue. This naturally belittled the position of the female relatives of the bridegroom present on the spot, who would try to defend their position with all the eloquence at their disposal. The Agris are a sentimental people and when their sentiments are hurt, they find an outlet in a hot and turbulent language. A quarrel, that ensued between the female folk of both the parties, filtered through their respective husbands to the male circle. And then there would be soon a transfer scene of a fight between the male members of both the parties, vocal or physical in its nature, in accordance with the quantity of liquor, which men from either side swallowed, made them fit to undertake !

The difficulty is now averted by arranging a joint purchase of all the apparels on some suitable and auspicious day, when representatives of both the sides are present by appointment.

All the females gathered help the bride to put on her apparel

and bedeck her with all the ornaments brought by the bridegroom. The bride moves slowly, rather in a confused state of feeling, blending of happiness and sorrow. She sits in front of the priest, at whose instruction the bridegroom " fills in her lap " with the following articles : a seer of wheat, almonds, walnuts, kum-kum tin, five plantains, a coconut and a pair of green glass bangles joined together by a band of red cotton fibre known as " Nadyachi athi ".

The priest then places on a stone slab seven heaps of rice, each crowned with a betel nut. The bride stands in front of it with her palms held close and facing upward. The bridegroom, standing close behind with his hands around her, grasps her palms. The priest now puts in some rice grains in her palms. Both of them now go round the stone slab, led by a husband's maid of honour, carrying a brass lamp in her hands. When the round is over, the bride lowers her palms and throws rice in the holy fire, kindled by the priest. She steps on the stone slab with her right foot and pushes down the first heap of rice. She steps back and stands in front of the stone slab as before. The priest puts again some rice in her palms as before and the pair completes the second round exactly in the same way as before. This is repeated till all the heaps are brushed down which are usually seven in number but five or nine at times. The women present at the ritual sing every time a couplet that refers to the standing posture of the couple.

And this brings us to the end of the ritual of ' Lajja Homa '.

21

USHTAVAN

The couple then moves inside the house, hand in hand, after the priest has permitted them to retire at the conclusion of the previous ritual. They are again in charge of the womenfolk, who are eager to conduct their ritual. The mutual feeding or ' Ushtavana ' is the opening item.

Henceforward the husband and wife are to be impressed that they have to lead and share a common lot in life. The household responsibility is a joint affair and all the phases incidental to it must not be neglected by either of them. Hence a common meal is to be shared by both. Some preparation like ' sev ' is brought on this occasion. And in case no special dish is available, ' vada ', ' pheni ' and a little jaggery are mixed together. The dish is brought in a metal

who present them. *Pari passu* all such details are recorded by two men belonging to either side in view of the social custom according to which a recipient has to return an equal substitute to the person concerned. The gifts include a number of articles, especially utensils that are required to furnish a new home for the married couple. In a good many cases the present may be in pecuniary form, the least sum being four annas as witnessed by me. The relatives and others before making a present sprinkle water on the gift to be presented, to confirm the renunciation of their right over it.

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" LAJJA HOMA "

The priest places whatever ornaments that have been purchased or assigned for the bride by her parents-in-law on a folded new sari and hands them over to the bridegroom to pass them to his bride. The bride, as soon as she receives them, hurries into the central apartment of the house, where her female relatives and other interested members are anxiously waiting to have a look at the ornaments and apparel assigned for their daughter !

Some ten years ago the female relatives of the bride would criticize the quality and price of the articles, thus provided, in very disparaging terms, because women as such they were not able to curb their sentiments and control their tongue. This naturally belittled the position of the female relatives of the bridegroom present on the spot, who would try to defend their position with all the eloquence at their disposal. The Agris are a sentimental people and when their sentiments are hurt, they find an outlet in a hot and turbulent language. A quarrel, that ensued between the female folk of both the parties, filtered through their respective husbands to the male circle. And then there would be soon a transfer scene of a fight between the male members of both the parties, vocal or physical in its nature, in accordance with the quantity of liquor, which men from eiher side swallowed, made them fit to undertake !

The difficulty is now averted by arranging a joint purchase of all the apparels on some suitable and auspicious day, when representatives of both the sides are present by appointment.

All the females gathered help the bride to put on her apparel

and bedeck her with all the ornaments brought by the bridegroom. The bride moves slowly, rather in a confused state of feeling, blending of happiness and sorrow. She sits in front of the priest, at whose instruction the bridegroom " fills in her lap " with the following articles : a seer of wheat, almonds, walnuts, kum-kum tin, five plantains, a coconut and a pair of green glass bangles joined together by a band of red cotton fibre known as " Nadyachi athi ".

The priest then places on a stone slab seven heaps of rice, each crowned with a betel nut. The bride stands in front of it with her palms held close and facing upward. The bridegroom, standing close behind with his hands around her, grasps her palms. The priest now puts in some rice grains in her palms. Both of them now go round the stone slab, led by a husband's maid of honour, carrying a brass lamp in her hands. When the round is over, the bride lowers her palms and throws rice in the holy fire, kindled by the priest. She steps on the stone slab with her right foot and pushes down the first heap of rice. She steps back and stands in front of the stone slab as before. The priest puts again some rice in her palms as before and the pair completes the second round exactly in the same way as before. This is repeated till all the heaps are brushed down which are usually seven in number but five or nine at times. The women present at the ritual sing every time a couplet that refers to the standing posture of the couple.

And this brings us to the end of the ritual of ' Lajja Homa '.

21

USHTAVAN

The couple then moves inside the house, hand in hand, after the priest has permitted them to retire at the conclusion of the previous ritual. They are again in charge of the womenfolk, who are eager to conduct their ritual. The mutual feeding or ' Ushtavana ' is the opening item.

Henceforward the husband and wife are to be impressed that they have to lead and share a common lot in life. The household responsibility is a joint affair and all the phases incidental to it must not be neglected by either of them. Hence a common meal is to be shared by both. Some preparation like ' sev ' is brought on this occasion. And in case no special dish is available, ' vada ', ' pheni ' and a little jaggery are mixed together. The dish is brought in a metal

plate. To start with, the bridegroom washes his hands in a basin. The bride feeds him with five morsels from the dish. Thereafter she washes her hands and she is likewise fed with three mouthfuls by the bridegroom. Here the peculiarity to be noted is that either of them who feeds another does not wash one's own hands but rather the one who is to be fed by the other.

22

SOYARYA SAMAJAVANE

As this ritual is being conducted, senior female relatives of the bridegroom quietly go away to a house in the neighbourhood, the place they visit being already determined beforehand. They are supposed to have been offended at the house of the bride and have gone there as a protest. They must be appeased and further convinced of sincerity and hospitality of the marriage-house. And two or more married women from the bride's family go to the place, pay respects to the mother of the bridegroom or her representative in case she is not present and conveys them their desire to show them honour and further request to let them know who should be the first recipient of this honour. They first apply kum-kum mark to her forehead, present her with a betel nut and then treat the rest of the female relatives of the bridegroom in a similar way. The maids of honour then request all of them to make a move to the marriage-house, where all the people are waiting for the feast. The two maids of honour then stretch a white garment, preferably a dhotee, which is proverbially known as ' palav ' above them as a canopy for the female relatives of the bridegroom, who are thus marched to their destination. Of course they must be led by a band of musicians. The accompanying maids of honour sing songs as they march, some of which are so humorous in their nature as may be deemed to go perhaps to the extent of satirical humiliation.

One of the songs portrays the pitiable lot of a ' soyari ' (a female related through marriage) who was perturbed by a bone of a ' saraga ' fish during the course of a feast. Another song contains a request to a ' soyari ' to visit the house of her daughter-in-law's relation, where she would be hospitably received, while the third refers to her avaricious nature, because she flies to a jungle to save herself from the huge expenditure in distributing pie-worth pieces of betel nut.

23

MARRIAGE FEAST

By the time the female relatives come back to the marriage-house, it is now very late and most of the people gathered for the ceremony eagerly tarry for a marriage feast. The feast at a bride's house is not a big function. It is attended by a small circle of relatives and friends, invitation being not extended to all the local members of the community. Leaf plates are spread in straight lines in the marriage booth and a poverbial call 'Pausa ghya-yala chala' literally meaning 'come to part rain water' is issued to get all the male guests seated in their places. Then male members, who are entrusted with the duties of a waiter, also known as 'Dharakyas', serve rice, dal, bhaji and other details to all the people in the booth, the required quantity of the food being delivered to them from time to time by household women from inside. According to the Agri custom, women do not serve the males at a social or public feast.

The rice cakes and jaggery soup, a special dish of this feast, is served in a limited quantity only at the rate of two cakes and proportionate soup per head, there being no restrictions on other items such as dal and rice! No member must get up half-way. One has to wait till all have finished. When a 'Dharakya' starts pouring a little water on the right palm of the members, it is a signal that no more food will be served and the feast is at an end. Sometimes this water may be served abruptly, especially when there is a gathering, bigger than expected. This is a panto mimic refusal and its significance is well understood.

The feast is over and as soon as all receive 'pan-supari' the members vacate the booth for the members of the fair sex, who are now to be served with meals.

24

BREAKING THE BONES OF SOYARI

All the womenfolk assembled in the marriage booth now take their seats as soon as leaf plates are laid down and before they start partaking of the feast, served by the womenfolk, there is one more little but noteworthy rite to be carried through. It is known as 'breaking the bones of a Soyari'.

The mother of the bride stands in the midst of the rows, mainly occupied by the female relatives of the bridegroom.

She addresses a general question to all, " Who is the senior-most amongst you, to whom should we show our deference ? " The women concerned point out a particular woman, preferably the mother of the bridegroom, who is to be so treated. The hostess goes there and applies turmeric powder and kumkum mark to her forehead first, which are then distributed to all present with the assistance of other female members of her household.

Now comes the funny part of the rite. The hostess gets two ' papads ', two ' phenis ', a little jaggery in a metal plate and sits with it before the ' Soyari ', alias the woman whom she honoured first. As she presses all the eatables in the plate with her right hand they go down flat with a crackling noise, with a coinstantaneous remark of the hostess, " How stiff are the bones of my ' Soyari ' ! From what a long distance she must have come." She then kneads all the articles in a lump, a little of which is to be served to every woman as a token of the honour done to her. All of them are eager to receive it in their plates, though they would care a little to touch it. But served they must be with this. Otherwise it is considered to be humiliation which brings abuses in their leaps and tears in their eyes, a scene which is far from pleasing to a hostess. The hostess then appeals to all to start with their meals with the following address :

" Kudya mandychi pej na ambila kelati ti mana karuna ghya. Na lava hata ".

It tantamounts to an appeal that she should be excused for her humble food.

Here also none of the members must get up from the line before all have finished. If anybody does, she is at once rebuked by the rest, " Are we gestronomers ? Why have you got up before all ? " The rest of the feast is conducted in the same way as before.

The remaining part of the day is spent merrily by all the people gathered. In this way comes to an end the second day of the nuptial ceremony, the most important ritual being peacefully gone through.

25

VARATA

(Nuptial Procession)

The bridegroom is now to return home ceremoniously with his newly-wedded wife at an auspicious hour—Muhurta—in

accordance with the sanction of a local priest. The hour prescribed for the couple to leave the bride's home should be sometime early in the evening or early in the morning but never at midnight hour according to the view of the bride's mother, who displays her disapproval in a number of ways if an awkward time is selected for them to start. She might cite a number of incidents of a procession meeting obstacles on the way in consequence of a start being made without a 'Muhurta' and might enumerate some unfavourable factors against her beloved daughter to leave for her new home at an ill-omened hour. Usually such a view of the bride's mother is not ignored. Just before the appointed hour of departure, the musicians start beating their drums, the people gather at the marriage booth The womenfolk begin to sing—rather whatever they say they do it in a sing-song way. The bride and the bridegroom once more garnish themselves in their best apparel and go round the elder folk gathered in the central apartment, who put pinches of sugar in their mouth and shower upon their blessings. The couple, before leaving the house, offers salutations to the household deities and slowly move to the advent of the booth, they being greeted at every step by the people present on the occasion. The band of musicians now gets ready to start, as the bridegroom and the bride assisted by their respective paternal uncles mount upon a nicely decorated horse, standing ready at the entrance. The procession then makes a move booming with the sound of the musical instruments in the direction of the village of the bridegroom. The female relatives of the bride, especially her mother and junior sisters, are moved with feelings of her separation from her home, a natural outcome of her wedding, which they earnestly longed so far! The pathetic feelings of the bride's relations are ventilated in a song (No. 45) sung so often at a nuptial procession. Their young daughter, as one of valedictory songs goes, innocent as she is, does not understand what would be her position in her new home. Her mother, who was her *vade mecum*, who so long guided her in the domestic work, and shielded her from the wrath of her father, is no longer there! She is resigned to the care of the benign deities, who will shower their blessings upon her.

The womenfolk, comfortably seated in bullock carts in the procession continue to sing with a little break whenever exhausted, till the procession leaves the boundary of the village. A few women accompany the bridal horse on foot, if their destination is not far away.

The procession stops at intervals to break coconuts in honour of the local deities and at parting of the roads, which are so often haunted by supernatural elements. Intimates, well-wishers and admirers of the family may request the bridegroom and the bride to stop a while at their house and wave lights around the faces of the marital couple in expression of their warm feelings. The bridegroom also in acknowledgement of the honour done to the couple puts a few copper coins in the metal plate holding the lights.

The musicians once more make the surrounding atmosphere resonant with the sound of their instruments. The womenfolk, some of whom looked drowsy on their way, wake up to sing the songs in a voice louder as ever, as the nuptial procession reaches the frontiers of the bridegroom's village. The local folk, young or old, all flock together and go forth to receive the new couple and accompany the procession to the house of the bridegroom. The musicians stand outside the booth, the people get aside, and the couple slowly dismounts from their charger and stand at the entrance of the booth. A female relative from the bridegroom's house comes from within with all the equipment of 'Arathi' to receive and admit the couple into the house. She waves a coconut around their face and hurls it away, as a counter-action to prevent some flagitious and sundowner spirits that might be lurking on their way from accompanying the couple further in their home. She waves 'Arathi' round their faces, washes their feet and invites them inside.

The village inhabitants, who have been present at the booth now slowly disperse : married women, children and young people interested in the marital affair, loiter about the couple to watch further details.

The mother of the bridegroom takes her seat on the main doorstep with a folded black blanket on her head and a staff in her hand, as her newly-married son is about to step in the house with his bride. Flabbergasted by this sudden outbreak in his mother's attitude, the son puts her a question, "Dear Mother, what makes you sit here ?" She replies that she is old and feeble now and as such incompetent for any piece of domestic service. She is anxious about her future and waits to know who would support her in her cumbersome old age. The bridegroom reports what his mother has said to his bride *in toto* and seeks her advice in the matter. The bride has to solve the problem by giving her consent to her husband to support her old mother-in-law during the rest

of her tenure. The mother of the bridegroom satisfied with her daughter-in-law's answer, gets away and makes their line clear.

The bride is thus given to understand her share of responsibility in the joint household of her husband and the attitude she has to maintain towards her mother-in-law. However, this consent of his bride is a formal affair and one need not go behind her words. Her husband soon realises that marrying is pleasant but housekeeping difficult, the whole trend of the event in future depending upon the attitude of his wife and fortune of the household sails in a direction according as his wife proves to be a salvation or destruction of the family. It is a normal behaviour of an Agri youth to struggle for a separate dwelling as he develops his contact with his spouse, which is permissible as soon as she attains puberty. His eyes that were wide open before his marriage to what passed in his household, are now half closed. At last he hunts for an opportunity to have a separate establishment within a year or thereabout or even earlier in case his wife happens to be matured at the time of her marriage. His parents, if they are old and feeble, know their lot is miserable in future with the arrival of their daughter-in-law In such a case, the marriage of their son is an event, partly mixed with sorrow and happiness. The position of the husband's mother is despairing, indeed, when she happens to be an old widow with no other support to fall back

After his mother has vacated her seat, an unmarried youth, more frequently a younger brother of the bridegroom, barricades the entrance of the couple and takes his seat in her place. The bridegroom asks him, " Brother, what makes you sit here ? " (ka re dada ! Tu hatha kana basalasa ?). He replies, ' Dada, you are married, but what about my marriage ? ' The bridegroom conveys these words to his wife, standing beside him and asks her advice in the matter. She replies, " We shall arrange for it ? " The brother, who is pleased with this gesture of his sister-in-law, goes away from the door-step and gets mixed with the onlookers.

Now comes the turn of the sister of the bridegroom and she once more obstructs their entrance. She demands from her brother, when asked why she is sitting there, that the first-born daughter of the couple should be given to her son. The husband conveys this to his wife and seeks her counsel in solving this problem. After a little consideration she conveys to her sister-in-law through her husband that she would

sympathetically deal with the matter when a second daughter will be born to the couple and not at the time of the bethrothal or her first born. Her sister-in-law does not approve of it. She communicates to her brother's wife that in case the latter would give her second daughter instead of the first, she would prescribe all the menial labour for her and would see that she would carry baskets full of cowdung to the field. Further, she requests the couple to reconsider their proposal and let her know what they intend to do. The couple confronted with a dilemma and quizzled for the moment, find no other solution and have ultimately to surrender to the condition of the husband's sister and with a promise to offer their first-born daughter to her son, requests her to admit them in the house. And it is with the physical assistance of the couple that the sister of a bridegroom gets up from her place.

The married couple in this rehearsal of their future life, staged in the nuptial ceremony, is thus goaded to the sense of responsibility that lies on their shoulders as individuals of a joint family. They have to share membership of a collective establishment and as such look in future to the general prosperity of the family. They have to take care of their junior relatives in future in a similar way just as they have been cared for by others at this stage.

The dominating attitude of the husband's sister and her refusal to get herself undermined unless and until her brother and his wife agree to offer their first-born daughter to her son, may be the indications of some of the remnants of her importance, which she once weighed in a matrilineal family in remote past. It should be rather surprising to note that no importance is attached to the bridegroom's father, when his mother, sister and brother are all given due deference!

The sister of the bridegroom then applies kum-kum powder to the feet of the bride and makes her stand on a bag of rice. Other women sing a couplet on the occasion. The bridegroom and the bride then stand together as in the case of 'Lajja Homa'. A maid of honour places a few rice grains, a betel leaf and a nut in the bride's palms joined together and the couple slowly moves from the entrance of the central apartment to the household sanctuary, the bride strewing rice on either side on her way. She is described as a woman who strews pearls in a little song sung on the occasion. The couple then offers salutations to the household deities. The bridegroom now goes out, while his bride takes

down all the 'Ahiris' one by one, simply to leave them in a disorder. She also then goes out.

Sometime later the husband returns to the spot. As he sees all the earthen pots scattered in disorder, he calls his mother and asks her where his wife has gone. His mother rejoins that she has possibly gone to bring water from the well and asks him to arrange all the earthen vessels in their proper order and keep them covered.

This suggests that the husband has to look after the household matters, even when as a rule he does not put his hand to a piece of domestic work.

After this the little ritual 'Ushtavan' as described before is repeated and there is a break till morning. And in this way ends the third day of marriage. On good many occasions, however, when the 'Varat' or the nuptial procession arrives late, there is not much time left and in such cases the rituals of the next day follow almost immediately.

28

WASHING THE MOUTH

Beyond the advents of the marriage booth the couple sits on two wooden planks placed on a portion of land that is well decorated with 'Kana'. It is surrounded by a number of bystanders to witness what follows next. The bride rolls some mango leaves into 'bidis' and presents one of them to her husband as a tooth brush for cleansing his teeth. The bridegroom formally brushes his teeth and throws it away. The bride helps him to wash his hands and mouth. This is repeated in all four times. A little song (No. 48) is sung on this occasion.

After the bridegroom has finished washing his teeth and mouth he also gives the same treatment to his bride; but he does in all three times only.

The bride then applies a little oil to the husband's hair and parts them with a comb. In reciprocation her husband merely pours a little oil on her palm, which she applies to her hair.

Then comes the ritual known as

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SALUTING THE MOON AND THE SUN

Both of them now get up from their seats and stand behind the wooden planks and face the eastern direction. As the bride strews some rice grains with both of her thumbs and as the

bridegroom continues to stand by her side the 'Dhavalrin' sings a special song followed in chorus by all the members of the fair sex present on the spot. In the conclusion of this song the married couple bow down to the sun rising in the east.

To put this song briefly, "The rays of the sun reach the precipices of the hills, where the deer graze." It further contains a prayer to the rising sun to accept salutations of the newly-wedded couple and bestow upon them in return a long prosperous married life.

After this ritual the couple goes inside, puts aside their coronets temporarily and there is a little break when tea may be presented to the distinguished visitors.

> "Like blood, like good and like age make the happiest marriage"—J. Clarke.

30

After a while the husband and wife now play some indoor games, specially meant to be played during the nuptial ceremony. When both of them are young, all the elderly people love to watch with admiration the young couple play these special games. To put it in proper spirit, it is rather the elderly folk that amuse themselves, while the newly-wedded couple play. And younger the age of the couple, more pleasing it is to the relatives. An old Agri woman remarked, "Should they not learn to live happily in their married life? And if it is to be answered positively, let there be an auspicious start".

The games played are:

1. Eki-beki;
2. Vala likavene (Hidding an armlet);
3. Supari likavane (Hiding a betel nut); and
4. Vidya todana (to bite off 'bidis').

1. *Eki-beki*

One of the couple, with a handful of tamarind seeds in her palm, asks the other whether the remainder, when the total number of seeds divided by two, is one or zero. After the other party predicts what it would be, the person puts down the seeds on the floor to verify the calculation. If the remainder is other than the answer predicted, the party concerned has to utter the name of the spouse as a penalty for

the wrong calculation, the successful candidate getting one more chance to open a new game.

2. *Hiding an armlet*

Either member of the couple conceals an armlet without being seen by the other, which is to be discovered by the other party. A search is undertaken according to oral instructions issued by the other party. If it is not found accordingly, the penalty prescribed for issuing wrong instructions is as before.

3. *Hiding a betel nut*

It is a repetition of the previous game (hiding an armlet); the only difference being an armlet is substituted by a betel nut.

4. *Biting off the 'bidis'*

One of the couple has to bite off the 'bidis' of the rolled mango leaves held in the mouth by the other.

In this way nearly two hours are spent, when the nuptial playing is over.

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After some time, the images of the family deities are brought from within and placed under the 'Toran' on a little wooden stool facing west. A 'Kara' is kept on a small heap of rice in front of them. On the right-hand side of the images, a bamboo stick, about a foot in length, is driven fast in the ground, on the top of which a little sweet oil earthen lamp is kept burning. This ceremony is known as 'Bhavani Thavarane'.

A 'gondhali', who has arrived on the spot, is requested to carry on his 'gondhal'. He has a follower or two. One of them sings, another beats his drum to the tune. They start loud singing and continuous beating of the drum as a signal for all the local residents to gather soon at the marriage booth. The bridal couple is summoned from within who continue to occupy their seat in front of the images throughout the tumultuous festivity of the 'gondhalis', concluded with an 'arathi' of the family deities, when both of them are required to pour sweet oil into the earthen lamp five times. After this they retire inside the house.

Then starts the ritual dealing with a marriage feast known as 'Gotambil'. According to the code of social behaviour of

the Agris the father of a bridegroom is required to entertain all the local caste members to a feast, which must compulsorily include some meat preparation in the case of marriage of his first or last son, the quantity and species of animals—goats and fowls—being determined by variation factors of the family and local traditions and the number of people present at the feast. Actual practices may differ as far as animals and their number are concerned with special reference to particular family deities. I am here referring to one such 'Gotambil' and the allied gathering held in one of the 'Mhatre' families of Dhokawade.

After the Gondhal is over, the father of a bridegroom or his surrogate stands before the images and conveys his good wishes to his caste members present at the gathering, and further requests them to prescribe the number of goats and fowls to be slaughtered in honour of the deities of Mhatre families.

An experienced member of his caste, invariably known as 'Pancha' then stands up and proclaims that one goat is sufficient for the day's feast, as the gathering is not a big one. "What about the rest of the animals ? Who is going to feast them ?" whispers someone from the corner in the meeting, "Well, they are reserved for another feast, when there will be a greater gathering !" returns a tactful "Pancha". According to his instructions, preparations are made to consecrate the number of goats required before they are slaughtered in honour of the family deities.

The list of the family deities of the Mhatre family from Dhokawade, includes Khanderao, Bhavani, Vakhajay, Bapa and Cheda out of whom Khanderao happens to be a Brahmin, who is a strict vegetarian, all the rest being non-vegetarians. The caste system has percolated to the Arcadian deities also ! Khanderao, being a Brahmin, is to be honoured first ! As soon as a coconut is broken in his honour, the face of the helpless deity is covered with a leaf, so as to make him oblivious of what follows next in the meeting. He is not supposed to share the animals offered to his non-vegetarian colleagues !

Then a leaf-plate is placed before the images. The party of bleating goats and groaning cocks, the number of which is fixed by the family traditions, is marched within. They are sanctified by a formal bath of washing their feet and mouth and thus made worthy of being offered to the deities. Few hair or feathers are removed from the body of every animal and placed on the leaf-plate by way of reserving them for

the specific deities. And a local Bhagat, who must never miss this opportunity, prays the deities devoutedly, as he offers these animals to the deities on behalf of the 'Yajman' or the householder to the following effect: "Oh gods, have this your share. May we be happy. Bless us with success in our own work! May we prosper!"

The number of the goats to be slaughtered from the group is fixed in proportion to the number of the people present! The life of the less unfortunate amongst them being extended by about a month according to the convenience of the family, these animals run away as soon as they are set free outside the booth! Other animals to be butchered are now handed over to another youth waiting outside the booth! The goat is slaughtered, the blood emanating forth is collected in a big metal plate and the goat is hung to a pole afterwards! Fowls are killed outside the booth.

A Muhammadan—usually referred to as Musalya by the Agris—is required to butcher a goat according to the family traditions of some of the Agris. Otherwise the meat is not considered purified. And even when a Muhammadan is not required to butcher it, a knife is gently applied to the neck of the goat to observe sacerdotal exigencies, and it is handed over to him to finish with his job. "The crust of the problem lies in the fact that to eat flesh of an animal is not considered as a sinful act; but to kill it is a sin. And when you want to eat meat, get the animal butchered for you." This is a sort of explanation which I was able to get from some of the Agris. Really speaking, slaughtering a goat need not be considered as an act of sin, where eating its meat is permitted by social and religious customs!

The heart of the goat is removed. It is cooked along with the solidified blood which is specially known as "Suti petecha naiveda". The rest of the meat is cooked in curry, to be served to the caste members in a marriage feast along with rice cakes, the preparation being reserved for a selected few.

As the meal-time approaches the neighbouring persons induce each other to attend the marriage feast with the typical expression; 'Sarata sola haya—hadakicha jewana asela'—to put it in English: "It is the last (son's) marriage; and as such there must be mutton preparation. Come, let us go." It is no wonder that the villagers flock in numbers for such a feast at the marriage booth. The rest of the arrangement and programme of the feast is observed in the same way as we have seen before!

We have seen so far that all the items of an Agri marriage are carried by the momentum of the mutual co-operation of the members of the community. They have to depute one member from every house and this earmarks the minimum share to be undertaken by every house without expecting anything in return. It is a part of the social obligation which an Agri has to fulfil. There is no individual exception made in this regulated pattern of social behaviour. Besides, it is only on rare occasions that a dinner is required to be served to the members of one's caste in his village in recognition of the social obligation done by them and it is done at the time of a marriage ceremony. To put it in a nutshell the origin of holding caste dinners at the time of marriages is to be traced to the idea of paying regards to the social duty and obligation.

After this feat, the two rituals, 'Soyarya Samajavene' and 'Soyarichi hade modane', which we observed at the bride's booth, are repeated here *in toto.*

Late in the evening, the couple drives to the village of the bride, this time they being accompanied by some two or three persons. The husband and his friend (man-of-honour) lodge in a neighbour's house for the night while the bride directly proceeds to her father's house with the coronets both in her charge.

This way ends the fourth day of an Agri marriage ceremony.

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IDENTIFICATION OF THE BRIDEGROOM

Early in the next morning, the bride makes a move to the neighbour's house in the company of a few female friends, her *vade mecum*, the maid of honour carrying the coronets with her. Her neighbour receives her with the following retort, "You swept away your husband with a broom yesterday! What makes you come here and search for him now?" The bride, who is baffled all the more, makes no reply. She silently moves inside the house to search for her husband.

The bridegroom and his party sleep in the 'Oti' or a frontal open room of the house. All of them pull covers across their faces as soon as they learn of the arrival of the bride and her party and pretend to enjoy sound sleep. The bashful bride gradually comes to the 'Oti' and hangs her head down, as she is now required to put her finger on the exact person in identification of her husband. She ponders for a while, seeks

counsel with her maid of honour and cautiously puts her hand on a particular man to identify her husband.

In case her judgment is wrong, she has to undergo a penalty of uttering her husband's name, which as a newly-married Hindu bride she is very shy to do.

The bride then offers the bridegroom a little oil to dress his hair and coronets for putting on once more. He merely acts up to her instructions, but does not make any reply. He feels he is insulted and must be appeased by a present of some article. She follows the instructions of her maid of honour, who advises her to make a present of some article. She further requests the bridegroom to leave his place and accompany her. He then gets up from his bed, puts on his dress along with the coronet and the couple once more play the same games in the yard of the neighbour for an hour. The hospitable neighbour entertains the couple to a dainty meal which gives an ample scope for him to display his warm relations with the bride's father. It is a very rare incident that some dainties are required to be despatched from the marriage-house even if the neighbour happens to be a man of meagre means The couple proceeds to the house of the bride's father after the meals are over.

33

BATHING AT THE BRIDE'S PLACE

The couple is received in a formal way at the entrance of the bride's house. They are taken in the booth where arrangements are made to entertain the couple to play a game known as 'Playing with the fishes'. Both the bride and bridegroom then sit on a wooden plank facing each other encircled by a number of visitors and relations. Few pieces of straw are strewn in water, coloured red and yellow with a little turmeric powder and calcium, in a shallow copper basin. They represent fishes! A betel nut and a metal ring are deposited at the bottom. The bridegroom puts his left hand into the water and grasps either of them in his folded palm. The bride is to unfold his palm, who being a weaker sex is shown a concession to use both her hands. In case she is successful she has to supplement her efforts with the utterance of her husband's name. When the turn of the bridegroom comes he is not shown any latitude and all the factors are unfavourable for him. While unfolding both the palms of his wife, he is to use only one of his palms and that too the left

one. He has to pay the same penalty in case he does not succeed. Besides, he is given only one chance, whereas the bride may get in all three chances.

The game ends with sprinkling of water from the basin by both of them on the opposite side. With their garments tied together by a stiff knot—an emblem to show that they are inseparable two—the couple now moves inside the house to celebrate the next ritual known as 'Bhavvar Phirane'.

34

BHAVVAR PHIRANE

An earthen pot is placed inside the 'Kana'. Two maids of honour and the couple go round the kana, the maid of honour, moving in front of them, holds a hanging lamp and the other following them carries a 'Kara' in her hand. At the completion of each successive round the last maid of honour pours a little water in the earthen pot inside the 'kana'. The 'Dhavalarin' sings a song glorifying the Puranic binate deities with some four variations, as she conducts the ritual.

Soon after this ritual is over, the couple sits before the 'Kana' for performing the next item.

35

The next ritual is known as 'HADAPANA ZADAPANA' which are the opening two words of a song used in this ritual. Four pairs of earthen vessels—each pair consisting of one smaller and another bigger pot placed one upon another are placed at the four corners of the 'kana' with 'kara' in the centre. A piece of thread is taken round all these vessels. As the couple sits on wooden planks facing the earthen vessels, a woman standing behind them touches their coronets in a cross-wise fashion. The 'Dhavalarin' who takes her seat in front of the 'kana' sprinkles water from the 'kara' with a mango leaf alternately on the coronets of the bride and bridegroom, reciting a song, the opening pair of words of which form the name of the ritual that glorifies the earthen vessels. She sings another song that depicts the role and purpose of the coronets.

After this ritual is over, all the eight earthen vessels are emptied on the bodies of the couple, half on one and half on the other. In the end water is sprinkled on the maids of honour in recognition of their services. The couple then

leaves for the house of the bridegroom. After a feast, they take a bath again and return to the house of the bride.

PLAYING WITH A BAT AND A BALL

The couple has a formal bath again at the house of the bride's father. The bride and the bridegroom then play in the booth with a bat and a ball, both of them standing on the opposite ends. One of them throws a ball and the other hits it with a bat. Fibres and pieces of dried stump of a plantain tree are rolled in a ball which is tied in a piece of cloth. The bride hits the ball five times and the husband three times. Relatives present on the occasion serve as fielders. After this comes the ritual known as 'Pata Modane'.

Four heaps, each containing papad, pheni, a rice cake, a betel nut, a piece of copra and dried date, are kept at four corners of a stone slab and the fifth in the centre. The stone slab is also placed in the centre of the 'Kana'. The couple takes their seats on wooden seats with their eyes fixed on a sweet oil lamp placed on the central heap. A little song is sung on the occasion on the conclusion of which all the heaps on the slabs are collected in a piece of cloth to be sent into the house.

36

BAJEWARA BASANE

The parents of the bride sit on one end of a cot, facing the newly-married couple who occupy the other end. There is a rehearsal of married life and some inkling about parental responsibility is given to the couple and they now indulge in archaic humour. A stone roller, covered with a white piece of cloth, signifying a babe, is handed over to the couple. They, after taking it in their hands, hand it over to the parents of the bride. A male relative places it again on the lap of the bridegroom and applies a line of turmeric paste. The bridegroom immediately remarks "The baby has a motion, his clothes are spoiled. Take it back" and hands it over to the bride's charge for nursing it. It is the maternal responsibility of the bride to nurse the child and her husband has to relieve her for some time and fondle it.

The couple is now given some idea of their marital relations and the regulation of carnal behaviour. The bridegroom gives three times threads of dried bark of a plantain tree with

the following remarks, the bridal couple continuing to sit at the same place all the while.

His opening remark is " He ghe dava na chala majha gava " —" Take this tie-rope and come (with me) to my village."

This signifies the bride's departure to her husband's house. After the marital relations are established, she has to continue her life with the husband.

The second remark is " He ghe asu na tujhi aisa ti majhi sasu "—" Take this fishing net, your mother is my mother-in-law ".

He impresses upon her the new relation created between himself and her family. By their union two families of bride and bridegroom are linked together.

His last expression is a pinnacle of archaic humour, divulging their sexual relation in a manner, coarse and vulgar as ever.

" Hya ghe moti na ye majhya bothi "—" Have this nose-ring and come close for . . . "

Now comes the turn of the bride who also must show some information about the sexual relation. Relatives present on the occasion give a small earthen vessel known as " bondle " to the bride. She hands it over to the bridegroom with the the remark, which though submissive in appearance is satirical in intention.

" He ghya bonda, nako pahu, dusarecha tonda "—" Accept this ' bonda ', please do not seek for any other woman."

With this last remark, the rehearsal of their married life comes to a close. The couple is given rest for a little while and then they start for the next ritual ' Daivata Uthavane '.

37

DAIVATA UTHAVANE

One by one various arrangements made for the nuptial celebrations are now dissolved till the house gets back in its pre-nuptial stage. Various relatives gathered for the ceremony slowly go away. Numerous deities invited to safeguard and supervise the performance must also be likewise made free from their task. Social shading will gradually fade away from the house. And a formal function of ' Daivata Uthavine ', i.e. ' dismissal of gods ' is an emblem for the people assembled at the marriage house to leave for their homes.

The bride and the bridegroom then go to the household sanctuary, where various earthen vessels stand in an order

of four vertical rows at four corners. The couple jointly lowers down all one by one until their order is completely broken. The bridegroom breaks a coconut. The bride divides it into small pieces (khurdya) and the couple distribute the pieces.

A young boy peeps through a window, as this whole ritual goes on, who clamours for his share from outside. He draws the attention of the bridegroom, who asks him, " Kaya re pora bapusa haya kaya gharan ? "—" Is your father at home, oh boy ? " Five times the bridegroom puts him this question, the boy replying negatively for all these times. At last the bridegroom offers him a copper pice on the sixth time and then the boy replies, " Yes, he is in " and the bridegroom sprinkles water on him through the window as the former runs away.

Similarly, special decorations of the marriage booth must also be removed as there is no need for them now. The couple goes outside the booth and cuts the plantain trees erected at the entrance of the marriage booth. They reduce them to small pieces and collect them in a basket along the 'Murta Medha'. The couple makes a move to the village well, the bridegroom carrying the basket on his head. Some women accompany them to a well. Their 'Kankanas' are removed for a while. A little part of the bride's auspicious thread is cut and put in the basket. The bridegroom empties the basket within the environs of the well. The couple puts on the 'kankana' and the party moves back to their booth.

The 'Murta Medha' is hung to the roof of the house. And the couple then drives in a bullock cart to the house of the bridegroom.

After reaching the bridegroom's house both the rituals are repeated *in toto* at the husband's house with the following additions.

As the party returns from the village well, the bride carries a copper vessel (Handa) full of water on her head. The husband who gains a few steps ahead of the party arrives at the house and calls out his mother to come out to assist her daughter-in-law to lower down the load. The mother acts accordingly and the bride then enters the house.

Some women cut the trunk of the plantain tree in small pieces and collect them in a basket. They place two wooden planks for the couple to take their seats. The couple is now to enjoy a formal meal—a regular feature of their life to come. The bride serves the pieces to the bridegroom in the formal meal for five times. When his meals are over he also

serves her likewise but only three times. The bride afterwards entertains all the women present to this mimic feast. Thus the couple is once more goaded to their mutual relation and co-operation and the attitude which the social system of the Agris demands.

38

PANCH PANCHANE

This is practically the concluding ritual of the marriage ceremony at a bridegroom's house, though there may be a few more in the line. Senior female members of both the families, united together through the wedding of their children, finally meet at a common platform to exchange mutual greetings and to foster good social feelings, solely with the desire of making the prospective married life of the couple as happy as it could be ! The whole of the ritual makes a solemn impression and unpleasant feelings created by quarrels in previous rituals are soothened.

On either side of the 'kana', drawn in the central part of the booth, important female personnel from both the families occupy their seats on wooden planks. The grandmother, the mother and the two sisters—or some other women—from the family of the bridegroom ; the grandmother, the mother of the bride's family are present at the ritual. Baskets of various description are required as mentioned below :

1. Hara — a big bamboo basket.
2. Shiptara — a big flat bamboo basket.
3. Javan — a bamboo wicker intended for the husband's brother's wife.
4. Nandavan — similar one, intended for the husband's sister, preferably married.

The big bamboo basket is filled with plantains, pieces of pith of a plantain tree (erected at the marriage booth of the bride's house), 'papad', 'pheni', jaggery, turmeric pieces, 'ladus' and so on.

About twelve years ago a big number of rice cakes was also added to this. But the practice has disappeared now. As the ritual starts, the wickers known as Javan and Nandavan are placed on the heads of the respective women concerned ; the hugh flat basket is jointly placed on the heads of the other women sitting on either side of 'kana', who lean forward to support it. And the 'Dhavalarin' present on the occasion sings a special song meant for the occasion, which opens with a description of how the bridegroom's father, per-

chance, saw the bride in her sportive mood and the consequent bethrothal. It deals with other arrangements of the nuptial rites. The song further contains some satirical remarks on various members of the husband's family, with whom the bride is so fortunate to be related through her marriage. The song is concluded by a pathetic appeal by the bride to her younger sisters to look after their (also her) father's home as she, their senior sister, is now going to a house other than their own !

As the song is over, the basket is carefully taken down. The members get up from their seats and leave the 'kana'. They now hold a common sitting to promote their good relations. They describe peculiarity of behaviour and nature of their children, with a mutual request to each other to take every care of the new child admitted into the family. The relatives of the bride request the other party "हाय आमची पलिंज पाकटी घ्या संभाळून". (Ours is a weakling. Please accommodate her in your family). The members of the bridegroom's family reciprocate this attitude by a similar courteous reply, though the bridegroom scarcely needs anyway to go and live with his wife's parents and that too in a submissive position ! Their reply runs thus "हाय आमचा येडाबागडा त्याला घ्या संभाळून" i.e. ('Ours is also a simpleton. Please get him adjusted.')

The womenfolk then carry all the actions of mutual courtesy to cement their new relationship. They put up a few pinches of sugar or jaggery in the mouths of the women from the newly related family. They embrace each other. present coconuts, apply kum-kum marks and so on.

A feast is, as usual, a crowning feature of this event Just before it starts a pair of coconuts is broken, cut into small pieces and are sweetened with jaggery. They are distributed amongst all the women present declaring the new name of the bride in her husband's house with the remark "गोड गोड खा नि....हाक मारा", i.e. "Eat sweet, sweet things and call (her) by such and such name".[13]

During this feast the ritual "सोयरीची हार्डे मोडणें" is once more repeated. This way ends the fourth day of marriage.

39

REMOVAL OF THE TURMERIC

Early in the morning the couple drives to the house of the bride. The marriage ceremony is now practically over. The

[13] Name of the daughter-in-law.

turmeric paste applied to the bodies of the bride and bridegroom is now to be removed. When preparations are ready for this the couple gets seated in their seats below the 'Toran' in the marriage booth. A maid of honour rubs rice flour to the body of the bride and washes it till it is clean. A male member rubs the body of the bridegroom in the same way. Both of them then take their bath.

After the bath is over the couple takes their seats on wooden planks to worship a picture of a mango tree drawn on the wall of the house. The 'Dhavalarin', who conducts the ritual, sings a song in praise of the mango tree. The bridegroom sprinkles little water, the bride merely sitting by his side all the while. With the conclusion of the song, the worship is over.

The couple is now entertained to a small feast, when 'Ladus' are the special dish prepared for them. This is the last ritual at the bride's house. The bride's mother gives five 'Ladus' in a bundle to her daughter, as the couple drives back to the bridegroom's house.

As they enter their village and further as their bullock cart drives along the alley leading to their home, youngsters mass at the entrance of the alley to receive the newly-married couple. The whole alley is resonant with loud cheers and vociferous expression of joy of the younger folk. The whole gathering follows the couple and swarms the courtyard as the couple gets inside the house. The couple is formally received by the mother of the bridegroom and taken inside to the central apartment.

According to her mother-in-law's instructions the bride scales the ladder, disappears in the loft, and after a little time comes down. Her mother-in-law puts a question to her, "Have you hidden the 'ladus'?" When she replies in the affirmative, the mother-in-law instructs her son to go up with a friend to assist him and to bring the bundle of 'ladus' secretly kept by his wife. Only a little time is given and if he is successful, the women gathered at the house remark, "He will get money and property", i.e. to put it in vivid words, he will be the domineering personality in his married life.

The bride in her turn scales the ladder and undertakes a search of the bundle of 'ladus' similarly hidden by her husband. She is also given her maid of honour as her assistant. She must also finish the search within a prescribed period. If she is successful, the women remark, "She will be a per-

emptory housewife, who will keep her husband under her thumb ".

And I asked the mother-in-law of the bridegroom, " Dear Gangubai, if both your son and daughter-in-law are equally successful in carrying out their research, what will be the judgment of the women present on the occasion ? " She replied, " In that case both my children "—here she meant her son and daughter-in-law—" would be a match for each other. Thus their married life would be, all the while, most happy indeed."

And with this we come to the end of the traditional form of an Agri marriage, which is but a plethora of various rituals imbibed with shadows of the future married life, the sequence of which may be lost or trimmed to suit a particular duration.

PAT OR MUHURTA

(A Widow's Remarriage)

According to the Agri custom, after the demise of her husband, an Agri woman, especially if she is young, is allowed to marry a second time with a man of her choice. Death of her first husband disintegrates her social and economic adjustment to her immediate environment in her husband's house In addition to her personal loss and sorrow after the death of her husband, she has to face a series of handicaps in her own home. In her bereavement far from any sympathy or consolation she is subject to a series of harangues delivered by her parents-in-law for her being so unfortunate as to loose their beloved son ! Unfair treatment accorded to her at the hands of other relatives this helpless grief-stricken widow, practically driven away from her own house, proceeds to the haven of her father's house as the only shelter and the last resort to escape further ill-treatment in the disturbed situation. Completely bereft of all the importance and the privileges enjoyed by her it is but natural that she feels humiliated to continue to live under the same roof any longer.

She is confronted with a number of problems—to bring up her young children, the possibility to lead a chaste life with none to support and all to criticize and last but not the least the economic factor, playing a dominant and decisive role in her life, she is for the time being oblivious to her future and inapprehensive as to what it holds for her. And helpless as she is she has to fall back upon someone as a beacon light for

taking her true bearings to ensure her a safe passage in the present calamity. And it is a noteworthy fact that many an Agri brother has brought his sister and safely kept her in his custody till the horizen is clear and the difficulty is tided over. Amidst the Agri social surroundings an independent life, though economically sound, is rather impracticable, unless she has some grown-up male relative who will protect her. If she has grown-up children and the attitude of her deceased husband's relatives is favourable, she continues to live under a separate roof depending economically for her maintenance on the joint earnings of herself and her children and socially on the guidance and advice of other relatives and well-wishers.

In a good many cases a loving father arranges to bring back his widowed daughter as soon as he learns the news of her husband's death. Her children, if major, are persuaded by their paternal relatives to stay in their deceased father's house and the minor children notwithstanding any coercion or persuasion by them, leave their late father's abode to accompany their mother. The children above eight or nine years make a useful addition to the domestic and agricultural routine in carrying out sundry tasks and are far from being a liability an asset to the family. With a widow's return to her father's house the last vestige of relationship which united the two families together disappears and the tie between the two families is broken and they stand as they were before being united through the marriage of the children of the respective families. For a widow it is a matter of the past and she must look ahead to her future. Within a period of a year or so her relatives are able to gauge whether she desires to lead a single life or wishes to get married again. If the latter, then gradually with her consent her intention is made known in their social circle. Her choice of husband in this case is limited, being strictly confined to a widower. According to the practice of the Agri exogamy a widow is debarred from marrying a cognate member from her deceased husband's family or a fresh bachelor in her community or anyone outside the caste.

A widower, acquainting himself with the details about such a widow, requests his friends and members of his family to make a move in the matter. These people after obtaining the relative information pay a courtesy visit, to put it mildly, with a previous intimation, of course, to the house of the widow's father.

They are greeted with salutations as they enter the cur-

tilages of the house and are then taken inside by the widow's relatives. The guests after the preliminary courtesies are exchanged disclose the purpose of their mission to the head of the widow's family and beseech him to let them know the details concerning and the terms of the widow required to be satisfied. The widow's father after being satisfied with all the details regarding the widower goes inside with the leave of the guests to his daughter and relates the gist of his conversation, which she has already overhead in eavesdropping all the while, with a view to obtain her formal consent. If she approves of the offer, her father comes out and conveys to the guests the consent given by his daughter. But the guests request him that they be allowed to learn the widow's consent in person. The father then ushers his daughter before them and addresses her with the following questions :

" Dear —*————— ! Do you wish to get remarried ?
——†————has sent these people to make an offer to you on his behalf ? "

" Do you approve of him ? "

She then gives her consent with the word " yes ", or " approved ".

They, with their mission successful, return to their village and furnish the widower with all that passed between them and the widow's family in the course of their visit to her house.

Some indications of prevarication on the part of the widow's father betray the widow's attitude marrying a particular man.

After a week or so of obtaining the consent, a meeting, composed of some ten or twelve relatives of the widower, some leading men of the caste—Panchas—and a few relatives of the widow, is held at the house of the widow's father after mutual consultation and previous intimation to all concerned to discuss the question of the remarriage, the amount of money to be paid to the bride and so on. This amount known by the term " Dej " is never fixed but always varies, the variation being governed by numerous factors, for example, her experience of agricultural pursuits, her knowledge of household management and her developed sense of judgment. In some cases the amount may rise to as much as Rs. 300 in addition to which she may claim a separate piece of land according to the financial position of the prospective husband and the number of children of the first wife.

* The name of the bride.
† The name of the bridegroom.

Out of the sum so fixed, some Rs. 25 or Rs. 30 are to be paid to the widow's relatives coming from the side of her first deceased husband. The failure to make this payment leads to all sorts of objections from them to prevent the remarriage. They would also be entitled to take the matter before the community to bring every pressure on her to pay their legitimate dues.

The expenses of this meeting, which come to Rs. 25 or Rs. 30 for tea, liquor and other things, are mainly borne by the widower, of which a paltry sum may be contributed by the widow. The bridegroom then presents the sum of " Dej " to the leaders of the community present at the meeting to be given to the widow through her father or brother or whosoever happens to be the head of her family. The share of the relatives of the deceased husband and her contribution towards the expenses of the meeting, as aforesaid, to be deducted from the amount of this before the balance is handed over to the widow. The widow becomes the absolute owner of the amount when handed over to her and she can utilize it in any way she desires. This brings the meeting to a close.

The amount to be paid to the deceased husband's relatives is usually sent to them through some local agent for whose services of carriage a nominal sum of Re. 1 is paid to them.

The day chosen for celebrating the remarriage is optionally fixed for Thursday, and preferably for Monday, and the time for it is usually after the hours of dusk. A few hours before the appointed time the would-be bride arrives in the bridegroom's neighbourhood for the ceremonial bathing, toilet and bedecking herself with ornaments and garments presented by the would-be husband. She is not to apply kum-kum on her forehead at this time. Preparations for the ceremony are hurriedly made in the bridegroom's house and the people gather in the immediate courtyard where the 'Ocimum Sanctum' (Tulsi) plant is planted.

A number of old men and women, especially married a second time, gather on the occasion, attendance of young persons in particular of those married or to be newly married being a taboo.

As the bride is led by two or three persons to take her seat on one of the wooden planks in front of the 'Ocimum Sanctum' plant, the other seat being occupied by the bridegroom, she is greeted by the priests. After she takes her seat, the village police-patil and the priest, in order to satisfy themselves of her *bona fides*, if she has voluntarily accepted this

offer of marriage without any compulsion or coercion from others, put her the following questions :

" Do you desire remarriage ?

Are you willing to marry this man ?

Have you received all the amount of 'Dej' and are your terms fulfilled ? "

When they are convinced that she is willing for the present remarriage and there is neither coercion nor any wrong dealing, the police-patil after noting all the details, permits the priest to proceed with the rituals of the remarriage.

Another widow remarried, specially summoned for this ceremony, does the bride an honour of " filling in the lap " (Oti Bharane) and applies a kum-kum mark on her forehead with a signal to the priest. The priest opens the battery of his Mantras. The ceremony has begun, the musicians beat their drums, blow their pipes in full vigour and all of them create a tumultuous sound to render the recitation of the Mantras completely inaudible to the bride and the bridegroom. It is an injunction that the Mantrams recited by the priests during the 'Pat' ceremony must not be heard by anybody. The priest strikes the heads of the bride and the bridegroom against each other's. The ritual is over and the musicians stop playing on their instruments.

The persons gathered on the occasion gradually disperse after they have been treated to tea and feast. This is done within two hours and a half more. After this the couple is left alone to begin their married life. Two or three days afterwards the father of the bride goes to the new house of his daughter to take the couple to his house. This son-in-law must be received with some honour, of course not with so much zeal and enthusiasm as in the case of the newly-married one. After the arrival of the couple in his house, the new son-in-law is a recipient of some honour and a present of a turban, a dhotee or some such thing from his father-in-law. Some hospitality is shown and a few persons are invited to a feast held in his honour.

The procedure of the marriage is simple. There are no 'Dhavalas' sung on the occasion. No 'Dhavalarins' need ever attend it. There is neither pomp nor show. And this 'Pat' is in a way an unexposed affair and not given any wide publicity. It is an adjustment in one's life. Except for the high price for the bride there are no expenses incurred in the 'Pat' ceremony. For a young man who is to be married

for the first time, marriage with a widow is a taboo. A man who wishes to take another wife during the life-time of the first one, as well as a widower, may marry a virgin, the choice of a widow being an option in either case.

A widow thus remarried does not enjoy the same social status as enjoyed by a woman married for the first time. Some such feelings find an expression, when a widow remarried is conspicuously known as 'Muhurtachi Bayako'. "Women alone are her incharitable critics."

During the marriage ceremony of a son of a remarried widow, she is not done the honour 'of washing the hands and feet' by the bride's mother, unless the latter also happens to be a widow thus remarried. In their heart of hearts, the persons born of the first marriage are unwilling to get married to ones born of a remarried union.

Tendency to remain single, as far as possible, after her husband's death is taking shape amongst the Agri female folk, though she is not required to lead the life of renunciation "according to the rules dictated by male jealousy and desire for possession carried to absurd and tragic lengths"[14] as in the case of the High Caste Hindus. And I have come across not a few young widows, definitely of a marriageable age, who wished to remain single. One of them being questioned retaliated that she had enough experience of a man and did not wish to undergo it another time.

I conclude this with a quotation of a verse expressing the view of the Agri women about a widow remarried.

पाटाचे ग तूं राण्ये किती नटसी जीवाला ?
तुज्या हातचा पानी नाहीं चालत देवाला !
हालदी कुकवाचा रंग तो पहिला गेला !

"Oh you Remarried Queen (woman) why are you so particular about bedecking your person ? (What is the use of it ?). The deities do not accept even water presented by you ! After all the first impression of turmeric and kum-kum is not there !"

FUNERAL RITES

When all signs show that a person is nearing his death, he is removed on a blanket kept on the floor. All his relations gathered at his house give him a little water or milk to drink in a small feeding cup or a vessel. It is a convention amongst

[14] Shrinivas, M. N., *Marriage and Family in Mysore*, p. 153.

the Agris that as far as possible every member from his family should give him food and drink at the hour of his departure from this life. The eldest of the sons, who is present at the time, takes his dying father's head in his lap till life ceases. With the passing away of the life, the pent-up grief and whimpering so restlessly held in control all the while now bursts forth into a loud wailing and crying. Some of the relatives, who can restrain themselves, keep shedding tears, some of those who cannot, cry aloud and the sad sombre situation makes even a stranger feel to participate in the family grief that seems for the moment unassuageable

Most of the persons in the neighbourhood who are aware of the family's loss gather at the house of the deceased the moment the news of the death which is circulated in a village reaches them. A few of the men start for the various villages where the relatives of the deceased are and whose presence is required according to the Agri social custom and conventions of the funeral! A few of them go to a local shop to purchase cloth for covering the corpse. And few of the rest left behind the house try to console the relatives of the dead as best as they can. In this way nearly three to four hours are spent till all the arrangements are made for the cremation ceremony.

One of the older women from the neighbourhood, gathered on the occasion, heats some water in an earthen pot. She seasons turmeric and copra on a stone slab and then puts the prepared ball on the leaf. Little rice boiled in another earthen vessel is taken on another leaf and the pot is cleaned and kept in its place.

The relatives of the dead now dress the dead body in its best apparel and place it in a sitting position in a chair in the courtyard. The people gather to have the last sight (darshan) of the dead man. All of them with a few exceptions wave lights around the face of the deceased person, applying turmeric and kum-kum mark on its forehead and also a few rice grains. The close relations and the intimate friends of the deceased garland the corpse as a token of their last courtesy to the departed soul.

After all have done this, they remove the dress of the corpse, rub the lavigated ointment of seasoned turmeric and copra all over the body and bathe it in hot water. The corpse is again dressed in new or washed clothing. If the dead person happens to be a widow, she is dressed in a white garment; or in a yellow sari if she happens to be a married

woman with her husband living at the time of her death (Ayo or Suvasini). Again all the people wave light around the face of the corpse after which the metal stand, containing sweet oil, is placed horizontally on the ground and all other vessels used in the bath are turned upside down.

The corpse is placed on a bier, which is made of two horizontal bamboo poles, placed parallel to each other and tied across at intervals by small bamboo pieces at a distance of about a foot, forming a kind of a ladder, the whole bamboo frame being finally covered by a palm leaf. As the corpse lies there in the courtyard the relations of the deceased person give the corpse a drink of coconut water in one of the measures, the most closely related among them muttering a lamentation to the dead " बाबा या आमचा शेवटचाच हो ", i.e. " Oh Father ! This is our last drink (to you) ! "

The eldest of the sons then carries smouldering pieces of charcoal on a triangular frame of bamboo sticks held by three ropes at three corners of the frame and tied into a knot one or two feet above the base. Another son takes water in the earthen pot, in which the rice was cooked before and carries it in a similar fashion.

A leading member of the caste removes the nose-ring, mangal sutra and ear-rings of the wife of the deceased, crying and bewailing all the while, by the side of the corpse and puts them on the bier. All these ornaments indicate that the husband of a woman is living and they must go with him if he dies earlier according to the Hindu belief and tradition.

He breaks her bangles with a piece of stone and likewise throws the broken pieces on the bier.

Four men, mainly from among the relations or close friends, as far as possible, carry the bier on their shoulders and the others follow them and the funeral procession moves to the cremation ground which is usually situated beyond the outskirts of a village.

Female members gathered at the house of the deceased step out along the procession for a few steps to show their respect for the departed person and turn back.

Some fifteen years ago the corpse was carried in a blanket, instead of a bier, by three or four pairs of men, who faced each other and joined their hands as a stretcher and moved sideways the whole way. This is now gradually given up though in rare cases it may be found in some interior village. It is a quick and easy method for the transport of the corpse, for which no extra material is required.

The corpse is then placed on the funeral pyre arranged by a few experienced caste-members, who have gone to the spot before others. The piece of cloth is removed from the dead body, the male relations of the deceased sprinkle a few drops of water with a small stone, known as Jiva-khada, picked up on their way to the cremation ground. The boiled rice is divided into three parts and rolled into three balls to be placed by the side of the dead body. All of them go round the pyre three or four times, there being no precise rule why either of the number of rounds is selected. An elderly relation breaks the earthen pot and the eldest son of the deceased sets the funeral pile on fire. There is no ritual followed, no formulae are repeated, nor prayers are said nor any hymns chanted. The presence of a Brahmin priest is also not considered necessary. Sickles, axes and other instruments used in breaking the wood for pyre are thrown across the funeral fire, when the pyre flares up, as an act of cleansing them. Caste-members who come for the cremation, sit at different places in various groups, watching the funeral pile burn, and indulge in conversations of a private nature.

From among those that are present for the cremation, contribution is raised which must be paid by every member present for the funeral, the major portion being subscribed by the close relations of the deceased. This is known as 'Aher' and the names of all the contributors are entered in a list. Some country liquor and parched grains are brought from a liquor shop and are served to all the members present on the occasion. They then all return to their respective homes, having fulfilled their part of social obligation but for a few friends and relations who proceed to the house of the deceased.

The womenfolk gathered from the neighbourhood at the house of the deceased, in the meanwhile, arrange for a bath of all the female mourners of the deceased's family, cook their meals and make other necessary arrangements for the subsequent bathing of the male members after their return from the cremation of the dead body.

The male mourners take their bath ; the rest of the people merely wash their hands and feet. The neighbouring women then serve the male mourners their meals before the commencement of which the rest of the people assembled at the house of the deceased depart for their respective homes. These women now join the female mourners at meals and then

leave for their homes, after they have finished with all the rest of the household and culinary work. An earthen sweet oil lamp with a wick in it is kept in the corner of the central apartment and henceforward the head of the family takes his meals in this corner; before starting his meals he dips the wick in sweet oil. This lamp is always kept in the corner and never gets lighted symbolising the extinguished flame of the life of the deceased.

Third Day

The relatives of the deceased scattered in the surrounding region and especially those who could not attend the cremation ceremony arrive at the house in mourning on the third day. Local adults gather at about 8-30 in the morning to attend the further funeral rites in honour of the deceased. The womenfolk burst into wailing and loud lamentation the moment they enter the courtyard. The women proceeding to the deceased's house always carry a piece of cloth with them to blot the tears shed in agony.

A finger dipped in sweet oil is drawn across the backside of the male mourner, after he has taken his bath. A handful of boiled rice is made into three balls. The people have now to go to the cremation ground for further rites. The head of the family in mourning, as he moves out of the house first, carries two of these balls in two leaf-cups held in his hands behind him. Then follows another mourner who carries the third ball in the same manner. The rest of the male members of the community follow them, one of whom carries a water vessel (Handa), another a winnowing basket and the third "equipment of Arati."

After all of them have reached the place of cremation each of them in turn sprinkles a few drops of water with the little stone known as Jivakhada—the stone of life—which is carefully kept in some remote corner. One of the rice balls is offered to it in recognition of the services rendered by it by way of giving water to the departed soul in the course of its flight to heaven. The first two balls of rice are placed at the cremation ground in honour of the departed soul. The mourners then pour water on the ashes, if the fire is not extinguished and carry all the ashes from the cremation ground to the trunk of a particular banian tree. They then sweep clean the ground and decorate it with a 'Kana'. They worship the 'Kana', and take a few pieces of the bones in a

piece of cloth to be hung on a peg in their house. The whole of this work is done by the mourners only; the rest of the people merely watching them at a distance. The winnowing basket is torn and thrown away, so that it may not be used by anybody else.

The following change in the above ritual is prescribed in case the person deceased happens to be a married woman (literally, whose husband is alive at the time of her death). The ashes are removed on the same day or the other following. A new winnowing basket is taken instead of an old one. Three pennants driven inside the Kana, which represent the dead, are worshipped by the mourners.

Tenth Day

The members of a house in mourning sweep and clean their house with a fresh coating of liquid cow-dung. The womenfolk from the neighbourhood and those related to the dead, come to the house in mourning after taking their bath. They break a coconut and with its juice help the female mourners to take their bath. As it is not possible for all the women gathered at the house in mourning to provide themselves with enough garments for a change, they merely wash their hair (Munda ke Dhune). A woman, who is requested to take her bath, expresses her unwillingness to do so by merely touching her head with the palm of her right hand. There is no attempt to persuade her, as it is merely a formal request.

Preparation of a rice-ball

Rice and an egg are boiled in an earthen vessel. The rice is removed in a metal plate and the yolk of the egg is poured out on it. Some sweet dish or jaggery, if nothing else is available, is added to it. All these things are then mixed together, well kneaded and made in one sticky ball and placed on a brass plate, covered with one leaf above and another below it.

As all the men gather at the house in mourning one of the women inform, "we are going ahead". A closely related married woman of the deceased leaves the house first. She carries the brass plate containing the 'Pinda', wailing and crying all the while till she crosses the last house in the habitation. The rest of the women follow her silently. All of them go to the village tank where the male inhabitants of the village have gathered before. The man from the house in

mourning also join this party at the tank before the arrival of their women, as they have come quicker and by a shorter route. A leading member of the caste steps forward, takes the saucer from the weeping woman, and ties the 'Pinda' in a piece of cloth. He then places it back in the saucer, crowning it with a bracelet, offered for the moment by some married woman. The plate with the 'Pinda' is placed at some suitable spot. The men gathered there break up into various groups and watch the other rites to follow.

By this time a Brahmin priest arrives with a cow to be worshipped by the women related to the deceased. Every prospective female worshipper brings two seers of paddy and a wreath of flowers. One by one they pour the paddy in the basket placed before the cow, tie the piece of cloth and the wreath round her neck, go round her five times and offer her their salutations. They make a present of a rupee and four annas to the Brahmin priest as his fees (daxina). The women other than those mentioned above merely apply the kum-kum and turmeric mark on the forehead of the cow and thus show their veneration to the departed soul! The cow and the Brahmin act as mediums for conveying ostensibly all the articles presented to them to the dead, but which are actually appropriated by the priest.

It is a custom prevailing amongst the Agris to offer 'van' of the deceased in case she happens to be an 'ayo' (Suvasini). To make up one such 'van', a woman relative of the deceased has to take a seer of rice, a piece of 'Khana', a betel nut, some fruit and a copper pice in a new winnowing basket. If the 'van' comes from a closely related woman, a new sari may be added to complete the list of 'van'.

All such 'vanas' are spread in a line in front of the respective married women who wish to present them. A widow being disqualified from doing this service nominates some other married woman to present the 'van' on her behalf. The Brahmin priest when he begins to perform this rite starts from the first woman with a query, "Lady, whose 'vana' is this? To whom is it to be offered?" The woman concerned replies, "It belongs to so and so or myself. It is to be dedicated to so and so." The woman pours out a little water over the 'van', *pari passu* with the chanting of a formula by the priest, as an indication of having dedicated it to the departed. In this way the priest goes on with everyone in the line, till he reaches the other end. Then he returns to the place from which he started applying the kum-kum mark on

the forehead of every married woman standing in the line, who falls out of file only after the whole thing is over. The priest then begins to collect all such 'vanas' which now become his property.

Women go to the saucer containing the 'Pinda' and in rotation pour water on it with the thumb of the right hand, drop a pice in the saucer and offer salutation in veneration to the departed soul. There is neither any association of the Mantrams nor any further ritual connected with it. After this is over, all of them accompany the female mourners to the house in mourning. As they get inside, everyone must wash her hands and feet. Turn by turn they pick up a few grains of rice and wave them round a sweet oil lamp hung in door-frame between the kitchen room and the central apartment. The lamp is lighted by the women who left the house last for the ritual at the village tank.

The men gathered at the village tank also worship the 'Pinda' in the same way and offer to it a four-anna piece each. Finally, the chief mourner, after he gets closely shaved at the hands of a village barber, who is invited on the occasion, bathes in the tank. He offers his salutation to the 'pinda' representing the deceased person and deposits it in the village tank, after the coins collected are presented to the priest.

Eleventh Day

Female members from the house in mourning wash all their household linen and clothes and spread them out to dry in the sun. Relatives of the dead are not to touch these clothes after they get dried, lest these should get unholy. Some woman from the neighbourhood collects these clothes and keeps them inside the house according to the directions given by the housewife concerned. In the evening women in the nighbourhood come to the house in mourning to take some seven to nine paylees of rice grains and have them milled into flour, for preparation of the rice-cakes required for the following day. They go home after the milling is over and after their meals are over return once more to prepare the dough.

After the dusk hour some male member from the house in mourning extends a personal invitation to every house in the Agri habitation to depute its members to attend the house of the deceased for the ritual known as 'Pacha Kula' on the next day!

Twelfth Day

Womenfolk from the neighbourhood, having finished their bath and household work, gather very early in the morning of the twelfth day at the house in mourning and make preparations for cooking as a number of caste members are to be entertained to a feast. The main dish of the feast is boiled cakes for which the dough is already kept ready.

At about eight o'clock in the morning a little rice is cooked and divided into three parts which are further rolled into balls called as 'pindas'. A Brahmin priest arrives after an hour to say prayers as the 'pindas' are being worshipped by the head of the family. He receives his fees and goes away. The head of the family then offers three pindas to a cow, a crow and the household fire respectively. In the last case all the vessels placed on the fire are to be removed before the pinda is thrown into it.

By this time all the male members of the community have arrived and the women in the neighbourhood get the bath ready for them and make all other arrangements necessary for their meals. They are entertained to a feast without any ceremonial in honour of the departed soul. The chief of the family waits for his meals till all have finished. He then takes his plate by the side of the earthen sweet oil lamp. As the rest of the relations and sometimes friends of the deceased sit down to take their meals, the other people go to some other houses and again gather at the house in mourning. In case the relatives of the deceased who are sitting in the central apartment hesitate to come out, the members of the caste gathered on the 'Oti' request them to come out with the following address: "Come along. Be quick. We are getting late."

After this women have their feast, when long plantain leaves are spread in a square form inside the central apartment. They are all joined end to end leaving no gap between any two of them. Boiled rice is poured out in a continuous line and the preparations which usually consist of curry and some other relish, are served on the top of the rice. All the women assembled take their seats in the front of these plantain leaves in company of all the female members of the house in mourning. Before they actually start taking their meals the chief female mourner takes a little of all the food preparations in honour of the departed soul on a separate plantain leaf lying in a corner. With the following expression every

one of them pours a little water on the plate—with the remark: "आत्तांपव तूं घासाची व्हतीस, ती वासाची झालीस ग बाय." which conveys—"Upto this time you were in our company, but now you are only to be remembered." All the rest of them similarly pay their homage to the dead. They then start taking their meals. A woman who does not appreciate this way of sharing the meals in common with others, removes her food on another leaf as hers and eats it. After their meals are over, all the women sit around the chief female mourner and console her with some such words as, "Dear ....., you have been lamenting so long! It is now enough. Please stop it and do not lament any more."

Finally, the members of the community take some lavigated sandalwood and rice grains on a plate of leaves and apply its mark on the forehead of the male members of the family in mourning and stick a few rice grains to it as well! The relations of the mourners present a turban or a dhotee or some such apparel or failing this they make a present of at least a rupee to one of the members of the bereaved family.

After the presenting of the article is over, it is the duty of the caste fellows and the relatives to take the mourners out of their house to some public place, so that they should forget the sad event and begin their life as usual. As they take the male mourners out of their house, the members of the caste take a long wick dipped in sweet oil and some rice grains on a plate of leaves.

As the male members leave their house, the female mourners who remain inside once more begin to wail and cry aloud. The women gathered try to console them and when successful in doing so they take the mourners to a 'tulsi' plant (Ocimum Sanctum) after having given them a toilet. These mourners now for the first time after the sad demise in the family offer their salutation to the holy mother plant. The women from the neighbourhood then depart for their respective homes.

At the temple the party of the male mourners and others accompanying them perform the following ritual. One of the senior caste members lights the wick and places it along the rice on the plate of leaves before the image of a village deity as an act of worship. All of the mourners then prostrate before the image, which marks the end of the religious side of this programme. All the people then leave the temple for a local liquor shop where they have a liberal drink, purchased by the amount raised between them by subscription,

a major part of which is paid by the chief mourner. The people disperse for their respective homes.

Later in the night on the same day a 'Guru-bhandar' is held. It is to be performed by a 'Guru' in whose absence anybody authorised by him acts as his representative. He comes in the evening to the house of the mourners, paints a 'Kana' in the central apartment, which has already been swept and coated with liquid cowdung solution for the occasion. The 'Guru' places an earthen pot full of toddy and covered with a leaf in the centre of the Kana. By its side he places some sweet oil in a coconut shell. A wreath of 'Zendu' flowers with few betel leaves fixed at its lower end is hung from the main beam of the house so as to be in a line and just above the earthen vessel! The 'Guru' has his supper and then retires for a while.

All the male members of the caste gather at the house in mourning in the night at about eight, when the 'Guru' starts his 'bhajan'. He takes out little toddy from the earthen pot in a metal cup in his right hand and covers it with the palm of his left hand. He first holds it by rotation in the face of everybody present on the occasion and chants the words 'Om Swaha' and finally takes and drinks the contents thereof himself. He does this four or three times and the 'bhajan' starts and continues till morning, when the head male member leaves the house, accompanied by three men, for a village tank. He carries the earthen pot in his right hand and the wreath of flowers in a piece of cloth in the other. On reaching the brim of a tank, he goes inside the tank to deposit all these things at the bottom. All the four then return to the house in mourning and stand at its main door.

All the male members assembled for the occasion remain sitting in the house in the intervening period and when the four persons have returned from the village tank, one of the assembled asks,

"How many of you did go?"
They reply, "Five."
"How many of you have returned?"
"Four."
"Where has the fifth gone to?"
(He has) "gone to the heavens."

All the inhabitants leave for their houses and come back after they have taken their bath. The women in the neighbourhood also gather at the house in mourning.

A full leaf of a plantain tree is placed on a 'Kana' drawn in the courtyard in the house in mourning. Pieces of the bones of the dead, brought from the cremation ground on the second day of the ceremony, are placed on the leaf with a few flowers, black-powder, a few incense-sticks, turmeric powder and so on.

To start with, all the women one by one sprinkle a little water on the plantain leaf by way of doing homage to the departed soul; the male members also do likewise, after the women have finished.

The bones are then collected and tied in a piece of cloth. The Yajaman or the male head mourner leaves for the sea-shore or a village tank with the bundle of bones in the company of all the caste members, where the bones are immersed. Again, as on the previous day, they proceed to a liquor house for a drink of toddy which they buy from common collection amongst them, the greater share being contributed by the Yajaman. They then disperse for their respective homes, which marks the conclusion of the funeral ceremony.

Throughout these rituals we are impressed with the fact that the Agri life is one corporate whole and no individual member or family of the caste, as far as possible within the social circle, is left alone to share one's happiness or sorrow and the whole-hearted co-operation of the whole habitation is evident in all the important events in one's life.

This solidarity of living is strictly observed in the Agri inhabitation through the agency of the पंचS or controlling agencies, which are the local units of the social organisation of the Agris. The details of this organisation follow in the next chapter.

A NOTE ON 'GURU-BHANDAR'

This rite is prescribed for the person, who has accepted some 'Guru' during his life, on the 12th day after his death.

Betel leaves are placed at all the eight directions and the ninth in the centre in honour of the disciples of 'Matchhindra', who is regarded as the 'Guru' of all. The present 'Guru' who conducts this ritual is a follower of one of the sects of these disciples of 'Matchhindra'.

North-east direction of this Kana is a seat of 'Adinath'. 'Giri' claims the north-west corner for him and 'Bharati' occupies the south-east corner. All the rest may have one corner from the remaining ones.

The Guru opens his 'bhajan' with जय जय गुरु महाराज जय जय गुरू परब्रह्म. Then various songs follow.

Halves of plantain leaves are arranged in a circular form with this 'kana' in the centre. Various sweet preparations and vegetables, which usually five in number in each case, are served on the leaves. This food is shared jointly by all those who have accepted some 'Guru'. Even a woman may join them, if she has a 'Guru'.

After the procedure—detailed in the embodiment as before —the relatives of the deceased person pour a little water on the dish, containing a share of each preparation, dedicated to the departed person, with an address, "I dedicate my share of meritorious deed of such and such to your lot." *

The ritual is to be completed before midnight. In case of a person where no 'Guru' is accepted, merely the eleventh chapter of 'Shivaleelamrit' is listened to by all the gathered, read by a senior relative of the deceased.

'Pachakul' otherwise known as 'Panchagavya', is a mixture of ghee, curds, milk, dung and urine of a cow and is served to all for their purification from the mourning of the deceased.

* माझें सोला सोमवाराचं पुण्य तुला देतो.

CHAPTER VIII

SOCIAL REGULATIONS

FROM the historical past, the agricultural populace of India, settled in numerous villages, was governed by a set of rules, that exercised powerful influence on individual behaviour. The village community organisation, very often inclusive of different castes following various occupations but residing in a common habitation,[1] managed its local affairs of agriculture, defence and finance with a united sense of responsibility. The representatives of all castes worked as whole to function their government. This organisation superintended all kinds of village affairs.

Similarly, the other organisation with caste, as its fundamental basis, known as caste council, that had a powerful influence on all its members scattered in many villages, carefully followed a set pattern of behaviour, the details of which were fixed by traditions secular or otherwise. The code of behaviour gradually rose up in response to the social, geographical and economic environments that determined its position in the hierarchy of the Hindu Caste System. The caste council composed of the responsible members determined the particulars of their social code and supervised individual behaviour in the light thereof

These village communities and caste councils steadily kept up their course during the whole of the historical period, when various ruling authorities changed their office and political changes swept over the country. They faced the gauntlets of political suppression and religious oppression. Out of these two social institutions that formed the backbone of the rural population, the village community received a death blow during the British regime, though the village life remained practically the same.

It will not be far from the truth to say that the individual behaviour of an Agri is moulded by the rules of the Agri caste councils even today. These caste councils, popularly known as 'Pancha System' have wielded powerful influence on the homogeneous Agri population covering a number of

[1] Altekar, *Village Communities in Western India*, p. 43.
भिन्नजातीनां भिन्नवृत्तीनामेकस्थाननिवासिनाम् ।

villages together. "The more territorially concentrated a caste the greater is its consciousness as a coherent entity",[2] and the behaviour of an Agri individual in the midst of the caste members does not show any trend other than the prescribed code. Any aberration from the prescribed code of behaviour is immediately suppressed by the caste members through the agency of their 'Panchas'. And an Agri individual is led to believe that he is a part and parcel of one united whole and as such can have no independent existence. His outlook and behaviour is moulded by the social pattern. In a number of cases an Agri has no independent view, but the one adopted by the 'Panchas'.

The villages holding the Agri population in Alibag Taluka have been divided into various groups on geographical basis so that the representatives of the Agris in each group can conveniently come together to tackle some social problem and keep up their regulated social life. "Local conditions, such as ease of communications, numbers of the caste residing and their concentration or dispersal, must determine the area in which the caste council functions."[3]

There are such six main groups of villages in Alibag Taluka. Each unit is called 'Tappa' which is another form of the word 'Tarfa',[4] a sub-division of a political unit during the pre-British regime in India. In this case the word 'Tappa' is not to be understood in the sense of a sub-division of the hereditary estate as used in the North-Western Province.[5] Each 'Tappa' or a group of villages is a unit of social regulation of the Agris.

Zirad, Parahur, Khandala, Umata, Bamangaon and Shirgaon (properly known as Shrigaon) are the groups of villages or Tappas. the number of villages in each 'Tappa' varying from 15 to 50. Out of these the Zirad and Parahur groups of villages are situated around the Kanakeshwar Hill in the northern part of Alibag Taluka. The Khandala Group extends between Alibag Town and Karla Khind. The Bamangaon and Umata group of villages are located in the southern part of the taluka surrounded by the two horse-shoe-shaped spurs of the Sahyadri Mountains, the latter extending its limits as far as the Agri habitations in the Khar lands on the northern side of the Kundalika estuary. The Shirgaon group of villages, by

[2] Hutton, *Caste in India*, p. 89.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 86.
[4] Date, *Maharashtra Shabdakosha*, Vol. IV; Molesworth, *Marathi* English Dictionary.
[5] Baden-Powell, *Village Community in India.*

far the biggest in the whole lot, sweep all the villages from Sambri to Manakola in the eastern part of the taluka, a major portion of the tract popularly known as Kharapat.

In every group of these villages invariably a chip of the old block is at its head, whose office is usually hereditary. He is called Mukadam or Sarpancha. In each of the villages under his jurisdiction in the 'Tappa' a number of 'Panchas' is appointed to look after the individual behaviour of the members of their caste. The number of houses and distribution of population roughly determine the number of the Panchas, which varies from 2 to 7 in every village.

There are no hard-and-fast rules or regulations for a person to be enlisted as a 'Pancha'. Many of the respectable 'Panchas' I have come across are advanced in age and endowed with practical experience of life. Most of them have commanding personality and though illiterate in the literal sense of the term, often possess a sense of responsibility and justice and carry their task fairly well. The blood of social service runs through their veins. Side by side there prevails another type of 'Panchas', that is gradually replacing the former ones. And at present a man, who has the gift of the gab, who can defend his position or use any logic to suppress the other side and prove to be a terror in the case of a slight opposition, can easily become a 'Pancha'. Wealth and physical power are now considered to be the additional qualifications for one intending to be a 'Pancha'.

The Panchas or the controlling persons deal with the social side of the individual behaviour and they deal with various problems involved in small disputes, such as maltreatment of a wife, discrepancy in the payment of the bridal price, premarital sexual relation, breach of marriage and such other details which are regarded as not sanctioned by the Agri code of social behaviour.

Every Tappa is an independent unit to prescribe various injunctions of behaviour for its people. Relaxation is made even in some traditional customs to render them suitable to the prevalent economic, social or political conditions.

Few examples of such reforms, adopted by the Agri caste councils, are given below.

I. In all the Tappas the bridal price, which formerly consisted of partly in cash and partly in paddy, was revised to be paid only in cash to keep their social behaviour within the circle of the rules and regulations of the Government Rationing System introduced during the war period.

II. Compulsory attendance of a washerwoman, who picked up the few coins on the stone-slab during the ritual of Gouricha Pata of the nuptial ceremony, is not now considered necessary on account of the inconvenience caused by her unpunctuality and impertinence.

III. In the opinion of a leading member of the Agris in the adjoining 'Tappa', a custom was introduced in the group of villages, surrounding Kusumbale in the eastern tract of the taluka, to permit a woman, who was divorced to get remarried to another Agri in order to save her from being converted to another faith.

And it will not be a wrong prophecy to say that the customary injunction of distributing liquor at some occasions during the nuptial and funeral ceremonies will be lifted in order to adjust the Agri code of behaviour to the new regulations according to the 'Prohibition Policy' of the Bombay Government.

Every 'Tappa' has fixed its own bridal price. As a rule marriage takes place between two persons of the same 'Tappa', though in some cases it is allowed between persons from different 'Tappas'. In such a case a bridegroom's father has to make some extra payment to the caste council of the Tappa from which the bride comes.

The Panchas are supposed neither to intervene nor to take any initiative in the matter even though they may have the cognizance of the offence or aberration done, as the person offended is bound to apply to them. After giving audience to the complainant, the Panchas instruct a man specially appointed to the office, known as Madhavi or Bombalya, to proclaim the day, hour and place of the meeting. The fees for such a proclamation are Re. 1-4 in the Zirad Tappa to be paid by the complainant at the first call to the house of a Pancha. The Pancha issues the following instructions to a Madhavi— "You have to proclaim today." * He thereon proclaims in the village the day, time and place of the meeting. Accordingly a meeting of the male members of the Agri caste from the habitation is held at the house of a third party in the village, where the Panchas summon a complainant 'to word out his complaint' after someone from the meeting raises a question, "Why is this meeting held ? † The culprit concerned is also summoned to give his defence afterwards. In case of a

* आज बाबा बोंबलाचा हाय!

† आजची सभा कला भरली हाय

complicated situation, consequent upon the evasive replies of the culprit, supplementary evidence is invited from the witnesses present at the meeting. "Their procedure is extremely simple, informal and untramelled by the law of evidence."[6] The decision is given summarily after the mutual concurrence of the Panchas, which is very often influenced by the opinion of the men present at the meeting. A sum of Rs. 5 to Rs. 50 or even more according to the nature of the offence is imposed as a fine upon the culprit, to be paid almost immediately. The failure to pay it means a social exclusion of the party, known as 'मनोमन बंदोबस्त' which implies that nobody must extend his co-operation to the culprit in his agricultural routine and social life. As observed in some other parts of India, no compulsion is made to give a feast either to the members of his caste or to Brahmins.

In case the party convicted feels that injustice has been done to him or if he is displeased with the decision of the local Panchas he is allowed to appeal to the Mukadam, who stands at the head of the Pancha Hierarchy, the fees in this case being Rs. 6. This Mukadam having conferred with the local Panchas from the village of the parties involved, issues instructions to the local Panchas of all villages under his jurisdiction to present themselves on a specified day and time at a place usually in proximity of the habitation of the parties involved This specified meeting follows the same procedure as before but on a large scale and this decision is final.

On rare occasions a joint meeting of the adjoining 'Tappas' may be held in case either of the parties in the social dispute escapes to the other 'Tappa' (*vide* example of Nyay No. 2). As the judgment is never postponed, the parties concerned must be present at the meeting, and no exception is made. The decision in such rare cases may be given *ex-parte*. Hence neither of the parties dare to be absent from the meeting. The Panchas may visit the house of either of the parties in case one is physically unfit, or the party concerned is the member of a fair sex, and carry the impression to the caste meeting. Except in extreme cases, when her presence is badly needed, a woman as a rule does not attend a caste meeting.

The punishment of social exclusion, inflicted on the party, reluctant to pay the sum of fine, is removed only after the full payment of the sum imposed and a total submission to the Panchas and that too after their proclamation to that effect in the next caste meeting.

[6] Hutton, *Caste in India*, p. 91.

Though the 'Pancha System' of the Agris is full with the spirit of democracy, the frame of its organisation is elemental enough! There are neither written regulations nor fixed procedure for the conduct of a caste meeting. Hence such a meeting does not impress one more than a mere gathering of persons. More often than not a meeting can be persuaded to sanction a particular proposal by a Pancha, by the vehemence of his argument or by his dynamic personality rather than by the importance of the subject. The place of a meeting is generally a public spot which may be a temple, a Banyan tree, the courtyard of a Pancha's house or some such suitable place. The amount of the fine collected is usually distributed according to the villages represented by the members present at the meeting, who invariably squander it in a tea-shop or a liquor house on their way back home. An attempt made by some of the leaders to open a fund, with the amounts of fines so collected, proved to be a failure.

At times this Pancha System has proved to be a tool of mischief at the hands of a rich and influential member of the community, who may use either persuasion or coercion to win them over to his side. Very often it has been like a double-edged weapon, which may be wielded against the party himself. And in some genuine cases, a complainant is made a fool, when the Panchas can be managed to pronounce their verdict against him. To quote an old Agri woman, "Verily the rich folk have many friends and the riches are but the baggage of virtues." *

In some cases a culprit, if he happens to be a man of influence and opulence, refuses to pay the amount of fine imposed upon him and takes the gauntlet, which the Panchas have thrown down upon him. Such a recalcitrant member may collect some men under his flag, all of whom live a corporate life of mutual assistance to each other in all walks of life even in the teeth of communal isolation. Such a party by the influence and the constant efforts of his friends gathers strength every day till his group attains majority. The Panchas then being fully aware of the impending situation have to retrace their steps and the social isolation gradually ends in smoke.

Some examples are cited to exhibit the operation of the Pancha System. They all warrant us to believe that the Panchas are helpless to handle a situation if a culprit escapes

* "राण्डबायचा कोन नाय! ताडी पाजील, झगझगी करील त्येचा न्याय!"

their geographical limit of jurisdiction. Further, they have no voice in a case where a member of another caste is involved. A resourceful party may play a mischief by taking the matter to a court of law, which may supersede the verdict of the Panchas. At times an influential member beats the Panchas to their knees.

EXAMPLES OF THE PANCH SYSTEM IN OPERATION

(1) An aged man from the Zirad Tappa, who often frequented the home of his married daughter in a neighbouring village, fell in love with one of her relations. With mutual consent and blind with passion as they were, both the lovers eloped and disappeared for some days, strongly believed by all to have led a married life. After a few months, probably when all his resources were exhausted, the old man returned with his sweetheart and sought shelter in the house of his son. The local Panchas strongly disapproving this aberration, warned his son that he would be socially isolated in case his father lived with him. The old man when reprimanded by his son, and given to understand that the Panchas were dogmatic and persistent in their attitude, got his sweetheart married probably as a divorced wife in an interior village of the Kharapat to some other man, and thus saved his son and himself from total social isolation.

(2) After an intimate friendship that developed between a married Agri woman and an Agri bachelor, they indulged in extra marital sexual behaviour. The paramours afterwards escaped one night and managed to get established as a married couple in one of the villages of the Parahur Tappa. This incident was hotly discussed at a joint meeting of both the 'Tappas' held at the request of the Mukadam of the Zirad Tappa, after the husband of the woman lodged a regular complaint with the local Panchas. They demanded that the woman should be sent back to their Tappa, where she would be tried and adequately punished for her social aberration. The Panchas of the Parahur Tappa on the other hand insisted that they regarded themselves more eligible to decide the matter, as she already took shelter in their Tappa. Then followed a series of jobations and harangues delivered by the leading personalities of both the 'Tappas'. Finally the joint meeting ended in a total fiasco. The controlling body of the Zirad Tappa has since then decided that no daughter of their 'Tappa' shall be ever married to a man from the Parhur Tappa.

(3) There was a dispute some fifteen years back when the progressive and orthodox elements of the Agris were divided against each other. The bone of contention between the two parties was whether youths could move about bareheaded in public places and at social functions. The modern element allowed the youths to move about in whatever way they pleased, which the orthodox people would not allow. They further demanded that their youths must get their heads clean-shaved leaving only a proper tuft of hair. The orthodox leaders of the community, who were determined to check this unruly and unsocial behaviour, declared in a caste meeting that youths who would not follow the social code of behaviour, though persuaded so often, were socially isolated. In retaliation the youths, who loved parted hair on their head more than the orthodox set of people, preferred to be socially isolated, gathered a good number of modern Agri youths under their flag and declared in their meeting that the orthodox element who refused to move with the time were socially isolated by them.

Both the parties being very strong the struggle continued for about six months and all the attempts of the orthodox party were foiled by their opponents. They then played a new trick. They declared that the landlords, who employed these modern youths, would not get any Agri labour. The landlords, who would not get involved in the struggle, refused to comply with this absurd demand. They accepted the labour that came to them. The struggle reached its natural end. And the social isolation though a very effective remedy to suppress an individual aberration, proved to be rather blunt against a group. The orthodox element had to surrender to the modern youths and had to move with the time.

(4) An acquaintance between an Agri girl and a Choukalashi youth developed into extra marital relationship. In order to save themselves from the clutches of the controlling body of their caste, the lovers crossed the Amba Creek and managed to get themselves established as a married couple. All the efforts of the local Agri Panchas were unsuccessful, because both of them were beyond the geographical limits of the tappa and more because one of them belonged to a caste other than their own.

(5) Some ten years back, the progressive element in the Parahur Tappa, in emulation of the educated classes, desired to eradicate the bigamous tendency of their people. They declared in their caste meeting, where they formed a majority

by previous arrangement, that a man who married another wife during the lifetime of his first one would be declared as socially isolated. But in this Kharapat area of the salt paddy fields a wife is an asset to an agriculturist. In a woman he gets a faithful servant and a legal wife. Besides, such a marriage takes place with a widow, who being advanced in age and experienced in agriculture, is a valuable addition to the household. This type of marriage costs only a few hundred rupees—an amount equal to the payment of a hired labourer for a year or two at the most, whose labour is doubtful to rely upon. Besides, the services of a wife can be commanded and maintained whenever needed. This ruling upset many Agris. In defiance of it some of them, who would have been otherwise reluctant to do so, purposely took another wife. There were free fights and quarrels between these two sections. And finally the progressive element had to give in. The pill they prescribed was too bitter to be swallowed.

(6) On another occasion, some fifteen years ago, the local leaders of the villages in the vicinity of Poynad organised nearly 15 villages in one harmonious group They set up a committee of sincere and experienced men to deal with the local complaints. All the villagers carried their disputes regarding agricultural and social affairs to the appointed personnel and were pleased with their impartial judgment. Gradually the field of jurisdiction was extended to include criminal offences also. This stopped the litigation from this part in the Alibag Taluka Court. Consequently, the Government officers who already watched the situation with frequent visits to this part threatened the people that they would be sued in a court of law for attempting to start a parallel government. The result was obvious. The organisation dwindled down and slowly the unity and co-operation disappeared from these villages.

(7) In a village in the Parahur Tappa an Agri youth, in one of his intoxicated moods, smashed the idol of a village deity, called as Bapadeva, with a hammer. This news immediately spread in the village and ultimately reached the local Panchas, who summoned a caste meeting next morning to deal with this local iconoclast. The culprit also presented himself at the meeting; and confessed that he broke the idol under the influence of liquor. His pleas for mercy were not heeded and he was punished with an instantaneous social isolation for good, which meant that the culprit concerned had to leave his village and settle in some remote part never to return

home. According to this ruling the social isolation was strictly followed. This situation prevailed for a fortnight or so! One night all of a sudden this iconoclast began to sing, dance and pray and proclaimed that Bapadev took his possession. Every night this faking penitent continued his singing and praying and went on blowing his trumpet. This had the desired effect on the villagers, who came to regard him as a genuine devotee, as the deity herself was gracious to take his possession even though he wronged her. A few of the people who were impressed by this miracle went to his house, notwithstanding the ban of social isolation. Gradually most of the villagers followed them. This devotee then wielded a powerful influence over the villagers and the social isolation steadily melted away.

CHAPTER IX

FAMILY IN OPERATION

THE Agri population settled in this region and especially in the agricultural land of salt paddy fields, which these people exclusively claim for themselves, has evolved a standard of living in response to the natural environment. Fostered with the spirit of self-reliance, an Agri need not go beyond his native soil for his maintenance. Yet scarcity of drinking water and firewood being the natural handicaps of the salt land, he finds it difficult to adjust himself in extreme cases. An attempt is made in this chapter to study all these details of the Agri life in the Alibag Taluka.

After observing the life of the Agris in a number of villages for more than a year, a questionnaire was prepared to cover all the economic aspects of an Agri family. It was further supplemented by some questions relating to an Agri's particular problems and the solution he would offer, to understand his attitude in an unbiassed way. Information regarding drinking and other habits was not included in the list in the light of my previous experience and as such an attempt would scarcely meet with any success.

A questionnaire for a family was prepared as "the family and not the individual is the unit of Indian economic organisation".[1] It proved to be a hard task to collect this type of information from individual families scattered over various villages of the Alibag Taluka. The ignorance of the rural Agri masses, their suspicion that the information given by them might be abused, and their reluctance to shed any light on the quantity of the foodgrains consumed under the misapprehension that it might result in unfavourable readjustment of their rations.—and this by the way had already created an unpleasant atmosphere,—were some of the impediments which I had to face during the course of this sample survey. And hence, a variety of means of approach was tried. A local Agri headman, an influential and benevolent landlord or a social worker popular amongst them, was often approached to win the confidence of the agrarian Agris. The questionnaire was filled only when there was no challenge about its

[1] Mukerji, R. K., *The Foundations of Indian Economics*, p. 59.

purpose and after-effects and the party was willing to get it filled.

Repeated trips were made to some villages, when the local people went on prevaricating till they were prepared to part with the necessary information. I may cite one such example of a group of villages surrounding Beloshi and Chinchoti in the southern part of Alibag Taluka, where I made no less than twenty-one trips till I succeeded in collecting the required information with the kind assistance of a notable leader of the community, who personally accompanied me. On the whole about two thousands of miles were covered on bicycle to get all the 586 schedules completed during the period of 1947-48.

Where illiteracy is the order of the day, and recording of usual family expenses is never a practice, the idea of an annual budget is nothing but ridiculous. By careful steps and counterchecks and presentations of similar examples, information on every item regarding the annual consumption of various commodities, the required results were obtained. A farmer could say how much oil he bought in a week, but he would never say what its quantity was like during the course of the whole year. Hence his weekly calculations were carried to a month and then to a year, noting particular weeks when the said commodity was not purchased.

In all 586 schedules were filled from more than seventy Agri habitations scattered all over the Taluka. Care was taken to represent various walks of life in the sample survey. Every effort was made to see that a proper representation of families from each area was obtained. Further attempt to reach accuracy was made by neglecting the schedules where the information given was found to be dubious or incomplete. The total number of family schedules that were finally taken up for tabulation was 564.

Analysing our data we find that the total number of individuals under this sample survey was 3,290 distributed over 564 families. The average number of members per family, therefore, comes to 5.83.

TABLE No. 1

Average number of members per family

Total number of persons under survey	...	3,290
Total number of families under survey	...	564
Average number of persons per family	...	5.83

Out of these 3,290 persons, 1,625 were males and 1,665 females. Thus the female ratio was 50.61 in every hundred.

TABLE No. 2

Sex Distribution

	No.	*Percentage*
Males	1625	49.39
Females	1665	50 61
Total ...	3290	100.00

TABLE No. 3

Distribution of families with their average annual income at different income levels

Per capita income level in rupees	No of families	Average income in rupees per family	Average income *per capita* in rupees
1-50 ...	6	272.6	33 40
50-100 ...	84	149.3	80.9
100-125 ..	79	688.8	114 2
125-150 ...	90	733 1	136.2
150-175 ...	59	788.2	163 1
175-200 ...	53	915.6	186.1
200-225 ...	41	1081.0	213 8
225-250 ...	35	1112 6	236 6
250-300 ...	59	1259.4	273.9
300-400 ...	29	1386 2	345 8
Above 400 ...	26	2434.4	563.8
All families ...	564	921 9	179.0

During the course of this survey the income of a family was estimated in the light of the information acquired personally from the heads of the Agri families. The income derived usually was based on the sources of agriculture, hiring one's labour, subsidiary occupations and crops. The details of these features have been discussed separately when the results of this survey were tabulated on various expenditure levels.

The total income earned by a family was divided by the number of adult equivalents to the members in a family to get the *per capita* income. The families were then arranged

in 11 different *per capita* income levels as given in Table No. 3. Children above 1 and below 12 have been regarded as half adults according to the Government Rationing System prevalent in the area.

A glance at the table shows that the income of six families was very small, while the income of about 312 families of the total lot, i.e. 55.3 per cent, ranged between Rs. 80.9 and Rs. 163.1. About 55 families from the sample survey appear to be financially stable.

The income in case of the last 26 families is pretty high. Breaking down the details of their income we find that except one, all the families show a special feature of possessing landed property, the biggest size of a single holding being 60 acres of agricultural land and an average of about 11 acres per family. Seventeen of them are natural families and nine joint ones ; the latter supplement their income by doing extra work or by some other occupation.

The lowest figure of the average income of a family is Rs. 272-6-0 and the highest is Rs. 2,434-4-0, the average income for all the 564 families being Rs. 921.9. The total income of all the families under this survey was Rs. 5,19,995 with a total number of 2,905 adult equivalents.

TABLE NO. 3A

Size of an average family as compared to income levels

Per capita income level in rupees	No. of families	Average number of adult equivalents in a family
1-50	6	5.6
50-100	84	5.4
100-125	79	5.9
125-150	90	5.3
150-175	59	4.8
175-200	53	5.0
200-225	44	5.0
225-250	35	4.8
250-300	59	4.5
300-400	29	3.9
Above 400	26	4.3

Further information as regards the size of family with average number of adult equivalents is given in Table No. 3A. From this table it will be seen that the number of

average adult equivalents is greatest at the lowest income level. It starts with 5.6 at the income level of Rs. 1-50. Then it shows a gradual tendency to decrease till at last it shrinks to 4.3; the number of adult equivalents at the last income level, where the figure of the total average income rises above Rs. 400.

To determine their respective standard of living, all the schedules of 564 families, the *per capita* expenditure of which varied between Rs. 52½ to Rs. 424, were arranged in an ascending order. They were distributed over various expenditure levels as detailed in Table No. 4. Further, the total expenditure in each family was divided by the units of members in a family, persons below 12 years and above 1 year being calculated as half of an adult according to the Government Rationing system prevalent in the area.

TABLE NO. 4

Expenditure level	Group	No. of families	Percentage
Rs 50 to Rs 100	I	54	9.57
,, 100 to ,, 125	II	112	19.88
,, 125 to ,, 150	III	124	21.98
,, 150 to ,, 175	IV	124	21.98
,, 175 to ,, 200	V	71	12 59
,, 200 to ,, 250	VI	48	8.51
,, 250 and beyond	VII	31	5.49
	Total	564	100.00

The annual *per capita* expenditure varied from Rs. 50 to Rs. 100 in the case of 54 families of the first group, which comprised 9.57 per cent of the total sample. These families were somewhere near the starvation level. Life at this level is next to impossibility. For many days during the monsoons some washy gruel or paste constitutes their daily grub. It merely helps them to keep their body and soul together. This continued starvation affects their resisting capacity to diseases. Evidently these people cannot withstand any epidemics and fall easy victims to various endemic diseases. It would not be far from the truth to say that their life is nothing but a series of hunger and misery.

Groups 2, 3 and 4 which include 360 families or 63.74 per cent of the total sample survey, with their *per capita* annual

expenditure varying between Rs. 100 to Rs. 175, represent the average standard of living led by the Agris in this taluka.

Group No. 7 comprises only 5.49 per cent of the number of families that have attained on the whole a standard of living usually beyond the reach of an average Agri.

A diagram given in Appendices graphically represents the position of various groups at different expenditure levels.

The number of children per family

Detailed information as regards the number of children born and deceased was obtained in respect of 430 families out of 564. Reluctant attitude of an Agri mother to enlist her deceased issues, inability of a father to supply in detail the required information when he got issues from more than one wife and the absence for a considerable period or death of either of the spouses, constituted the main difficulty in collecting this data. In two cases alone an Agri mother found it difficult to recollect all her deliveries! In four cases the women refused to distinguish their children from their co-wives'.[2] Whereas the number of sterile couples was only 27 out of 564 or 4.8 per cent; two couples were so unfortunate as to lose all the 7 and 9 issues born to them respectively.

A glance at the following table will show that in the first group the total number of children born to 42 couples was 225 out of whom 179 survived. In the second group it was 339 out of 425, where the number of families involved was 87. On the whole it was found that the average number of children dead and those born showed a tendency to decrease with the rise in income as will be clear from Table No. 5.

TABLE No. 5

Details of children born and dead

Expenditure level in Rs.	No. of families	Number of children		Percentage of children	
		Born	Dead	Surviving	Dead
50 to 100 ...	42	225	46	79.6	20.4
100 to 125 ...	87	425	86	79.8	20.2
125 to 150 ...	95	390	54	83.1	16.9
150 to 175 ...	97	474	58	84.5	15.5
175 to 250 ...	86	315	42	86.7	13 3
250 and more ...	23	82	10	87 9	12.1
All Families ...	430	1911	296	84.6	15.4

[2] सवतीचा असला म्हणून काय झाला? माझाच नाय तो? was the retort given by one of them.

Average spacing between two deliveries was 1 and 1½ years in a number of cases, though in rare cases it rose to 3. The maximum number of children born to a couple was 13 as observed in the village of Shahabaj.

TABLE No. 6

Details of agricultural and varkas land held by a family

(The average figures are in acres)

Expenditure level in Rs.	Agricultural land			Varkas land			Average of total land
	Sowcar's land (rented)	Land owned by tenant	Total Agri. land available	Sowcar's land	Tenant's land	Total Varkas land of a tenant	
I ...	0.9	1.6	2 5	0 7	0 3	1.0	3 5
II ...	1.2	3.1	4 3	0 3	0 6	0 9	5 2
III ...	2 7	2.1	4.8	0 5	0 5	1 0	5.8
IV ...	2 2	2 5	4 7	0 6	0 3	0 9	5 6
V ...	3 6	1.3	4 9	1 3	0 6	1.9	6.8
VI ...	3 2	1.9	5 1	0 9	0.1	1 0	6 1
VII ...	9.7	2.4	12.1	1.9	0.7	2.6	14.7
All families	2 6	2.2	4.8	0.7	0.4	1.1	5.9

Agricultural holding per family

Table No. 6 gives the details of the average size of land held by a family. In Group No. 1 it was as low as 3.5 acres, out of which arable land shared was only 2.4 acres. This size is barely capable of raising grains for the subsistence of a family composed on an average of 7 members at this expenditure level. The minimum number of acres of total land required for the maintenance of an average family is 4 to 6 acres.[3] The average size of holding in acres in 1931 was 11.7 in the Bombay Presidency ;[4] but only 5.4 per cent of the total families of our sample survey were found to have acquired that status. The average size of holding at the disposal of a family was 5.9 out of which agricultural land was 4.8 acres.

Paddy available per family

The main occupation of the Agris is agriculture. They carry on agricultural operations in their traditional style. The

[3] Charan Singh, *Abolition of Zamindari*, p. 214.
[4] Nanavati & Anjaria, *Indian Rural Problem*, p. 132.

main crop grown is paddy. Table No. 7 gives the details of paddy available per family during the year 1947-48. Rice is the only staple food available in the Alibag Taluka for the agriculturist. Twelve maunds of paddy is the minimum annual consumption of an average Agri adult, when rice alone is consumed. The calculation of wages is also based on this basis. At this rate the quantity of paddy required for a family consisting of 5.83 members, on an average comes to roughly seventy maunds per year.

Table No. 7 makes it clear that the quantity of paddy available per head for members from Groups 1 and 2 was far below this minimum.

TABLE No. 7

Details of amount of paddy available per family with the share of the Sowcar

(Figures are in maunds)

Expenditure* level Group	Share of Sowcar	Tenant's share from rented land	Tenant's share from owned land	Total share of tenants
I ...	8.6	24 3	16.2	40.5
II .	32 2	38 8	20 0	58 8
III ...	20.9	29.6	39.4	69.0
IV ..	25.0	32.3	38 6	70 9
V ...	21 0	32 0	61 8	93 8
VI .	20.1	27 7	82.1	109.8
VII ...	13.3	24.3	127 0	151 3
All families	22.4	31 4	44 4	75.7

* The expenditure levels follow the same order as before.

Families in Group 4 were in a position to reach this standard, whereas those from Groups 6 and 7 had surplus quantities which they could sell. This enabled them to keep their higher standard of living. The number of such families was, obviously, very small. The income of paddy of a family from Group 7 was double that of a family from any one of the first four groups. Further the quantity of paddy received by this family from its own agricultural holding was about ten times the quantity of paddy raised by a family from Group 1.

Secondary Crops

Besides paddy, the Agris grow certain vegetables and some grains. They are dealt with in their order of importance. Some of the families included in this survey were found to raise some secondary crops in order to supplement their income from agriculture. Except Vari, Nachani and Tondali, most of the products mentioned in Table No 8 are raised in the agricultural holding after the paddy harvest is over. These subsidiary crops do not require any special investment for a farmer as he can manage their cultivation with his usual agricultural equipment What is required is the application of additional physical labour, which the Agris as a class can easily afford. Generally members of the family including women and children lend a helping hand in the cultivation of these secondary crops.

Plantations of Tondali and other vegetables as also flower gardens which have been recently prospering in the villages surrounding the Kanakeshwar and other hills in the northern part of Alibag Taluka, owe their existence to the steady and assiduous labour put in by the Agris These plantations have considerably improved the economic status of the agricultural families in this area. Most of the produce is exported to Bombay, which provides a fascinating market for fresh vegetables raised in this taluka.

Sailing ships loaded with seasonal produce like Ghevada and Papadi leave the ports of Kambharle, Rewas and Mandwa to Bombay to be marketed there. Of the vegetables, Tondali is raised all the year round and is sent to Bombay where there is good demand for it.

The following table gives details of subsidiary crops raised, with the number of families at various expenditure levels :—

TABLE NO. 8

Crop	Expenditure levels							Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	
	No. of families							
Val ...	12	21	27	24	15	7	6	111
Vegetable ...	0	9	10	4	8	3	7	41
Tondali ...	2	4	8	7	5	5	2	33
Ghevada ...	8	4	12	3	1	1	2	31
Kashi (water melon plantation) ...	5	3	9	4	3	1	2	27
Papadi ...	4	4	4	2	3	1	2	20
Chavali ...	2	3	3	0	2	1	0	11
Mung ...	1	2	1	2	0	1	2	9
Flowers ...	0	0	1	0	3	1	1	6
Others ...	2	2	0	1	1	1	0	7

Subsidiary Occupations

The Agri families which can afford to spare some capital try to augment their income further by various secondary occupations, the details of which are presented in Table No. 9. In some cases the members of a single family were observed to have adopted more than two occupations according to the means at their disposal and facilities available.

TABLE No. 9

Subsidiary occupations and the number of persons employed therein

Name of occupation	Expenditure levels							Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	
	Number of persons							
Cattle farming and dairy industry ...	11	13	14	17	7	5	2	69
Cart driving ...	12	12	14	7	8	2	1	56
Ploughing ...	0	8	9	10	9	1	4	41
Business ...	4	8	8	0	9	4	3	36
Carpentry ...	5	14	8	3	1	1	0	32
Poultry farming ...	1	7	2	3	6	0	0	19
Piper ...	3	6	1	2	2	1	1	16
Sheep farming ...	2	4	5	1	1	0	1	14
Sailors ...	1	1	2	1	2	2	0	9
Tailoring ...	1	2	1	2	1	0	1	8
Salt manufacturing ...	1	1	3	1	0	0	0	6
Sawing ...	0	0	1	2	2	0	0	5
Hotel keeping ...	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	5
All others ...	1	11	10	11	6	13	3	55
Total ...	42	87	79	60	55	31	17	371

TABLE No. 9A

Number of families which followed the subsidiary occupation of rice pounding and manual labour

Expenditure level	Total No. of families	No. of families following only rice pounding	Manual labour	Following both
I ...	54	1	21	22
II ...	112	6	45	47
III ...	124	5	26	51
IV ...	124	5	29	45
V ...	71	0	8	11
VI ...	48	1	7	17
VII ...	31	1	1	5
Total	564	19	137	198

TABLE No. 9B

Number of families showing one and more than one occupation at various expenditure levels

Expenditure level	No. of families	Families following one profession	Families following more than one
I ..	54	23	9
II ...	112	43	23
III ...	124	44	19
IV ...	124	59	12
V ...	71	31	8
VI ...	48	24	3
VII ...	31	16	4
Total	564	240	78

The quasi-agricultural pursuits like cart-driving and milk distribution depended mainly on the bovine stock that could be accommodated in the farmers' agricultural holdings without incurring additional expenditure. Hence it is no wonder that the Agris take to these occupations. The Agris employed in these two subsidiary occupations accounted for one-third of the total number of 371.

Hired ploughing should not be considered as a separate pursuit in view of the fact that a farmer with a pair of bullocks and a plough of his own is ready to work for others on the basis of daily wages, when he has completed his agricultural operations. In the year 1947-48 the rate of wages for a ploughman who had his own plough and a pair of bullocks, was Rs. 3 per day, whereas the wages of a male labourer were Re. 0-12-0 to Re. 0-14-0 per day. Hence working as a ploughman proved to be an attractive source of income. Cart-driving is also a good source of additional income for a farmer, who owns a pair of bullocks. Usually the daily wages of a ploughman and a cart-driver are the same. This occupation is usually followed for nearly seven to eight months and in some cases throughout the year.

Under the column 'business' come persons who are traders dealing in vegetables and grains. Some of them act as middlemen for the local agriculturists and the merchants in Bombay. But their number is small and hence they are not shown separately.

Thirty-two Agri males were returned as carpenters. In some cases this was found to be their main profession, where there was a heavy demand for the services of carpenters. A carpenter in an Agri habitation, to put it shortly, is a sort of a hired labourer, who goes with his set of implements and tools whenever required and works on daily wages which ranged from Re. 1-8-0 to Rs. 2-8-0 per day during the period of this survey.

Poultry and sheep farming, though they are not carried on as separate occupations, do play an important part in the rural economy of the Agris. Fowls and goats are sold whenever their number happens to be in excess of the demand of an Agri family. Out of 564 families enumerated, only 34 were found to have taken to this occupation as a source of additional income. Usually an Agri house has a few fowls. Only in three cases it was found that the families did not own any fowls. Poultry farming is not carried on in a scientific manner by the Agris. The fowls are collected and covered under a basket or in some other special accommodation in the evening to be let loose next morning to forage in the adjoining compounds.

It is usually the task of a young boy in a family to look after the goats if their number exceeds eight or ten. They browse all the day long in the open or village pasture and return home in the evening all the while under supervision of the young boy. Here again the Agris do not incur any special expenditure on fodder, etc. for the goats.

Nine men were found to have been employed in sailing ships that ply between Bombay and their native ports in the Amba Creek, carrying seasonal vegetables, flowers, paddy and sand to Bombay.

Eight men from various families were reported to have resorted to the occupation of a tailor to ease the financial strain of their families. Elementary training and a sewing machine are all that are required to start this occupation. Unlike a carpenter, a tailor does not go from house to house but receives the orders from his customers at his place.

Some of the other pursuits followed by the Agris are sawing wood and smithy. Some of the Agris on account of their close association with goldsmiths have also acquired skill to the extent of conducting an independent business of their own as goldsmiths. One of them was so successful in his enterprise that he had to be placed in Group VII.

Wages earned in kind and cash

Husking paddy is a cottage industry popular throughout the Alibag Taluka. Every family holding paddy in its barn must get husked some maunds of paddy for their daily consumption for which regular labour is demanded. With the higher cost of commodities and scarcity of rice in their native villages all the female members of the agriculturists' families take to this occupation as the wages for husking paddy are always given in kind. Two female labourers can husk a maund of paddy and then polish the rice thus obtained by pounding within a day, their joint wages for this piece of work in Alibag Taluka being four seers of rice, half of which is unpolished. Usually two women form the unit of labour for this work.

Besides pounding paddy the members of the agrarian class work on the farms of the landholders and other agriculturists wherever hired labour is employed. The Agri farmers express their sense of mutual co-operation by exchanging their labour with neighbours. This system is called 'Handa' in Kharapat.

During the period of transplantation of the paddy plants in the month of July in the western part of the taluka, hundreds of persons of agricultural classes from the villages in the adjacent part of the Kharapat flock to the villages in Ashtagar in search of employment because the cultivation of salt paddy fields does not require this operation of transplantation. There the paddy plants are grown by merely sowing paddy seeds in wet soil. This period of leisure in Kharapat coincides with the busiest period in Ashtagar, and hence this transfer of labour is possible. In the light of this information it should be noted that in the absence of this imported labour from Kharapat, cultivation of paddy fields in many of the villages in northern Ashtagar would be certainly difficult.

The following table shows the wages earned in kind and cash by members of the families included in this survey according to their expenditure level :—

TABLE No. 10

Expenditure level in Rs.	No. of families	Average earnings in Rs.	
		Rice pounding	Hired labour
50 to 100	54	22.1	113.9
100 to 125	112	21.3	121.6
125 to 150	124	20 4	80.2
150 to 175	124	16.7	70.8
175 to 250	119	11.9	48.3
250 and more	31	7.7	18.2
All families	564	17.8	79.3

Columns 3 and 4 in Table No. 10 above give the average income per family derived from these two occupations of husking paddy and hiring one's labour at different expenditure levels. Further analysis of the data makes it clear that the income from these two occupations diminishes at the higher expenditure levels. This can be explained by the fact that the amount in column 3 mentioned against Groups 5 and 6 indicates proportionate value of labour put in by the female members of the respective families to get their own paddy husked and rice polished.

It would not be out of place to mention here the competition that these people have to face in this occupation. The establishment of twelve rice mills affected the income of many Agri families as almost all the rice exported from the taluka was milled in these factories. The charges for getting the rice milled in a factory were Rs. 8 to Rs. 10 per 'khandi' during the period of survey. As against it, ten paylees of rice were required for getting an equal quantity milled at home with the assistance of female labour. And this worked out at Rs. 18 to Rs. 20 per khandi. The rice polished in mills however loses most of its vitamins that are preserved in hand-pounded rice which are so essential for a population that subsists on rice as its only staple food. Rice mills in this area are getting popular and may oust females from this occupation.

Rice pounding alone accounts for 18.4 per cent of the total wages earned thus showing its importance. The aggregate income of all the families derived from this occupation was Rs. 10,095 as against Rs. 44,744,[5] the amount earned by them from all other sources of hired labour.

Other sources of Income

During the course of this survey it was found that about 145 members of both the sexes from various families had left their native villages for some service to improve their economic status. Most of them were reported to be serving in Bombay in various factories, docks and hotels. A few of them who were fortunate to possess a P.S.L. Certificate were employed in Municipal Primary Schools in Bombay as well as in some places in the adjoining talukas. These details are considered separately.

Most of these persons, though they stayed outside, rendered economic assistance to their family members every month, by

[5] These figures were calculated on the basis of the figures given in Table No. 10.

sending whatever little they could. Only in two cases sons who went away after getting themselves separated from the joint family did not send money to their people at home.

Some of these persons who depended upon their muscles to eke out some income returned home during the period of transplantation and harvest, when every additional hand was welcome.

About 123 or 83.6 per cent were found to be grown-up sons of the families under investigation. It was interesting to note that out of three females shown in Table No. 11, two happened to be wives, who while working in Bombay, regularly remitted money to their husbands and children at home. These women furnish us with a fine specimen of economic independence which Agri women, when given proper scope to develop their innate qualities, are capable of achieving. And as such they must receive our admiration. It is more impressive when we learn that not a single similar example could be had from the numerous families of advanced classes established in Ashtagar with their family heads serving in Bombay upon whom they depend for their maintenance.

The total amount received in cash by the Agri families from outside amounted to Rs. 16,451, the average contribution being Rs. 111.2 per member, per annum. Indirect assistance in the form of clothes and other articles was very meagre. It was Rs. 310, the average being only Rs. 5.5.

On the whole, 122 families out of 564, that is 24.3 per cent, received monetary help from outside through the agency of their family members, the share of each family being Rs. 134.8 per annum.

The following table gives details of financial assistance received from members living in Bombay and other places :—

TABLE No. 11

Expenditure level*	No. of families	Husband	Brother	Father	Wife	Son	Others	Total No.	Help in Rs.	Average in Rs.
I ...	13	0	2	0	0	13	1	16	2,020	126.2
II ...	23	2	4	0	0	24	0	30	3,256	106.2
III ...	36	0	1	1	2	36	0	40	5,050	125.2
IV ...	20	1	2	0	1	19	1	24	2,430	101.2
V ...	11	0	0	2	0	9	0	11	1,185	107.7
VI ...	10	2	0	0	0	9	1	12	1,460	121.6
VI ...	9	1	0	0	0	13	0	14	1,050	75.0
All families	122	6	9	3	3	123	3	147	16,451	111.2

* Expenditure levels as in Table No. 4.

Table No. 12 throws further light on the earning members of various families, who lived at other places and were a source of additional income. In all 147 members coming from 122 different families were distributed at different places.

As many as 135 of these persons were employed in Bombay in various capacities as teachers, labourers and so on, the places of employment being Bombay Municipality, Bombay Port Trust, hotels, etc. Three were serving in Alibag Taluka and six others were working in the Kolaba Collectorate. Only two of them had gone as far as Nasik or Poona in connection with their service.

TABLE No. 12

Distribution of 147 earning members who render financial aid to 122 families according to their places of employment

Name of place	Number
Bombay	135
Alibag Taluka	3
Panvel Taluka	2
Uran Peta	2
Karjat	2
Thana	1
Nasik	1
Poona	1
Total	147

Debts

"The Universal lesson of agrarian history, we are told, is that the cultivator is always in need of credit. His capital consists in his land and stock and cannot be easily mobilized."[6] As a majority of the families enumerated in this survey pursued agriculture as their main occupation in life, they found it difficult to balance their budgets. Uncertain agricultural income, howsoever supplemented by various other subsidiary occupations, was found to be insufficient to make both ends meet. As a result as many as three hundred families were found to be indebted for 313 reasons, ten families having borrowed money for more than one reason. In addition to uncertain agricultural income, high prices of commodities particularly during and after the war, static social re-

[6] Pillai, *Economic Conditions in India*, p. 118.

gulations and bad and wasteful habits coupled with the absence of any planned expenditure were other factors which compelled many families to borrow. There might have been a few more cases than the number mentioned in this table as some of the agricultural people were reluctant to part with this piece of information. Very often they had to borrow sums at a high rate of interest, when the contracts were made in privacy with local money-lenders. Government's efforts to put a stop to the usurious practices of money-lenders, rightly described as the engines of destruction,[7] did not seem to have improved their lot.

At times Agris indulge in wreckless ways of expenditure on social and religious functions. Their ways are untutored and customs static. "A money-lender, howsoever unscrupulous he may be, tides over their difficulties whenever they apply to him for help." This view commonly held by many agriculturists has been referred to in one of the dialogues. (See Appendices). When loans cannot be obtained by fair means, the needy people are apt to go in for secret contracts which make their lot more miserable. When they are unable to return the loan borrowed, they resort to dishonest and unscrupulous means. This behaviour has further demoralising effect on their dealing in other departments of life. A number of petty thefts were reported all over the taluka, especially during the last two years, that steadily deteriorated the complacent local village life. "While it is not denied that some defaults so far as they are wilful, reflect the demoralising effects of the agrarian relief legislations, it is equally true that the major cause of default is the debtors' inability to pay."[8] One of the benevolent landlords, whom I happened to meet in a village in the eastern belt of the taluka, asked: "What money-lender do you think, Mr. Kale, will spoil his money by advancing loans to these agriculturists at present?"

Out of 313 cases of debts in Table No. 13, as many as 239 families had to incur debts to make their both ends meet. One of the important occasions for borrowing money was marriage. They had to spend a good deal of money on various items connected with this ceremony particularly the caste-dinner, which no Agri family can avoid according to their social code of behaviour.

There were only 11 cases where loans were taken for agricultural purposes. But this productive loan appeared to be

7 Ghurye and Deshpande, *Journal of Indian Economics*, April 1927.
8 Nanavati & Anjaria, *The Indian Rural Problem*, p. 217.

very small. It covered Rs. 2,350 only as against a total amount of debts of Rs. 72,995 in a class with agriculture as its main pursuit in life.

TABLE No. 13

Number of indebted families in each group *

Group	Reasons of incurring debt			
	Household	Marriage	Agriculture	Others
I ...	23	11	0	0
II ...	61	18	2	2
III ...	51	17	3	0
IV ...	57	4	3	2
V ...	21	5	2	3
VI ...	16	0	1	2
VII ..	7	1	0	1
Total number	236	56	11	10

* The groups are arranged according to expenditure levels Table No. 4.

Other reasons for borrowing loans were litigation, education and the like the ratio of which was comparatively negligible to deserve any special mention.

Most of the loans were borrowed from the local Sowcars, the amount secured as loan from the Co-operative Society being Rs. 462. The rate of interest varied from 6 to 18 per cent per annum, except in a few cases, when no interest was charged as the loan concerned was often advanced by friends and relations of the clients.

To sum up, as many as 300 families out of 564, i.e. 53.1 per cent of the total had incurred debts for one reason or other. The debt of such a family, on an average, amounted to Rs. 299.2. The aggregate amount borrowed was Rs. 72,995 for as many as 313 reasons, the average amount of debt of a family (in this group of 300 families) being Rs. 233.2.

The cases where the debt was incurred for marriage were 17.8 per cent only as compared with 22.96 per cent in a Gujarat Taluka,[9] 32 per cent in Borsad Taluka,[10] 32.64 per cent amongst the Agris of Jita Dighoda and other villages[11] and 33.7 per cent in Bhivandi Taluka.[12]

[9] Shukla, *Life and Labour in a Gujarat Taluka*, p. 233.
[10] Patel, *Indian Agricultural Economics*, p. 239.
[11] Ghurye and Deshpande, *Journal of Indian Economics*, April 1927.
[12] Bhagat, *Farmer and his Wealth*, p. 128.

TABLE NO. 14

Details of expenditure in rupees on various items of the 564 families enumerated

Group	No. of families	Rice	Pulses	Tea Sugar	Fish	Meat	Vege-tables	Ghee	Oil	Salt & Condiments
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I ...	54	273.1	19.7	28.8	25.1	11.1	5.2	1.1	17.1	33.4
II ...	112	350.9	18.7	33.4	32.8	12.2	5.0	.9	21.6	42.4
III ...	124	344.8	20.4	37.9	28.1	13.1	7.6	2.0	22.3	44.2
IV ...	124	346.2	24.7	46.3	33.7	14.5	8 9	2.0	23.0	44.4
V ...	71	397.3	33.3	56.8	26.3	17 7	10.1	4.1	30.8	47.0
VI ...	48	395 7	37.5	59.0	31.1	16.0	14.1	6.0	29.0	41.5
VII ...	31	440.0	51.4	98 9	63.9	24.5	28.6	11.2	35.6	44.7
All Families ...	564	352.4	25.6	44.6	32.0	14.6	9.1	2.8	24.1	42.6

Group	Clothes	Fuel	Light	Religious items	Recreation	Litigation	Social function	Education	Sundry	Total
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
I ...	59.3	37.4	14 3	4.1	.1	3	1.6	4.1	9.3	545.1
II ...	79.9	44.0	15.8	5.9	.6	8 8	1 2	3.9	12.5	690.5
III ...	87.1	47.4	16 5	10.1	2.2	1.8	2.0	7.7	11.6	706.8
IV ...	77.2	46.5	17.8	9.7	1.0	3 8	2.8	9.6	13.7	725.9
V ...	110.4	52.7	19.8	19.3	1 9	20.8	3.1	12.6	18.5	882.5
VI ...	101.8	52 6	20.3	20.4	.5	19.2	9.8	31.9	14.7	901.1
VII ...	130.2	62.5	25.6	32.9	4.7	21.1	11.4	18.5	34.7	1140.4
All Families ...	86.5	46.6	17.6	11.9	1 3	8.4	3.1	15.7	14.3	753.9

General Expenditure of a Family

The collection of details of family expenditure from the ignorant agrarian population proved to be an arduous task. It was found difficult to ascertain the values of fish and firewood consequent upon variation in their prices from place to place in the taluka. Firewood is scarce and fish sufficient in the Kharapat. The situation is otherwise in the Bamangaon and Umata groups of villages. Hence the prices were fixed in accordance with the amount of labour the family members had to put in to acquire them when not actually purchased. The fish is bartered for rice in Kharapat villages. Quantities of other commodities purchased were calculated according to the current bazaar rates. They had to be adjusted in some cases, when the parties concerned could not say definitely how much they purchased.

An analysis of the data reveals the extreme poverty of a family in the first economic group, where the amount spent on clothing per head per annum was ten rupees only. For satisfying his refined tastes an Agri in this group gets less than an anna. The average expenditure on education of children was four rupees to be spent after slate and pencil, a few exercise books and possibly a text-book or two.

Table No. 14 shows that the *per capita* expenditure on rice was Rs. 3-4-0 per month. In all other cases it was found to be uniformly poor. It meant that an individual at this level can barely meet the minimum necessities of life.

Though the standard of living was found to be higher in Group II, it cannot be said to have reached a satisfactory level. The *per capita* consumption of rice and fish was greater than that of Group I. However, the expenditure on education of their children was found to be less.

One peculiarity of an average family in Group IV is that it spent more on sugar and tea. As regards other items a gradual improvement was perceptible.

A marked increase in the standard of living was noticeable in families coming under Group V. Apart from the increased *per capita* consumption of rice, they spent proportionately more on tea and ghee. Other items also showed a higher level of expenditure.

An average family in Group VI spent remarkably more on education. An Agri has to send his children to other places like Alibag, Rewdanda, Pen and Bombay as the primary D.L.B. Schools provided education upto the Marathi Standard VII, i.e. P.S.L. Certificate only.

The standard of living of families in Group VII was definitely higher. They spent more on education : it amounted to double the figure spent by the rest of the groups on education. Expenses on tea, ghee, vegetables and other items were also appreciably high.

Social

This column gives an idea of the contributions made by a family to the general fund of the caste, raised to meet the expenses of social events : money spent on 'Aher' at a nuptial ceremony or at a funeral and others. All these were necessary contributions which an Agri family had to make as a unit of the society. A glance at Table No. 14 will show that the expenditure on this item rose steadily in the first five groups. It rose by leaps and bounds in the last two groups.

Religious Items

Expenses incurred on religious matters were manifold in their nature. These included money given to a priest to perform certain Pujas on special days like Ekadashi, contributions to local 'Bhajan Parties', celebration of Satya Narayan Puja and contributions to meet special expenditure on festivals of some local temples. A glance at Table No. 14 shows that the average expenditure varied from Rs. 4.15 to Rs. 32.9. The more prosperous families showed a tendency to spend more on Satya Narayan Puja.

Recreation

Under this column was included the sum of money spent by a family on recreation, e.g. dramas, circus and the like. Mobile units of such performers camp every year at a few places like Poynad, Chondhi and Rewdanda in the taluka. The average expenditure on this item was as low as $1\frac{1}{2}$ annas in the first group, but it rose gradually to Rs. 4.7. Curiously enough this item of expenditure was totally absent in Group VII.

Litigation

This column specifies the amount spent on various disputes in the court, often relating to land or theft. Social disputes are often decided by the Panchas by imposing fine on a person found guilty of any offence. It will be seen from the table that there was a sudden rise in this item of expenditure in the last three groups.

On the whole the average family expenditure rose under every item in the groups with higher expenditure levels. Rise in expenditure on specific items cannot be said to indicate a particular standard of living, as many of the families coming under this survey led a hand to mouth existence, the lot of the better ones being determined by their change in meals from the gruel to the addition of rice, fish and condiments to their menu. Further scrutiny of their expenditure showed that more than half the expenses were earmarked for food ingredients in the first six groups. An appreciable difference in the standard of living was noticeable in the last group.

Valuation of the Houses

Houses of the Agris, as we have seen before, are constructed with materials locally available. The present survey disclosed that, however humble an Agri might be, he would raise up a hut of his own for him to live. The number of families which did not have a house of their own was only 12 out of 564.

Table No. 15 shows the number of houses with their average value in rupees including the site. As an Agri is usually unwilling to leave his village ' Gaothan ', he builds his house on any available piece of land irrespective of the price. Hence the value of the houses appears to be a little high considering the labour and material required for its construction.

Further, an Agri house requires 500 to 1,500 sheaves of rice-straw for thatching the roof every year ; the value of sheaves ranged from Rs. 40 to Rs. 80 per thousand, during the course of the survey. Old and used straw removed from the roof every year is generally taken to the paddy fields to be burnt as manure for paddy plants. The average value of a house in Group I was Rs. 482.4. It rose steadily from Group III to the last one where it settled down at Rs. 1,268.1. Most of the houses in the last two groups were built with pucca walls and sometimes roofed with Mangalore tiles. The average price of a house in the last group was so high as to cover that of any two houses from the first three groups.

Some of the twelve families, returned as not living in houses of their own, were really speaking occupying rented houses, because they happened to be away from their own villages where the heads of their respective families were employed.

TABLE No. 15

Valuation of the houses according to the expenditure levels

Expenditure level in Rs.	No. of families	No. of houses owned	Average value in Rs.
50 to 100 ...	54	50	482 4
100 to 125 ...	112	111	514.7
125 to 150 ...	124	121	582.6
150 to 175 ...	124	124	728.9
175 to 250 ...	119	117	1085.2
250 and more ...	31	29	1268.1

Note. This valuation is inclusive of the value of the site of the house.

Only in six cases the plot of land on which the house was constructed did not belong to the owner of the house : it was raised in the compound belonging to the landlord. Hence the sweet will of the landlord and the cordial relations between the landlord and the tenant were the only factors that determined the period of the lease of such a plot.

Silver, Gold, Cash and other Assets

An Agri depends for his maintenance on the income derived from his agricultural holding, wages earned as a farm labourer and other occupations connected therewith. In some cases he gets help from some members of his family employed elsewhere. Now we shall examine his saving in the shape of gold, cash and so on.

Table No. 16 gives details of the assets for the various groups. To the extent that a certain quantity of gold varying from 3/4 of a tola to two tolas go to make a "Mangal Sutra" (sacred thread) and the ear-rings that make the nuptial insignia of a bride—and these can never be separated from her person throughout the married life—it may be called a compulsory form of saving. Similarly, silver bangles known as 'Bargothas' are also at times considered necessary. Sometimes chains, lockets or other ornaments made from silver are purchased for their children according to their financial position.

From the economic point of view this may be considered as an idle form of investment. It only confirms the remark that "India is known as the burial ground of precious metals." [13]

[13] P. Slater, *Some South Indian Villages*, p. 232.

TABLE No. 16

Silver, gold, cash and other miscellaneous assets
(Average value in rupees per family)

Group	Silver	Gold	Postal saving	Insurance	Share	Cash certificates	Cash	Other	Total
I ...	25.7	126.0	0	0	0	0	34.4	16.2	202.4
II ...	27.7	295.5	0	4.5	0	.5	56 0	15.6	391.0
III ...	25.7	218.8	4 0	0	4.4	7.3	70.4	71.4	402.1
IV ...	38.1	218 2	3.3	24.1	0.1	.8	22.2	67.4	374.2
V ...	36.6	281.0	2.5	133.8	3.2	5 4	56.3	172.5	691.4
VI ...	41.0	303.9	0	52.0	4.8	1 0	76.4	113.4	571 8
VII ...	81.7	684.3	16.1	32.2	9.7	23.5	107.4	364 4	1309.4
All families	30.58	245.82	2.2	3.2	2.3	3.9	54.2	64.8	471.0

A glance at Table No. 16 will show that the average holding of silver is more in higher expenditure levels. The value of gold in the shape of ornaments was worth Rs. 684.3 per family in the last group, which would mean that about six tolas of gold were available for two women in an average Agri family consisting of 5.83 persons. It was barely half a tola per female in the first group.

The average value of silver held by the first six economic groups ranged from Rs. 25.7 to Rs. 41.10. In case of the average family in the last group quantities of silver and gold held were considerably large, as these people still consider this to be a stable and sound form of investment. Besides, ornaments are an indication of their economic and social status.

Postal Savings

The assets of an average Agri in a Postal Savings Bank were found to be very small. Generally, Agris were found to be apathetic in depositing their savings in the Postal Savings Bank. Personal enquiries revealed that the Agris experienced considerable difficulty in going through the formalities at the time of depositing or withdrawing money. Then again Post Offices in the taluka are not so conveniently situated as to enable the Agris to take advantage of the Savings Bank facilities. Out of the 11 Post offices including branch offices, 7 are situated in the western part alone. Agris from three economic groups only were found to have invested money in Postal Savings.

Insurance

The average figure of insurance was greatest in the last but one group. This form of investment which is characteristic of an advanced society, was adopted by a few persons. The average amount of insurance appears to be larger, though the number of persons insured was only four.

Shares

Total capital invested in shares was only Rs. 1,350 for all the groups. Most of the shares were of the Co-operative Society and the persons to whom they belonged were teachers. In some cases this form of investment was found to be more or less compulsory.

Cash Certificates

The total amount invested in Government Cash Certificates was Rs. 2,224. Only 11 persons from 5 different groups have invested their money in Cash Certificates.

Cash in Hand

Most of the Agris are accustomed to lay aside some cash whenever they can. In many houses where security is dubious, as their houses are not built with pucca walls, they hide their cash in a secret place. The Agri women bury their cash behind their earthen fireplace in a portion called 'Bhanas'.

A glance at this column shows that this item is distributed over all the expenditure levels and the average per family is Rs. 5 in the first group. An Agri farmer from the first group has no prospects of improving his income. The maximum he can undertake is to hire himself on daily wages and that too in certain agricultural operations when he has to attend to his farm also.

Domestic Animals

Services of the domestic animals determine a man's effort to exploit his surrounding resources in his agricultural holding. These animals supply him with labour, manure, milk and share the common lot of their master. The bullock is an indispensable factor of agriculture as a draught animal, while the she-buffalo is a source of supplementary income to tide over his deficit budget.

Agriculture in the Kharapat, however, depends upon manual labour instead of the bullocks, the operation of ploughing

being substituted by turning over the clods in the fields. Long arms of the small tributaries of the Amba estuary traversing their agricultural land being used for transport, bullock carts are replaced by small boats.

Insufficiency of drinking water spells the absence of the she-buffaloes, in 'kharapat' which are found in greater numbers in other parts of the taluka.

Few of the families under this survey were found to tend goats or sheep as a supplementary source of income by selling a few of their heads for mutton to local villagers.

Fowls are an ubiquitous species in the Agri population. They often go to make a substantial change in the static and common Agri menu consisting of rice with fish or dal. They multiply steadily every year and in the words of an Agri friend of mine, "The fowls are just like Tondali", which yield regular fruit all the year round for the maintenance of which neither labour is required nor expense is incurred.

In three families out of five, that had horses at their disposal, cart-driving was their main source of subsistence. Maintenance of the animals is expensive in this region abounding in rice and straw in view of the fact that they are fed on hay and gram.

Though buffaloes are more useful than bullocks for agriculture, they are not so popular on account of their sluggishness; this prevents people using them for quick transport and cart races.

All these bovine animals are further useful to agriculture as they supply manure for paddy cultivation. The dung is also used to prepare dung-cakes to be used as fuel.

Table No. 18 gives details of these domestic animals possessed by 564 families under survey. Their value is not fixed. Their utility, the need of the agriculturists and the local circumstances are factors which determine the prices of these animals.

There were in all 611 bullocks worth Rs. 63,080. They are the valuable assets of an agricultural household and pet animals of the farmers who often yoke them to take part in cart races—a popular hobby of a number of people in this region.

Tools of an Agri Farmer

Table No. 19 gives details about the agricultural tools which are useful for a farmer. Most of these tools, though age-old in pattern and crude in appearance, are indispensable to the

TABLE No. 18

Showing the Number and Value of Cattle

Group	Bullocks		She-Buffaloes		Cows		Male Buffaloes	
	No.	Price	No.	Price	No.	Price	No.	Price
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.
I ...	55	5,075	11	1,770	61	1,616	6	500
II ..	148	11,970	32	4,745	81	2,955	27	1,650
III ...	125	14,025	43	7,598	79	4,020	36	2,295
IV ...	167	12,850	55	8,655	53	2,755	30	2,130
V ...	52	10,930	35	6,250	67	3,875	47	4,040
VI ...	23	3,300	22	4,552	11	670	16	1,580
VII ...	41	4,930	16	3,033	25	1,635	18	1,485
Total ...	611	63,080	214	36,603	377	17,526	180	13,680

Group	Calves		Sheep		Fowls		Horses		Young Buffaloes	
	No.	Price	No	Price	No.	Price	No.	Price	No.	Price
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
		Rs		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.
I ...	30	604	56	669	245	409	0	0	8	137
II ...	52	908	97	1,728	563	995	0	0	23	519
III ...	99	1,218	73	1,353	541	839	2	400	29	254
IV ...	45	770	22	310	624	1,042	2	500	59	417
V ...	53	1,217	26	420	324	567	2	400	24	377
VI ...	16	540	2	25	217	376	7	1,300	47	195
VII ...	19	385	14	250	108	271	2	500	8	390
Total ...	314	5,642	290	4,755	2,622	4,499	15	3,100	198	2,289

TABLE NO. 19

Agricultural implements and their value in rupees

Group	Ploughs		Wooden Combs		Axes		Crowbars		Pickaxe	
	No.	Value	No.	Value	No.	Value	No.	Value	No.	Value
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.
I ...	32	151	3	20	22	56	49	183	33	62
II ...	70	330	18	62	54	130	133	505	46	89
III ...	78	402	29	82	67	184	173	583	71	111
IV ...	72	364	7	27	63	154	173	721	95	151
V ...	59	319	3	11	51	121	122	457	66	111
VI ...	21	139	3	14	21	61	89	276	38	58
VII ...	30	133	6	27	14	29	50	202	23	47
Total ...	362	1,838	69	243	292	734	789	2,927	372	629

Group	Small Sickle		Sickle		Shovels		Pensan		Baskets No.
	No.	Value	No.	Value	No.	Value	No.	Value	
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.	
I ...	146	215	62	141	35	62	16	36	19
II ...	332	485	156	398	65	95	58	122	91
III ...	331	451	165	423	66	114	58	111	136
IV ...	339	414	170	429	57	106	62	128	107
V ...	208	255	129	348	53	106	25	50	73
VI ...	110	137	83	168	32	66	19	50	20
VII ...	77	91	51	129	22	42	4	13	25
Total ...	1,543	2,048	816	2,036	330	591	242	510	471

farmer. These are generally manufactured by the village blacksmith ; and repairs to these tools are carried out by him.

A small sickle useful in cutting grass, hay or standing crop in the fields and a big sickle or a mowing loop to break the firewood are invariably seen in an Agri household. A plough and a wooden comb may not be present in every house as they are not needed for more than a few occasions in a year when they are conveniently exchanged for manual labour or money. These two agricultural implements are singularly absent in the house of a Kharapat Agri who has his special tool known as ' Pensan ' instead. It is made of a wooden plank of the size and shape of an average cricket bat and is used in turning over the clods in the dry fields or square pieces of thick marshy soil which they use for carrying out repairs to the outer bund of the paddy fields.

A general impression of this economic survey of 564 families of the Agris with 3,290 persons, distributed in more than seventy different villages out of the total number of 205 in Alibag Taluka may now be presented.

The ratio of the females to males is not unsatisfactory. For every 51 females, males numbered only 49. The average number of persons is 5.83 per family. The average size of holding held by a family ranged from 3.5 to 14.7 acres according to different economic levels. The average literacy was not disappointing. It was 24.6 per cent.

As many as 371 members from all these families followed more than 14 different occupations to supplement their agricultural income, out of which the quasi-agricultural occupations of cart-driving and plough-hiring and some form of service unconnected with these were common. As many as 147 members from 122 families served elsewhere mostly in Bombay and rendered economic assistance to relieve the economic pressure of their families at home.

The diagram (*vide* Appendices) represents the annual expenditure of an average Agri family holding 5.83 members. Accordingly, 72.7 per cent of the expenditure was earmarked for food, 11.4 per cent for clothing, 8.5 per cent for fuel and lighting and only 7.2 per cent covered all other items. Hence the life of an Agri is nothing but a struggle for existence. Table No. 23 gives the percentage of expenditure when a similar sample survey was carried out by (Dr.) Ghurye and Deshpande in four Agri villages in the adjoining taluka. The results of their survey disclosed that 74.5 per cent of expenditure was earmarked for food in an Agri family.

TABLE NO. 23 *

Total cases examined were 145

Average number of persons per family ...	5.66
Food	74.53
Fuel and Lighting	2.85
Clothing	11.43
Rent	.13
Miscellaneous	11.06

Rice and fish, the most cherished food of an Agri, mostly comprised his menu. On the whole, except a few families, the majority of the rural Agri population raked in poverty. Those who obtained their daily square meals were considered as the happiest of their lot.

It was a satisfaction to note that the Agris did not neglect the education of their children notwithstanding their chronic poverty.

Barring a few exceptions all the Agri families possessed houses of their own. The average value of a house including the site ranged from Rs. 482 to Rs. 1,268.

Further details of this survey showed that the number of domestic animals enumerated in farmers' holdings and the number of agricultural implements were fairly adequate though their general condition and upkeep on the whole needed some improvement.

FAMILY IN OPERATION AS A SOCIAL UNIT

Details of the economic life of the Agris in Alibag Taluka have been so far observed in this chapter. We now try to understand some aspects of family as a social unit, other details as regards operative folk-lore and beliefs, marriage and other rituals being dealt with in respective chapters. We make a reference to the undermentioned subjects in the following pages :

(1) Cases of contracting second marriage during the life-time of the first wife.
(2) Deities worshipped in the Agri families.
(3) Trees worshipped by the Agris at the time of marriage.
(4) Picture of a daughter-in-law as studied from various Agri songs.
(5) Some Agri customs.

* S. R. Deshpande and G. S. Ghurye, *Some village studies.*

Cases of contracting second marriage during the lifetime of the first wife

During the course of this sample survey, among 564 families with as many as 502 cases of continued marriages, nineteen cases of bigamy were discovered. In five of these cases both the wives shared a common household in the company of their husband ; in the remaining 14 only the second wife lived with her husband. On the whole the lot of the discarded wives was found to be pitiable.

My oral enquiries and personal interviews with most of these persons lead us to believe that such a marriage is usually contracted in the first case, if the wife is found unwilling to stay with her husband on account of the bad treatment she receives either at the hands of her husband or mother-in-law. Continued barrenness of his wife is also a sufficient cause for a husband to take another wife according to the prevalent Agri customs. At times an Agri farmer of some means undertakes to marry a second time either because of the management of his agricultural holding fallen on his shoulders or the extensive household activities assigned to his wife, a lot which is too heavy for her, being single-handed, to cope with. And sometimes an Agri husband, who has developed some individual tastes, comes to dislike his wife after his continued association with her on account of her incompetency to maintain the standard of behaviour, desired by him.

Reasons for undertaking second marriage	No. of cases
First wife unwilling to stay with her husband ...	6
No issue from the first wife	6
For management of household work	3
For management of agricultural holding ...	2
The husband did not approve of his first wife ..	2
Total number of cases ...	19

The above table gives us the information of 19 such cases, which we have surveyed and where a second wife was taken. In six cases out of these, the wife was reported to have refused to live with her husband, because of the ill-treatment inflicted upon her by her husband or his mother. The other details follow next. Second marriage, according to some observers, indicates some variation in taste, though the division of labour is also a powerful factor to support it.

Only in the last year (1948) an Agri youth from Zirad, who is serving in Bombay, refused to admit his wife to his house

after her return from one of her occasional visits to her father's house on the plea that she put on her sari in the orthodox Agri fashion. Her father's persuasions and appeals to train his wife, to adopt whatever style of dressing he preferred, have not yet been successful in opening the doors. The youth who is serving in Bombay, as he comes in contact with women of other communities, does not esteem his 'country' wife. Evidently it is a case of clash of culture.

Sometimes, a newly-married Agri girl returns to her father's house, never wishing to go back to the husband's house, which is often due to the bad treatment she receives there or the pressure of the household routine. Such a daughter-in-law secretly escapes to her father's house in a village, usually lying in proximity, to be brought back by her spouse with some physical force, when persuasions and other methods fail.[14] In extreme cases, when the mutual quarrel of a couple extends to both the families, the matter is reported to the Panchas who have to intervene to restore order. If they are also helpless, when the spouses do not agree on account of their mutually incompatible nature, they allow the husband to take another wife.

A number of Agris informed me that bigamy was a common feature of their society till the last generation. It was often customary for a well-placed Agri to marry second time a young widow, when he would be about forty years old. By this time his first wife bore him many children and appeared old, who would be unable to spare her time for her husband, being all the while buried in the domestic routine in the midst of a number of children. With the gradual infiltration of education and cultural contact with people of higher classes, the bigamous tendency of the Agris was getting slowly suppressed and now the enactment of the present Government has totally banned it.

Deities worshipped

Name of the deity		Number of worshipperrs
Khandoba	...	272
Bahiri	...	220
Bhavani	...	213
Baba	...	100
Vaghajay	...	89

[14] "एवढा पैस खपवून तिला केली ती माहेरी रावाला काय?"
is a common expression of a disturbed husband in such cases

Name of the deity		Number of worshippers
Kalakay	...	52
Mhasoba	...	45
Mari	...	45
Pirsahib	...	31
Kalabhairi	...	23
Devi	...	22
Kulaswamini	...	19
Kanhoba	...	15
Vetal	...	15
Shriram	...	10
Vishnu	...	10
Vaghoba	...	8
Kamaleshwar	...	6
Kafari	...	20
Bhairav	...	5
Ganapati	...	4
Ghavir	...	4
Munja	...	4
Kasubai	...	4
Maruti	...	4
Others	...	4

Kuldaivatas (Family deities)

The above table gives some information, acquired during the course of this sample survey, regarding the deities as preserved and worshipped by the members of the Agri families. A number of families with a common surname have a group of images of the specified deities given in charge of a particular family for a year when a son's marriage is to be celebrated, failing which they remain in the custody of some other family. Such deities preserved in a group are known as 'Kuldaivatas'.

There are some twenty such deities, most of which are not heard of in the Hindu mythology. According to reliable sources the names of Hindu mythological deities like Shriram, Vishnu, Ganapati and others enlisted by some families in the ranks of 'Kuladaivatas' should be regarded as a modern practice. A glance at the list of these family deities makes it clear that Bahiri and Bhavani are the popular deities of the first grade. Kafri, Vetal, Munja and Ghavir are Goblin deities, while Vaghoba and Mhasoba are Animal ones.

Heads of some twenty-six families displayed their ignorance as regards the details of the family deities. In the educated families of the Agris these deities are fast losing their ground and are often being replaced by deities of Hindu mythology.

Trees worshipped at the marriage ceremony

The branches of specified trees are worshipped at the ritual known as "Daivat Thapane" and are thenceforth preserved in a corner of the marriage pandal during the duration of the nuptial ceremony according to the Agri marriage customs. All such trees are enlisted in the following table:—

Name of the tree		No. of the families
Mango	...	452
Umbar	...	432
Jambhul	...	224
Bhend	...	62
Pimpal	...	25
Saga	...	25
Others	...	32

Out of seven sacred trees Mango [15] and Umbar [16] are the most popular with Jambhul [17] following.

On the whole the presence of these trees is also fast disappearing with the religious importance attached to them, from the marriage pandals of the Agris, as they prefer to celebrate their marriage ceremonies according to the Vedic form. Various questions put to the heads of the families disclosed the view of the Agri males that their trees and deities (Kuladaivatas) were the business of the women folk and men as such knew very little of the matter.

Some Agri Customs

1. After they have stored bundles of straw in a huge pile, a stump of paddy plant is uprooted from the soil, beaten into the shape of a cone and placed on the top of the pile. This is a measure to guard the pile and secure abundant grains during the threshing operation.

2. On the Ganapati day a young boy from a farmer's family carries two 'Modaks' suspended from either end of a bamboo, placed across his shoulders, to his fields. There he puts down the pole, breaks the 'Modaks' into small pieces and throws

[15] Mangifera Indica.
[16] Figus Glomerata.
[17] Eugenia Jambolana.

them in the fields with a prayer, "Oh God Ganoba, do not let your horses free and let our crops grow in abundance". This is a remedy to prevent the standing crop being destroyed by the mice, which are the chargers of Lord Ganapati.

3. In the harvest yard, where corn is thrashed out, a small sickle, a dry fish and the twig of a tree known as 'Borya Chikada'[18] are all tied together and placed on the lower plate of the grinding machine, which itself is placed on a wooden shelf. By its side a whole coconut, specially reserved from the equipment of worship of God Ganapati is placed. As the farmers start threshing, they cry aloud and pray, "Oh God, grant us paddy; Oh God, grant us paddy".

4. After the whole roof of a house is covered with straw, a senior male member of the house stands on the top of the roof and hurls some onions in all the directions of the compass. Young children from the neighbourhood, who anxiously wait down, race for the onions and eat them.

5. An Agri will first dip his 'Pensan' in the soil on the day of Gouri.

6. Whereas amongst most of the Hindus it is only the wife of the deceased that is prohibited from applying the kum-kum mark on her forehead, all the female members in the Agri household do not put the mark during the period of mourning.

7. A daughter after her marriage continues to receive her personal quota of copra oil, kum-kum, combs and blouse pieces from her parental house throughout her married status. It is not supplied by her husband.

8. After the harvest season, sometimes before the day of threshing paddy from straw-sheaves, some gift is required to be offered to a deity presiding over the fields. It consists of six smaller circular breads, a coconut and a fowl. It is offered at the threshing yard. This is the annual gift which must be offered, the failure of which constitutes according to the Agri belief some damage to the agricultural yield or to a person in the family.

9. On the second day following a local fair in the month of Vaishakha, a procession of the male members of the Agri habitation goes round to village boundaries before offering their annual gift of a goat to the deity presiding over the village areas. A local leader holding a small circular basket full of boiled rice which is covered with red powder and anicum leads the procession. Another member, holding a sweet-oil lamp, closely follows him. The third man leads a

[18] Euphorbia Tirrucally.

goat with its forehead smeared with anicum. Most of the matured male members housed within the village limits join the procession. They are not to look behind as the procession moves. The noise of the drum, screamings and yells, rapid steps of the party and disciplined movements create a dreadful impression in the village population. Young children flee to their mothers, the moment they listen to somebody uttering 'Bali Ala'.

After the prescribed course of the round the goat is slaughtered and cooked in a meal to be served to all those present on the spot.

10. On the fourteenth day of the first half of the month of Phalgun (Shimaga) some male Agris of the Kharapat villages gather at a village boundary by the dusk hour and stand there in a line. Their headman who is known as 'Baikar', leads them to a village 'Chawdi' with the following instructions." "Jatana jo bolela, to patana pavela." The whole party then moves in a single file till they reach the village 'Chawdi', where other male members of the habitation are ready to receive them. Their steps are heavy as the party moves. They simultaneously fall down at the signal of their leader when in the vicinity of their destination. They then stand in a semi-circle facing the villagers. The 'Baikar' accompanied by the party sings the following triplet :—

येशिन् येशिन् मिरवित कैसा
त्या बैलाचा नमन कैसा
गावचे देवाशी, शिवेचे देवाशी खेल माण्डलाय गो.

The villagers then take the party to the village 'Chawdi', whence all of them move together to the place of the box fire for further celebration of the festival.

11. A day or two before the ritual of turmeric of a nuptial ceremony, some goats and fowls are slaughtered for a feast at which a number of relatives and friends are entertained by the father of the bridegroom. All the members then have a common sitting before the images of the family deities. A person who is then possessed by some supernatural element then stands in front of the gathering, applies an ash mark to the forehead of the bridegroom to protect him from any mishap or trouble during the ceremony.

A few fowls and a goat are reserved for the marriage feast on the day of 'Gotambil', when most of the members of the community in the village are entertained to a feast.

DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

From a general survey of the various Gauri songs an attempt is made here to sketch a picture of a daughter-in-law, whose lot in the Agri household as also in the joint Hindu family is always pitiable. Practice of early marriage drags her away from the affectionate parental home to a new surrounding.[19] Unexperienced in the domestic routine and tender in her age she finds it difficult to adjust herself to the new environment under the stern rule of her mother-in-law and a number of other relations, none of whom is ever willing to sympathise with her lot. There are none to love her, few to guide and all to scold. She feels that she is left all alone and always remembers her loving father and mother who would have been most useful to guide her.[20]

Sometimes she is so acquainted with this treatment that she does not care for the consequences, if a complaint is lodged with her mother-in-law.[21] At times she is subject to corporal punishment at the hands of her husband and his mother.[22] Woman, indeed, is the enemy of a woman! Her personality and sentiments are curbed and kept at the lowest level of human beings. Her lot is the most despicable if she is so unfortunate as to lose her husband. She is then regarded as simply valueless.[23] All this she has to bear patiently without ventilating her grievances to anybody else, lest the name of her father should be spoiled. Her desire to see her mother is scarcely granted by her husband's people.[24] And it is not unnatural that sometimes she escapes secretly from her home to her mother's, when living with her mother-in-law becomes impossible. Yet these people are shrewd to call her by all the good names in the presence of other people.[25]

As a wife she is depicted to be faithful and honest as ever! She has closely emulated the Hindu ideal to hold her husband in reverence notwithstanding both the maltreatment she receives and his defects which may be numerous.

[19] सात वरसची व्हत मी लान
आइबापानी केला लगन
तव्वा दिल्ही तुमच हाती

[20] येवढा सांगू कोनापाशी
माझा आइबाप रायला घरी

[21] सासू बायनी माजा काय केला

[22] दोनचार चावूक चमकविल हो झमकविल
दोनचार चावूक वरच्यावरी हो दुरच्या दुरी

[23] सोना त्या उलगूनि गेला
लाखेचा भरावण राहिला

[24] दावील्या दावील्या तिला माहेरीच्या वाटा हो

[25] गुनाचे गुनवन्ते सदीचे हो भागीर्थे

It is the general impression that a woman makes the lot of another woman pitiable. The women as a class are never willing to adjust themselves in a joint household, may they be sisters, wives, sisters-in-law or mothers-in-law. The difference, if at all there be any, is to be seen in degrees and not in kind. The traducing nature of a woman is also evident from these songs !

CHAPTER X

RECREATIONAL SIDE OF THE AGRI LIFE

THE life of an agriculturist in the geographically isolated tract of the Agri habitation in Alibag Taluka appears dull, static or even dull to a stranger continued for days together except for a seasonal change. Cycles of seasons with their corresponding changes in the agricultural operations circumgyrate every year in the life of an Agri. Otherwise his routine is so regulated as neither to allow the sight of unfamiliar faces nor experience a change even in the series of his handicaps. A farmer's life in this tract is thus not only static but cumbersome. Perpetual tranquillity and serenity of his village, though loved by his metropolitan brother, has no attraction for him. Hence, some need for diversion or amusement is required to animate his monotonous life.

His spirit of self-reliance has permeated to the sphere of recreation also, and his leisure though abundant is circumscribed by the unavoidable factor of poverty. Hence, gossiping by the wayside inn or cracking of jokes in the concourse of rural population is the cheapest means of recreation. His other means of recreation are scanty and cheap.

It is a fact that an Agri boy plays 'Atya patya', 'Hu-tu-tu', 'Viti-dandu', 'Seek and hide', 'Bana' and the like which do not require any extra expenditure The pastimes of a young Agri girl likewise do not require any money to be spent, though they differ in physical activities.

Some change for the better is visible in the recreation of the grown-up people. But the difference is only of degrees in almost all the cases.

Recreational activities of the adults

Male	— Dancing and singing, wrestling, cart-racing, bhajans, bhaleryas (singing).
Female	— Lullabies, Shimaga songs, Shikka songs, Gouri songs.

Singing and a little dancing is common to both males and females. But these types of recreation are enjoyed in the company of the members of their own sex.

Wrestling

Wrestling as a popular pastime is losing its ground in the Agri villages. The hardy youths from various villages, who specially equip themselves with practice and training under guide, used to enter the arenas of wrestling tournaments at different places in the taluka, held mostly during the monsoon months. Mandawa, Awas, Thal and Nagaon are some of such places, where the wrestling tournaments are keenly watched by hundreds of people. A successful candidate is presented with a few rupees and a coconut. Naga-panchami, Narali Pournima and others are some of these days when tournaments are held. During the last five years the Kolis (fishermen) are proving themselves as better wrestlers than others in these local tournaments. Agris, on the whole, do not seem to have a liking for wrestling.

Cart-races

Cart-driving is a popular hobby amongst local Agris. A farmer with his usual agricultural establishment need not incur any extra expenditure on this hobby. The bullocks that draw his cart are equally useful in his agricultural routine. A number of bullock-carts swarms various shrines during ' the season of fair ', which period extends from November to May. And on the following day a whole village may indulge in a gossip about some exciting incident of a cart-race.

Though almost all the farmers who own a pair of bullocks and a cart, take part in the cart-race, one or two men from every habitation display a special aptitude for this hobby who put in special labour for the training and maintenance of their bullocks. The bullocks are specially imported for this purpose from the villages like Baramati and others from Poona district. It is the ' khilari ' breed of bullocks that is useful for this purpose. All other breeds including the local ones are not found so useful. A habitual cart-driver must go in for the purchase of a suitable racer if either of his bullocks fails to keep up itself in the race.

It is a universal experience, I am told by my Agri friends, that no two bullocks run together in exact harmony and every habitual cartman wants to see that his bullocks maintain maximum co-operation. A slight trend of deficiency is a sufficient cause for the disposal of either of his bullocks. An enthusiastic race-goer goes on changing bullocks till his pair develops in one harmonious unit. I know the case of a cart-driver

who has lost all his six acres of agricultural land after this hobby.

In another case a farmer exchanged no less than twenty bullocks during fifteen years in his enthusiasm to have a suitable pair of his bullocks.

Naturally one must carefully select his bullocks. According to the Agri standard of judgment a nimble and quick bullock must have its tail reaching its hind hoofs, its horns must be paralled and erect. It must kick, if its tail is twisted, so hot it must be in its temperament. Passive temperament is not a desirable tendency even though a bull may be blooming in its vigour. Again such a racer must not get fatty though it is fed luxuriously.

Such bullocks that are meant for taking part in cart-races receive a major share of restorative food given to the stock of the bovine animals of an agriculturist. At times a farmer spends immoderate sums after his racers so as to supersede the claim of his children even ! Half a pound of ghee and a pound of carrots are prescribed as a restorative food for a bullock to be administered continuously for a week. In case a bull gets a nervous breakdown as a result of excessive strain and fatigue of the race, he is given a soup prepared from the head of a virile goat. A spike which shoots forth from a coconut palm is prescribed in a similar way. A bottle of sweet oil restores the lost vitality of a bullock. A bandicoot rat, killed and cut into pieces and mixed with oil-cakes, or bran, is a good restorative food. A bottle of an intoxicating drink is at times given to the bull before they are yoked for a race.

These are special restorative tonics besides their daily share of oil cake, rice bran and ' Udid ' given to them during eight months in a year. No restorative food is considered necessary for the bullocks or cattle during the months of rainy season when grass is abundant. The bullocks are let loose during this period to browse freely and enjoy their rainy season vacation.

It is a pitiable sight to see the treatment given to the bullocks during the period of their training and in the course of races. They are mercilessly hammered with bamboo-sticks and pierced with needle-pointed sticks till they bleed. Such a scene during the course of a cart-race makes one's flesh creep. I am often told by some experienced Agri farmers that most of the bullocks when given such a treatment die an early death. Such bullocks are not yoked to draw heavy

loads, as that will disqualify them as racers, to which extent the agricultural routine suffers.

During the period from November to May when all the roads and lanes are open for traffic the bullock-carts swarm various places on a festival, nuptial or bazaar days at various places in the taluka. The festivals at the shrines of Datta,[1] Vithoba,[2] and Nageshwar[3] are some of the important occasions when cart-racers get ample scope to pursue their hobby. Chondhi, Poynal, Nagaon and other similar small centres where the cart-racers meet on various festive days.

Bhajans

Bhajan Mandalis found in Alibag Taluka are of three types. The type is determined by the number of members, the element of the population as it happens to be either modern or orthodox and lastly the potent controlling factor of finance. The types are :

(i) Ektare—those who use a guitar.
(ii) Nalawale—those who use a native tabor.
(iii) Highly developed musical parties.

Ektare

The party of 'Bhajanis' as recognised by the above term, meaning those who use a guitar with a single chord, is usually located in a small Agri habitation where the number of male adults is small. Such a party consists of about a dozen men at the most, who are usually advanced in age and orthodox in their views. They are faithful devotees who sing prayers during their leisure hours though they may not be competent as singers or musicians. They are a simple folk with limited means at their disposal though their heart will be full of devotion.

This party has three or four members who have their own flat small drum (known as dafara). All others have a pair of cymbals each. As the prayers start, the main singer begins his prayer with a guitar, the rest of the members follow him in a chorus and beat their drums and cymbals. They sing and pray. It is a combination of devotion and recreation. Their programme is simple. They need no 'Buwa' nor a musical instructor to coach them in singing. This party is otherwise known as 'Dafawale' as some of the members have 'Dafs'.

[1] Choul. [2] Varsoli. [3] Avas.

Nalawale

The second variety of 'Bhajani Mandal' is known as Nalawale, as a big drum—a sort of tabor—is their special musical instrument. Such a party must have at least 15 to 20 members. A harmonium is also used, if available. As in the previous case, the other members have their pairs of cymbals.

The members of this party are given day-to-day instructions in singing and praying by their music instructor. They require about four months to get proficiency in their art after which period the party may be able to attend some public function to give performance of their 'bhajan'. They usually meet for about two to three hours in the evening after their meals are over. The charges of the music teacher for this period are about Rs. 40 to Rs. 50 per month which are to be paid from the common subscription collected by the members of this 'Bhajan'. Besides this training, the party receives special coaching by way of preparation when they have to attend some public function.

The songs prescribed for singing are the 'Abhangas' of the Maratha poets of the Varakari Cult which flourished in Maharashtra since the 13th century.[4]

The last type of 'bhajan' party is a highly developed musical affair which has reached a high level of efficiency. It is elaborately equipped with costly musical instruments such as a harmonium, a small drum, a pair of 'Tabala'—resembling kettledrum—all of which together cost some Rs. 300 to Rs. 500. Besides these, all other members have their pairs of cymbals This party is invariably an affair of a richer class of members. About thirty people is the minimum number that is required to make up such a party. The members have to undergo a long period of careful training under an experienced music teacher. They require some two years to complete their course in musical instruction till the party as a whole is fit to give a 'bhajan' performance at a public place. Their music teacher very often receives a sum of Rs. 200 per month. Regular and continued attendance, aptitude for music and laborious work which the members put in determine the musical efficiency of a party. As their music and 'bhajan' start, members playing on various instruments

[4] "We must remember that Vithoba Bhakti was prevalent even in Alandi about seventy years before the birth of Jnandevo" (1275-1296 A.D.), Belvalkar and Ranade, *History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. VII, p. 41.

must be able to keep their tune and maintain harmony all the while. A single man can spoil the whole soup. And there is a healthy competition amongst the members who have to observe discipline in music to keep up the prescribed standard. Such a party receives invitation to give a performance at religious functions, especially at Satya Narayan Puja held every year from village to village. They charge from Rs. 50 to Rs. 100 for one such single performance. More than two Bhajan parties are invited at such a religious function which is a great opportunity for a bhajan mandal to make a good name by displaying the best of their musical skill. Rivalry between bhajan parties then breeds a sense of jealousy at such public functions. Very often their prayers, as the members of a party gets in the tempo of jealousy and unhealthy rivalry, often indulge in abusive language, though *prima facie* it appears to be music.[5]

They call such lines of verses as musical retorts (Tonapas). At some of the musical performance of such 'Bhajans', where I was present, they sang one or two songs in honour of god and all the rest they followed was nothing but profuse indulgence in type of music mentioned above. At times such an unhealthy competition results in a free exchange of blows, which ultimately dissolves such a gathering. And a host has very often to warn previously such parties that they must not indulge in such a way but to stage their performance in an orderly behaviour.

It is my impression that after all a 'Bhajan Mandal' of the 'Varekari' type that maintains faithful devotion and healthy spirit is a genuine type of 'Bhajan'. Its expenditure is limited. All its members indulge in devout praying. On the whole their rereation is passive. And this 'Bhajan' mandal of the last type in its present form is something other than what it is properly meant for.

But the Varekari type of 'Bhajan' parties is however dwindling in its strength. The last type of 'Bhajan' parties popularly known as 'Sagra-Sangeet-Bhajan' which is becoming popular amongst the modern youths of the Agri habitation, covers nearly ninety per cent of all 'Bhajan' parties in Alibag Taluka.

[5] "अगो अगो बाईल मोठी. मुसल घेऊनी लागली पाठी".
This and similar musicial taunts are hurled against the other party. At times they use abusive language also.

Ganapati Dance of the Agri men

Dancing is not a popular hobby or pastime with the Agris as a class. As a rule the Agri males do not show aptitude for dancing, their only occasion for doing so is the Ganapati festival. This dancing is further commonly shared by other people of the locality. Ganapati dancing may be roughly divided into three types. In all the cases the members who take part in dancing must be equipped with small trinkets tied in a bunch to either of their legs and a coloured kerchief in hand. The members present on the occasion usually form themselves in a circle and move clock-wise or anti-clock-wise in circumbulation according to the instructions given by the strokes of a drum or a particular modulation in the voice of their leading member who sings. Training starts a week or two before the actual commencement of the Ganapati festival.

Variety one

This is a simple dance. The equipment of the dancing party in this case is a drum known as 'Nal'. The number of persons varies from eight to twenty, though there is no restriction.

To start with, all the dancers stand in a circle surrounding the main party, who sing and beat the drum to regulate the steps and other movements in the course of their dance. As he sings an opening song in honour of God Ganapati, all the members simultaneously put their right hands up and right foot forward and repeat the song in chorus. They then turn to their right and move in a circle with various musical steps, sometimes resting with one foot on the ground. Sinking themselves in a complete sitting posture or taking a quick roundabout turn during the course of dancing, all such different movements being determined by the modulation of voice or following a different song by the main singer. Uniformly disciplined physical movements, sound of jingling trinkets and modulation in singing make these dances impressive.

Variety two

The members of the dancing party are equipped in this case with a pair of small sticks known as Tiparyas—in addition to a kerchief and 'Ghungurs'. The members of the party is any number multiplied by three. The details of the performance are the same as in the previous case. But the additional beating of the pair of sticks with those of the other two,

creates complications that demand slow and careful movements of dancing postures. The movements of the dancing performance on the whole present us a series of slow and loaded steps, if the members of a party are not well trained.

Variety three

This is known as a dance of the sylphs (Paricha Nacha), as the party of dancers include the young girls or young boys dressed in the garments of females. This party possesses high musical skill, as it includes the hired services of various musicians playing on harmonium, a pair of 'Tabla' and others. Each party has a specific uniform for its members. Long period of training and a considerable amount of money are required for the training of the personnel and other preliminaries before such a party stages its public performance. This party moves from village to village to stage its performance and at times receives sumptuous presents in pecuniary forms from their hosts.

Every year a party of such dancers from Manakola—a village in the eastern belt of Kharapat in this taluka—visits the famous shrines of Nageshwar situated in Ashtagar on the Naga-panchami day to pay their homage to this deity by one of their performances.

A notable feature of such parties is a display of 'Gopha songs'. All the trios in the party which hold a thread each twist a huge rope, hung perpendicularly, by retracing all their musical steps. For such a performance a high level of efficiency is demanded from the composite members of the party.

SHIMAGA FESTIVAL

The Holi is a saturnalia connected with the spring exquinox and is observed in indecorous and boisterous form by the Agris. From the first of 'Phalguna', i.e. sometime in the months of February and March begins the Hindu festival of Shimaga which culminates with the waning phases of the moon and reaches its maximum celebration on the fifteenth full-moon day. Then it slowly diminishes within five days that follow thereafter.

The Agri people enjoy this festival to their heart's content. They cease to engage themselves in agricultural pursuits and other operations in this period. Agriculturists just attend to their essential work like watering their cattle and milking

milk-cattle. Otherwise they indulge themselves with their comrades in making themselves merry during this festival. The repugnant feature of this festival is that one of them sings aloud a couplet that carries with it an insult directed at somebody and the rest of the men or boys in the group conclude the couplet with a hideous expression and beat their mouth with the back of their palm which is as obnoxious to hear as it is nauseating to see. During this festival the village youths enjoy a good deal of liberty in indulging in abusive language exuberant in sexual allusions and committing petty thefts of agricultural produce from the houses and the fields of their neighbours. Young boys collect from house to house contributions in the form of logs of wood and hay or even steal them when persuasion fails and make arrangements for a bon-fire at a central spot in a village. There may be two or three bon-fires in case the village happens to be an extensive one, e.g. the village of Hashivara being very extensive in area lights some five or six bon-fires.

After taking their meals in the evening the male members of the village populace gather around the pile of logs arranged in a large circle for the prospective bon-fire. Immediately after the head-man or a senior man first lights the pile with a resounding couplet which is taken up by the rest of the people and there is a vocal competition of self-composed or imitated couplets. This is over within half an hour. Young boys of 12-20 years of age play games, in particular 'Atyapatya', till the late hours of the night, the elders usually retiring to their homes an hour or two earlier.

Some years ago every village in Kharapat had its own party of Vaghya and Murali made up of youths who possessed some elementary knowledge of dancing and singing and a young boy who would play the role of a woman. Such a party, accompanied by a number of young men from the village, would visit the neighbouring villages, where they would give their performance or watch others doing so. All such visitors, accompanying the party, were entertained at meals by the local villagers, however great their number might be. The best of such parties would receive a number of invitations from villages far and near to give them one of their popular performances. There was a sort of healthy competition between various villages to present the best of their amateur artists with the ultimate design of entering the final stage in the arena of this dramatic competition. This kind of performance fast disappeared during the last ten or fifteen years,

their songs being neglected and thus forgotten. History of the art and the historic actions included therein were completely lost. Few of the songs, sung during the performance of Vaghya Murali, which I was able to gather from the village of Chari, have been included in the appendices of this work. A reference to this performance is found in one of the songs sung in the 'Sati' celebration on the sixth day since child-birth.

As the members of the opposite sex seldom mix together in a public place or at a meeting, for recreation being prohibited from doing so by the social conventions of the Agris, their female folk enjoy Shimaga festival in much a different way. In case of the male members, especially when drinking is unrestricted either by time or quantity, the Shimaga festival abounds in scenes of verbal exchanges and at times in physical fights.

Members of the fair sex among the Agris being comparatively more docile than their boisterous and virile male members, enjoy their Shimaga in a healthier and more congenial atmosphere. Every evening, when their male members have left home after their meals for the Holi celebrations, the women whether married or otherwise, young girls of all ages, gather in the courtyard of the house of some elderly women who know well the Shimaga songs. The number of women goes on increasing every night and reaches its maximum limit on the Full-Moon night or Holi Pournima.

The manner of dancing

All the members of the fair sex gathered, divide themselves into two rows, facing each other and separated at a distance of about four paces. When they begin to sing a song, the members of both the files march face to face slowly with their heads and trunks bent forward. When they come quite close to each other, they retreat in the same manner without turning their backs. Having gone some three or four paces back they again move forward as before. There are no elaborate movements or gestures, nor is any professional skill displayed by these danseuses in the course of their dance. It is a simple dance with no complicated features in it and may be followed by a novice without much difficulty or effort on her part. Any late-comer may join in any of the rows she likes at any stage of the dance and get along with the swing of it. This sort of dancing during the Shimaga festival is particularly known amongst the Agris as Dhabali or Kambali Khandane.

The manner of singing

The elderly women from either of the rows who know the song first sing a line and then the women from the other row repeat it after them. This is done once more. Both the rows maintain the same singing and heaving movements. In this way the female singers alternately get some breathing time and there is no strain on the memory, thereby giving ample time and scope to recollect the following line as well as some momentary relaxation to them. Even a novice can follow it without any difficulty.

A GENERAL NOTE ON FOLK-SONGS

'The folk-song' as Krappe says, is 'a song, i.e a lyric poem with melody which originated anonymously, among unlettered folk in times past and which remain in currency for a considerable time, as a rule, for centuries'.[6]

The folk-songs which are sung usually without the accompaniment of any musical instrument appear to be the heritage of the Agris from the past. They are sung by numerous persons in a group during agricultural operations, nuptial ceremonies, holidays and festivals. They are handed from generation to generation and village to village by mere oral transmission in the absence of written records.

They are the songs of open and free atmosphere and unfettered by any conventions such as poetic, literary and the like. They do not form a monopoly of any single individual but are a universal possession. It is then no wonder that slight changes like additions or omissions are always in progress in the rolling mass of these songs at various hands. They are commonly shared by all the members of the community as spontaneous expressions of human heart! Far from being a static composition, they are a source of delight and relaxation amongst the agrarian Agris.

As composition of verse they look unpolished in appearance, simple in construction and at times appear to lack in the sequence of ideas. Some idea regarding a word from the previous line is developed in the following one. It is the sound and not the sense that constitutes their beauty. They appear defective because of inconsistent expressions and irrelevant ideas. They are redundant with discrepant minor details and very often refuse to follow any rules of prosody. Yet as songs

[6] Krappe A. H., *The Science of Folklore*. p. 153.

they have a popular appeal to the ear and the heart. In the elementary stage of composition, it is the sound that appeals.

Themes of some of the folk-songs of the Agris are simple and have some bearing on their living and environment. They do not make an attempt at a solution of any problem nor embody any piece of advice. They bristle with reflections and folk-ways of the rural Agri life. These songs have preserved and conserved their heritage of primitive culture and belief. Some of them happen to be graphic as pictures and present us with a peep in the life of the people. Any characteristic of a polished composition to disguise one's defects or embodiment of thoughts in an embellished language is totally absent.

It is amongst such songs that some references can be found to their original culture that is gradually fading away from this and similar communities. "Folk-songs coming down to us through countless generations which help us to rewrite the history of the people." [7]

A comparison of some of these songs with those collated by various Marathi scholars and published not long ago proves that the expressions of human experience do not differ much in similar circumstances.

Almost all these songs are in the custody of women and hence they may be aptly called as 'Apaurcoheya', [8] i.e. not composed by man—a term synonymous of Veda.

The folk-songs collected from the Agri community may be divided as follows:—

(1) Those that are current amongst the male members, and

(2) others that are current amongst the women-folk.

The songs sung by males are rare. They mainly constitute the songs which are sung during the Ganapati festival invariably associated with some form of dance. These songs come from printed books.

The other group is of 'Bhaleryas'.

The songs popular amongst the female folk are sometimes accompanied by simple dances. Gouri and Shimaga songs fall under this heading—these songs, especially from the farmer group, are often sung in company by Agri women during the agricultural operations to lessen the burden of labour in the fields. Others are sung without the accompaniment of any physical movements.

The songs current amongst the women-folk are:—

[7] *Developing Village India*—Special Number, 1946.
[8] Deshapande K., *Apoureshey Vangmay Arthat Strigeete.*

1. Lullabies,
2. Shimaga songs,
3. Shikka songs,
4. Gouri songs, and
5. Marriage songs.

The marriage songs, out of these, are never sung as a recreation but only on ceremonials and are the property of a few women.

BHALERYAS

These ' Bhaleryas ' are pastoral songs, never exceeding three or four lines and are about thirty-six in number. They are a monopoly of the masculine sex and are sung during the transplantation and harvest operations. One leading member of the workers in the fields sings aloud a whole song and the rest follow him in chorus. " Bhale-re-bhale " to the top of their voice rendering the air resonant with the sound ! It is a pleasant sight to see these songs creating jovial atmosphere amongst the agricultural labourers, a single repetition of the song being enough to draw them all into a silent form of discipline and is a demonstration of how labour can work efficiently in a body and finish the job in a short time. Unrestrained in their humour and licentious in their expression as these madrigals happen to be, they are not sung when members of the fair sex are preponderant. It is especially in a part of fields mainly occupied by jovial young men that these songs may be heard. Female labourers depart to another corner as the youths start singing these ' Bhaleryas '. Sometimes presence of females is ignored and it is but natural for womenfolk to watch from a distance how their men-folk enjoy the fun of singing these ' Bhaleryas '. Repetition of these songs with suitable substitutions for the persons and places concerned render them more appropriate for their occasions. They have a scope for taunts and retaliations to promote the invigorating spirit and singing competition to lighten the manual exertions of the wearisome agricultural operations. The labourers in the fields get divided in groups as the competition in singing ' Bhaleryas ' opens. A member of a group sings a Bhaleri song containing a taunt or a remark hurled against a particular member of another group, the rest of the members of his group supplementing his remark with a cry of " Bhale-re-bhale ". The youth for whom this remark is intended picks up the challenge, sings another song in retalia-

tion, and is supported by the members of his group in a similar way.

Prima facie the text of the 'Bhaleryas' appears to be dull and abominable. Nevertheless they contain words of wisdom, epitome of one's life experience and subtle observations of individual behaviour of the people of all the castes in a village. A Brahmin even is not spared. Men or women, married or unmarried, young or old, virgins or widows and all those who shine in village life are given an equal treatment touching their genuine drawbacks. So cosmopolitan they are in their spirit! Poverty, though usually used to depict a feeling of pathos, is used as an expression of humour. Finished results of experience of various people are put in plain words. An exuberance of comments rich in carnal allusions create an atmosphere of sex-complex.

Honest in their expression, the agriculturists present the things as they see them ignoring the etiquette of polished and refined language of the cultured classes, very often imbibed with hypocrisy. So unceremonious they are in their criticism!

These 'Bhaleryas' claimed to be a common heritage are handled in a way suitable according to an individual need and are given various treatments like additions, subtractions and others, though such mutations are in no way sufficient to deprive them of their general spirit and impression of pastoral poetry.

LULLABIES

The lullabies are sung by an Agri mother or sister as she rocks a baby's cradle to put her to sleep during the nocturnal hours or as she reposes in her leisure hours with a baby by her side. These lullabies vary in length and stretch themselves from two to twelve lines. They are infused with a mother's affection for her child. Whatever a mother says or feels for her child she does it from her heart as a child is a mother's most valuable treasure. It is therefore no wonder that women have been able to promulgate a special form of poetry full of feminine touch and expressions peculiar to women. Some of the lullabies are original and some in imitation of others. They are simple and classic in construction and easy for committing to memory being all the time in the custody of women and girls.

Sometimes they go so far in their colloquial expressions amongst the Agri surroundings that their rhyming and colloquial syntax cannot be properly expressed in a language other than their own. A spontaneous gush from one's heart cannot be imprisoned in frames of words and phrases. A translation of some of these songs in English may not be faithful to the original in spirit. Besides, they abound in minor details like want of sequence, inconsistency of ideas apart from an evolution of a narration.

Some of them may be compared to 'Ovis' from the Marathi book 'Stree-Jeewan' compiled by Sane Guruji. Some of them are typical instances of an agricultural household in poetry.

These verses hurry over various ideas without any relevancy or evolution of facts, simply because they are meant to create a fascinating atmosphere for a child to roll in slumber, who then roams in the dreamland of the fairies. Hence no attempt need be undertaken to go behind the actual wordings of these lines even when some of them may sound incomprehensible to our ears.

SHIKKA SONGS

According to the superstitious belief of the Agris the body of a person attacked by small-pox is rather an embodiment of the visitation of the plural deities known as 'Bayas', than as a result of epidemic. A person, who is attacked by small-pox, is supposed to have been possessed by them or to say explicitly the body of a person is a temporary abode of these deities. And as such all the attitude and gestures of reverence and courtesy must be showered upon them throughout the duration. After the sixth or the seventh day of the attack, when the pimpals are visible on the body, various songs are sung in honour of the plural deities for about six days. The whole period is spent ceremoniously as if it were a festival. A booth is erected before the house of the diseased and the yard is cleaned and given a coating of cow-dung solution. A swinging flank decorated with a number of seasonal flowers is hung in the centre. A general invitation is extended to all the people in the neighbourhood to attend the house of the patient in the evening, after their meals are over, in honour of these deities.

After a week after a young child is inoculated for small-pox by a vaccinator, the further period of a week is also considered as a festival in honour of the same deities. Some resemblance

betrayed by the after-effects of vaccination marks with the pimpals of small-pox accounts for the identification of the two. Hence these songs are otherwise known as Shikka songs. 'Shikka' in Agri dialect means the marks of vaccination. The duration of this ceremony lasts longer than that of the effect of inoculation, a period that synchronizes with the effect of small-pox. Throughout this period the house in question is kept clean. No non-vegetarian menu is allowed. An emblem of these plural deities of small-pox, known as 'Ghat' is erected. It consists of the bunch of twigs of the Nigadi plant (Vitex Nirgundi) placed vertically in a nickel pot with a flat bottom. It is worshipped every day by some member in the family. In the evening the people gathered from the neighbourhood sing in chorus various songs composed in their honour. It is usually the custom of the Agri household to show preference to the female members of the community though the male members are also invited. In such cases men and women are invited at different hours. The songs sung by both the sexes are the same. It is, however, observed that females display a special aptitude to sing songs and the men are invited more or less as a matter of courtesy. Tea is served to all and an occasional smoke is provided for the male members during this hour.

The Shikka songs are of three types :

1. Those which are sung with reference to the popular Hindu deity—Lord Krishna.
2. Others bearing reference to the plural deities of small-pox.
3. Those dealing with a young baby.

1. One of the songs from group one describes the birthday being celebrated in Lanka, the capital of the demon king Ravan. Other songs contain references to the wanton deeds of the mischievous urchin Lord Krishna, so popularly sung by Sanskrit and Marathi poets including his amorous sport with Radha, his famous consort and the daughter-in-law of a cowherd from Gokula. Another reference is to the well-known episode in Krishna's life in Gokula, when he climbed up a Kadamba tree with the garments of his female companions, whom he persuaded to have a dip in the Jamuna. The next song contains an allusion to the quarrel between Krishna's wives, Rukmini and Satyabhama, over a flower brought by the famous traducer from the heaven, Narada.

2. In the other group of songs, one of them goes to describe a detailed account of the plural small-pox deities. Another

song gives instructions about erecting various parts of the house for residence of these deities in a manner that is suitable for such a worthy people. At some other time they are said to have been playing on the bank of the Jamuna where the urchin Krishna goes to play. His mother goes there to take him back and asks him what he wishes to have. The mischievous child bewilders his mother with a demand for a roasted ball of butter, the sound of vibration of a pot or the sun as a toy. In some other song these plural deities are referred to have camped at the fort of Jejuri, the fabulous description of which enjoins unimaginable wealth. There are further references to their dress, coiffure and a trip along to Choul.

The third group of songs refer to a young baby. Really speaking, these songs should be classified along other lullabies treated in a special group

SONGS SUNG DURING THE GAURI FESTIVAL

The festival of Gauri, which follows soon after Ganapati in the Hindu month of Bhadrapade (August and September) lasts for about two days and is all the rage amongst the Agri women-folk. During these days the Agri females of all ages sing, dance and play before the image of Gauri installed in their home 'Gauray Bay' as Gauri is affectionately called by the Agris, their popular deity, comes only once a year and that too on a short visit of about two days. And as such she must be entertained in all the best manner possible in the Agri household. In her honour beautiful 'Kanas' are drawn in the court-yard of an Agri house. Sweet dishes are specially cooked and the mirthful activities of singing and dancing keep the whole family in high spirits. To sum up, the art impulse of an Agri female finds an outlet in these days in all these songs. The songs sung in honour of the 'Gauray Bay' are accompanied by various physical activities. They include :—

1. Bhovar (भोवर) : A circular dance of a group of females with various movements of hands and feet.
2. Zimma (झिम्मा) : Consists of the parties striking one another's palms and again advancing.
3. Phugadya (फुगड्या) : A kind of dance when two or more females holding each other's hands, fling themselves about, keeping time to

their movements by puffing (फुगडी फू) 'phugadi phoo' with the mouth.

4. Basphugadi (बसफुगडी) : The same dance as above but with various sitting positions.
5. Kombada (कोंबडा) : A dance involving the actions of a cock.
6. Ghusalane (घुसलन) : A dance involving the actions of a woman who is churning butter milk,

and others.

The whole day and night bevies of Agri women pay visits from house to house to have a look at their fondled deity 'Gauray Bay' and sing a song in her honour accompanied by some physical activity. During the nocturnal hour, all of them gather together to celebrate the festival at some house. It will be clear that this Gauri festival is a concern of the members of the fair sex alone.

The Gauri songs may be classified in three groups.

I — Consists of the songs that are directly connected with the Gauri rituals of installation, prayers, immersion and others, all of which are religious in nature.

II — In this group short narrative poems that preserve some references pauranic or otherwise have been collected. These songs appear pauranic and quasi-pauranic in nature.

III — All the rest of the songs that throw some light on the Agri mind in working. These are genuine Agri songs.

Group I

After all one cannot deny the fact that it is a man who has created god, notwithstanding the converse of this is an accepted truth. Hence all the human sentiments and other associations are transferred to the man-made deities. And in all these songs sung with reference to 'Gauray Bay' we get a sketch of a newly-married girl, who is eager as ever to go to her mother's house and always unwilling to leave it, though leave it she must.

'Gauray Bay' is described to have come from her husband's home situated somewhere on the Ghat side. She is said to have made a halt on the other side of the river for a ferry to take her across, whence she can go to her mother's home. She is permitted by her husband's people to live with her mother for a short period of about two days. In another song her brother, who goes to take her to the house of her mother,

says that he is prepared to take all the responsibility and agrees even to carry her on his shoulders if the river on his way gets swollen on account of incessant rain.

This fondled daughter of the house unlike other married girls of the community is fortunate to get a loving mother-in-law, who also does not like her daughter-in-law separated from her. This daughter is addressed in various loving terms[8] as माझ गौरु बाय! लाडक लेकी! सोनाल! and so on.

Her loving mother, who is moved with the pangs of separation at the hour of her daughter's departure, ventilates her feelings in some of the songs. She wanders from bazaar to bazaar in search of a suitable gift for her daughter—say a winnowing basket, a cow and so on—but she is extremely disappointed to find it impossible to obtain one.

The mother promises her daughter that she would send somebody to bring her back on a specific day. In some other song it is said that this 'Gauray Bay', who is washing her linen on the shore, sends a word per passer-by to her mother to take her back to her parental home.

On the day of the departure of this 'Gauray Bay' all the women of the Agri habitation accompany her, the worthy daughter of their community, as far as the sea-shore, whence she goes all alone to her husband's home.

On the occasion of the immersion of Gauri the Agri womenfolk divide themselves in various groups according to their habitations and these groups hurl against each other a number of musical remarks.

It is evident from the general description and impression of these songs that this Gauri culture is infiltrated in Konkan from the Ghat side.

Summary of seven songs

A summary of seven songs included in the Gauri Group is given for general impression to understand their subject-matter :—

1. Suraya's daughter Radhika once forgot her necklace, she knows not where, which she removed from her person before taking her bath in the river. Govinda (Lord Krishna)

—[8] बापाच लाडके लेकी.
—सोनाल जातय सासुर्या.
—समुद्राच्या काटी गौराय धुना धवीत व्हती हो.
as sung in various Gauri songs.

assuming the form of a bird steals it away. Radhika realises her mistake after reaching her home and conducts a vigorous search for the lost ornament. As per reports she receives, she approaches Govinda with a request to him to give her back her necklace, who agrees to do so only if Radhika consents to share his bed for an overnight. Shrewd Radhika then yields to this offer. But tactfully escapes with her necklace, when Govinda is lost in sleep.

2. Rai, a newly-married girl, during one of her casual visits to her parental home, learns from a female vendor some bad information about her husband. Her doubt about his safety is further moulded into anxiety by some inauspicious omens. Her immediate departure is, however, withheld for one reason or the other by her parents. Finally she learns the most unhappy news of the demise of her husband from a cow of her hamlet, where she has gone to search for him on account of the prevaricating replies and indirect remarks given to her by her husband's parents. According to the further instructions of the same cow, she goes to the assembly of the gods and returns to her home back with her husband alive.

3. Jayata, a newly-married young girl, is tempted to watch her husband playing with his comrades on her way to the well, in spite of the warning given by her father-in-law ! Bhovar, her husband, learns what she has done. Blind with indignation he binds her to a pole and mercilessly beats her in spite of her numerous requests.

4. A humorous description of a woman, who has recently settled with her husband in Bombay City.

5. This is a pathetic story of a young married girl who is harassed by her eight brothers-in-law and nine sisters-in-law. Her brother who learns the fact during a brief visit to her house, is also helpless in the matter. He has to go back to his house without her, as all the relatives to whom his helpless sister approaches to sanction her visit to her parental house direct her to the next person. She finally asks her husband, who prevaricates from time to time for nearly four months (from the period of sowing to harvest) and at last teaches her a good lesson with a rod for asking the aforesaid permission. She secretly escapes to her mother's house.

6. Rai, another married girl, who is tired of the inhuman treatment given to her by her husband's relations, disappears at Mahadeva's temple on her way to the house of her husband. She is born again as a cow there, where she litters after a few years. A panther from the forest sprawls up to her place to

devour her. She requests him to wait till her calf grows up, after which she assures she would present herself to the abode of the panther deep in the forest.

7. This is a beautiful narration. Pious Sakhu, who is married recently, is tempted to accompany a caravan of pilgrims, whom she happens to watch. On her way, her husband chases and gets her back. He locks her in a room. After a few days this Sakhu returns from Pandharpur and presents her mother-in-law and husband with black fragrant powder (बुक्का); and parched rice (लाह्या). both of whom are all the more astonished to learn that it is God Vithoba, who is locked in the room and not Sakhu, who executed all the household work instead.

SHIMAGA SONGS

These Shimaga songs are sung in honour of Houlubai, the deity presiding over the bon-fire festival. The concluding couplet or a song has invariably a direct or indirect reference to her. She is looked upon as a female deity resembling a beloved daughter coming back to her paternal home after a long lapse of about a year and at times the songs represent her as a young wife returning to her parental home with her first born. Her husband's home is situated at an unusually distant place and unlike other girls she cannot visit her mother's home on every festive occasion nor even on invitation. The month of Shimaga appears to be the only period when members of her husband's family can spare her to visit her mother. At times she is shown as having come to her parent's home after her delivery possibly for the first time and her younger sister is made to keep attendance on her and help to lessen her mother's burden in the management of the household affairs. Other times she is said to be working in the fields where her younger brothers come to take her home. But they fail to persuade her. It is only that her elder brothers succeed in taking her home. Her younger brothers and friends look forward for her arrival in their mother's village and keep a nightly vigil for her till her eyes are beady with sleep.

Her husband is described as having gone to a neighbour's house, possibly on leaving his father-in-law's house during one of his short and rare visits to his wife's parental residence, as he feels he is not being given the proper treatment befitting his position (status) as a son-in-law. Some influential relations

of Houlubai are then sent to persuade him to come to the house of his father-in-law and are successful in their mission only after they have offered him some nice gifts. Shirahari is the name of her husband. There is no particular reference in these songs whether her husband accompanies Houlubai. There is also no light thrown on other details regarding his residence, temperament or other information except that he is known at times by another name of Raja Devaji.

An important feature of these songs, which deserves special mention is that throughout there is no reference made to any part of Hindu mythology. All these Shimaga songs depict a close and faithful picture of the surroundings and environment in which they live, love and languish. These songs are simple in construction, primitive in thought and sometimes contain obsolete and vulgar expressions. The Shimaga songs are practically the same all over the taluka and are also sung by other women-folk like Marathas and Choukalashis. Yet the Agri women betray a special aptitude for these songs amongst whom they are very popular !

Dera songs are the other variety of Shimaga songs. Dera is an earthen pot the mouth of which is covered tightly with a piece of goatskin and it is made airtight with a smearing of a mixture made of cow-dung and mud. A dried blade of a palm leaf is attached to the centre of the skin with a little thread tied to it. Usually a young girl or one in her teens plays on the ' dera ' placed on the ground before her and with some pressure she passes the fingers of both her hands alternately on the blade in a vertical manner giving a melodious sound at the same time. As this girl with dera sings a song, the rest of her friends follow her in a chorus. The manner of singing the song is as before. There is neither any dancing nor particular formation nor arrangement of the group, the party of singers generally standing in a semi-circle. Only a section of younger girls and a few recently married ones join the ' dera ' group. Such a party of young singers go singing from house to house and collect a few coins which the honoured housewife may be pleased to give them during the Shimaga festival. In the end the sum thus collected is equally distributed amongst all the members of the party.

MARRIAGE SONGS

The marriage songs are always associated with the various stages of a marriage ceremony. They are a traditional heri-

tage of the Agri women-folk handed down from generation to generation, the origin of which seems to fade in the dim past to such an extent that even well-informed Agris are not able to comment or say in any way about their origin and authorship. No particular authorship, place or period is considered to have been responsible for their composition, which seem to have undergone a considerable change which varies with the disposition of the singer and the influence of the moment upon him.

These marriage songs, known by the distinctive name of 'Dhavalas', are sung by the female members among the Agris known as 'Dhavalarinis'. A 'Dhavalarin' who recites or sings these marriage songs on a number of occasions in marriage ceremonies without either the help of a written text or the aid of a mentor fills a role more important than a Brahmin. The Agris believe that a Brahmin priest has very little work to do except to perform the two rituals of 'Daivat thapane' (establishing the deities) and 'Mal ghalane' when a bride and a bridegroom garland each other. They consider the 'Dhavalas' as nothing less than holy formulae (Mantrams) and do not permit them to be sung frivolously or lightheartedly so as to maintain their sanctity and propriety.

Proficiency in the art of reciting these 'Dhavalas' is by no means a simple task, especially when hearing and repeating them is the only medium left to them through which the simple Agri women can learn to sing the songs and it is therefore no surprise that a 'Dhavalarin' is not very often to be met in their village. The troublesome task of mastering these 'Dhavalas' means some spare time and not a little personal freedom in addition to the natural gift of a good memory to the prospective Agri 'Dhavalarin'.

The Agri women, being always absorbed in her usual domestic routine with hardly any time for relaxation and being always at the mercy of her husband when she has to be absent from the house, particularly if there is a number of children under her care, does not make a fit person for the role of 'Dhavalarin'. More often than not we observe that a 'Dhavalarin' is a widow or a woman with little domestic responsibility. She is present at all the stages of a marriage ceremony and intelligently picks up and fixes in her memory the text of the recitation and the ceremonial details with which a particular song is connected, when an experienced and veteran 'Dhavalarin' keeps on singing. There is no special coaching or impacting of these 'Dhavalas' to a novice

for whom the next marriage ceremony offers the only opportunity for revision. It is needless to add that there is no specific test nor an examination to determine her standard of the merit of a prospective ' Dhavalarin '.

The way in which a ' Dhavala ' is sung makes it very convenient for fixing it in one's memory. Recitation of a single line by a Dhavalarin is orally recited by the rest of the women present at the function. The line is again repeated by the main singer and again they follow her in a chorus. Thus a line is repeated in all four times. The intelligent woman should not find it difficult to memorise it.

Though a ' Dhavalarin ' is often a widow, her widowhood being in no way regarded by her society as inauspicious or unfavourable for the performance of a marriage ceremony, she moves freely with the status as that of a married woman.

These ' Dhavalas ' though traditionally handed down from generation to generation and retained strictly for the specific purpose of a marriage, show a definite tendency to lack in uniformity and fixity of their texts. A word or two may be missing on one occasion, a whole line on another or there may be an altogether loose and disintegrated recitation of a song. On more than one occasion I have heard a ' Dhavala ' admitting an altogether unusual word, when the memory of a ' Dhavalarin ' fails her at the eleventh hour. This adjustment is in no way deemed to have impaired the essence or sanctity of the songs. On the whole these songs do not appreciably differ in form or otherwise from place to place and a little difference here or there or an omission or addition of a few words or a suitable change are ignored by them. Their songs serve their purpose as aforesaid and there their function ceases !

The wording of these ' Dhavalas ' are completely a monopoly of the women-folk and do not differ to any appreciable extent from the dialect, which is spoken by them in their homes. These ' Dhavalas ' are graphic in their description, natural in their expression, colloquial in their form and emotional in their nature, as truly to show that it is a woman, who has poured her heart into these songs, even though as a form of verse it may not appear acatalectic to us.

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION

Introduction

We have seen so long various details connected with the living of the Agris in Alibag Taluka, their beliefs and folk-lore, their social pattern of behaviour that is regulated by the Agri caste councils, usually distributed according to the geographical divisions. We have also seen the details of the Agri dialect, including its peculiarities of grammar and phraseology on which no assistance of written records is available and on the whole it does not differ much from the dialect spoken by other agricultural communities in Alibag Taluka. For recreation the Agri men show a marked liking for 'Bhajan' and similar activities, whereas the members of their fair sex still preserve for themselves a mass of folk-songs handed down from generation to generation to which they seem to be adding their own. In studying the details of the economic life of the Agris, it was found that agriculture and other pursuits allied therewith are the mainstay of their life. As found elsewhere in India, the homeland of the Agris is a ruralised country and will remain so long as agriculture is the main pursuit in their life. In a majority of cases, we cited, all the activities of the Agris find their place at a low subsistence level, life meaning nothing more than a struggle to satisfy the prime necessities of human life. The educated element of the community, when given a chance, can rise appreciably so as to adjust themselves with various walks of life. Yet a major portion of the Agri population distributed in its homeland consisting of villages in the rural country-side has to depend upon agricultural and other pursuits allied therewith for their maintenance which have been hitherto neglected by the upper classes in India. After all, the farmers of a country play a great part in the existence of a nation, who exert to support the whole burden of society. Various problems confronting Indian agriculture, the difficulties and handicaps of an Indian farmer and the social organisation and the beliefs, that have arrested the progress of our rural folk, are to be noticed within the compass of the Agri life in this region with a difference only in degrees, introduced by local conditions.

It is proposed in the following few pages to look into some details of the rural Agri life as observed by me during the course of this sample survey and to show where the Agris stand at present. Further, an humble attempt is made to offer some suggestions to help their efforts in their present surroundings to improve income, having noted for our purpose the needs of the self-reliant Agris, namely, suggestions which brought into execution will not involve much financial strain. To quote, " Agriculture is a necessary industry in every country, but no nation has gone rich in modern times from mere agricultural pursuits ".[1] It was found that the rice is the main agricultural produce and that too raised only once a year, the proportion of land under subsidiary crops being quite negligible in the absence of facilities for water supply for irrigation. The Agri farmers in this taluka follow other pursuits in order to make their both ends meet.

Out of the total number of 564 families under survey, some 216[2] persons eked out supplementary income from agricultural and quasi-agricultural pursuits like ploughing (41), dairy farming (69), cart-driving (56). About 36 more followed their own business. Other sources of supplementary income include pipers (16), salt manufactures (6), and the like, whereas 45 more followed other occupations like carpentry (32), tailoring (8), and hotel-keeping which are non-agricultural in nature.

Besides these general pursuits, we study in the following few pages specific trends of economic and cultural development of various tappas (group of villages) and a brief survey of the social evolution of the Agris in Alibag Taluka before we deal with other details.

Socio-economic side

It is seen that the cultural development of the various groups of the Agri population varies and synchronizes with their social contact with the urbane strata of the society living in Bombay. The 'Tappas', which have been separately dealt with in Chapter X, show a distinct trend of development of their own.

The Kharapat area, which covers most of the villages on the western bank of the Amba creek, has furnished the whole of the Kolaba Collectorate with a good number of teachers and village revenue clerks (Talathis).

[1] Sir Vishwesharayya, *Unemployment in India*, p. 13.
[2] The figures in the brackets show the number of persons.

The Zirad, Bamangaon and Umata groups of villages (Tappas) still preserve the traditions and customs of the Agris, as they have not progressed much either in the field of education or finance. Very often they inhabit a village in common with other classes like Choukalashis, Marathas, Brahmins and others. Here the number of the Agris, which has migrated from their native homes to other places either on account of employment or education, is not considerable ; most of those who have left their villages being in the capacity of labourers and daily wage-earners.

The Agris in the Parhur group of villages have been mostly engaged in agricultural and seasonal horticultural operations, as they have some facilities of water supply to raise subsidiary crops during winter months of a year. Quantities of various vegetables like ' Ghevada ', ' Valapapadi ', ' Tondali ', ' Brinjal ' and the like are grown for the greater part of a year. It is but natural that not many people have left their homes from this area.

The Agris of Umata and Bamangaon groups depend in general upon agriculture, whose products they use for their consumption in the absence of quick transport facilities for exporting their vegetable produce to other places. In comparison to their brothers from the neighbouring groups of villages, these Agris do not appear to have made much progress to improve their lot for the simple reason that they do not make any effort to get out of the rut.

Again, there is a marked tendency amongst the various groups to follow typical occupations, which the Agris pursue according to the geographical differences and the configuration of their respective villages. My observations are summarized in the following paragraphs :

The Agris of the Kusumbale group of the villages, who migrate to Bombay, seek employment in factories, mills, particularly in the textile mills.

The Agris of the Kharapat, who fortunately happen to be sufficiently mentally equipped with education either of primary or other nature, occupy a number of posts in the Government Revenue Services and the District Local Board Schools.

The people, who hail from Shiravali and thereabout, have specialized in hotel-keeping and they are running some hotels in Bombay.

The Agris of Saral and other villages in proximity thereto have acquired notable skill as goldsmiths and some of them are so capable as to conduct a business of their own.

The Agris who migrate to Bombay from their village homes on the bank of the Kundalika estuary, find employment in the Bombay Port Trust and in other workshops in the docks at Bombay.

All these facts lead us to believe that the Agris, as a class, are capable people, following various pursuits, native with shrewdness and are able to adjust themselves to their environment.

Their progressive nature can also be seen especially in the educational advancement, which the Agris from Alibag Taluka have made. To put it shortly, there is one Master of Arts and Law Graduate, seven Arts graduates out of whom three are women. Twenty-two are college-going students, three of them being women. There are sixty-six High School students and a number of other pupils attending the District Local Board Schools.

Out of an aggregate number of 197 male teachers employed in the services of the District Local Board Primary Schools, seventy-seven are Agris, out of which number thirty-eight are trained ones. In addition to this there are sixteen Agri lady teachers out of whom six are trained from among a total lot of sixty lady teachers of various communities. Moreover, there are about sixteen Agri male teachers from Alibag Taluka employed in Bombay in Municipal Primary Marathi Schools. About ten to twelve more Agri men are employed in clerical services in Government offices, mills and other places—all from Alibag Taluka. The number of the Agris employed in the Revenue Department in the capacity of village revenue clerks otherwise known as Talathis is also promising. Out of sixty-four such clerks, including regular, additional and census Talathis, coming from nineteen different communities on the whole, the Agris among them number twenty, all but one being from Alibag Taluka.

Having thus seen various trends of these Tappas, we have a brief review of the social evolution of the Agris in this taluka.

A short history of social evolution

The history of the social evolution of the Agris in Alibag Taluka may be traced as far back as the year 1896, when two

Brahmin teachers,[3] who were in succession the heads of a primary school in the village of Shahabaj, diligently tutored and took interest in the local intelligent boys and worked with every sincerity for their educational uplift. These teachers then persuaded the guardians of such pupils as were found capable of higher education to send them to English Schools or a Primary Teachers' Training College, both of which were then usually regarded as beyond the pale of an average Agri. These pupils proved worthy of the hope placed in them by their teachers and some of them secured open scholarships. In a boarding, where these pupils conducted a joint mess for themselves, there were so many pupils of one common name, Narayan,[4] that they had to be distinguished by putting before the first letter of the names of the villages from which they came to their own names and so on. During these days, the examinations held by the Training Colleges were considered to be difficult, yet some of the pupils passed them with credit. After completing their school careers, these young men were employed as teachers getting a monthly salary in cash, which was certainly a novel feature for the Agris. In addition to the economic effect of it, a teacher's post was always considered a respectable and honest profession. Hence many Agris from other villages tried to emulate their example and took up to teaching and thus entered a new sphere of activity entirely at variance with their traditional occupations.

These youths, when grown into fully educated persons, took a leading part in bringing up other members of their community by launching some small schemes totally strange to the Agri villages. They opened a small library, encouraged the children and especially the girls to go to school.

The first woman who passed the Third-Year examination of the Training College in 1909, was honoured at a public meeting under the presidentship of the Collector of Kolaba in the same year. This function gave a great momentum to the movement for social reform.

The educated element of the Agris now tried to check all bad and anti-social customs and fostered the spread of literacy, and in doing so, gathered good strength and gained such confidence among the people that they were inspired to extend their activities to cover the whole of the Agri community and they convened a conference of all the Agris at Shahabaj in Alibag Taluka in 1916. Since then, annual sessions of

[3] Messrs. Dharap and Sohani.
[4] For example S. Narayan meant Narayan, who came from Shahahaj.

this conference, known as 'Akhila Agri Dnyati Parishad', were held from year to year at various places, the leading elements among its workers being from this Alibag Taluka. They stood for mutual co-operation, spread of literacy and general social uplift.

The association of some of the Agri leaders with the non-Brahmin movement from the Ghat-side, which spread to this part of Agri population, created dissensions amongst the Agris. Some of them who held a broader view, sensibly refused to co-operate in the work of a destructive nature. This led to a split in the whole organisation of the Agris in this taluka in smaller groups, all working with the same goal in view, according to their respective schools of thinking. Some of them who did not like to be after the interests of their community alone, entered other spheres of national movement in this country. For a long time these dissensions amongst the Agris continued till 1948, when again a conference of all the Agris from this region was convened at Poynad with a view of making some attempt to unite together all the Agris as farmers and workers.

Throughout the course of their local movement, the Agri leaders never forgot the fact that there were many social evils rampant in their community, namely the huge amount of expenditure made on the occasion of marriage celebrations and funeral rites, when a number of caste people were required to be fed. They also tried to check the evil of alcoholism amongst their people. Liquor, they knew, was too freely distributed at the marriage functions. They pressed home the need for better education of the Agris, more so for the members of the fair sex among them.

These efforts, which steadily gained ground and gradually helped to mould the behaviour of the members of their community, have now been seen to be successful to a certain extent in checking some of the social evils among the Agris. Some reforms may be cited below :

Liquor is not now served in the pandal put up for marriage celebration, though a guest may be served with a drink in private. In some cases the bride-price is not accepted. The number of girls going to school is slowly increasing. On certain days of religious importance like Ekadashi and others, eating of fish is not indulged in. In some villages, the Agris totally abstain from eating fish in the month of Shravan, that is August according to the Christian calendar. When I say

that the Agris in some villages abstain from eating fish in the Hindu month of Shravan—I mean the small seasonal variety of fish known as 'Kolabi', which is believed to breed the germs of cholera.

As far as the clothing apparel of the Agris is concerned, the men have introduced the shirt and dhotee, besides a coat, which they may wear occasionally. Some of their women wear saris after the fashion of the upper classes, when not engaged in agricultural operations. And it is also evident from their general progress that the educated Agris on the whole do not allow themselves to fall behind the times.

To refer to the general pattern of behaviour of the Agris in the villages largely and predominantly occupied by them, as in some of the typical villages in Kharapat, their primitive nature often finds free scope, whereas the Agris, who are residents of villages with mixed population are rather sober and refined. Evidently in a belt of wholesale population where they have no contact with strangers and are not therefore influenced or impressed by them, the people have to evolve a pattern of their own in the absence of a standard for comparison, emulation or guiding post. A number of murder cases have been reported during the last twenty years in villages entirely inhabited by the Agris and in the area surrounding Chari. The latter place, being a village of mixed population, the cases of murder are believed to be absent.

As far as the orthodox element in the Pancha system is concerned, it is this element that determines the general pattern of behaviour of the Agris as a whole and in doing so at times fails to understand and tackle in their proper perspective the various problems, arising out of their cultural contact with other communities and with urban social life and thus arrest the progress of their people. The educated element amongst the Agris, which migrates to Bombay and other places for its economic prosperity, being the more sublimated section of the society, should be able to assist their country brothers to adjust themselves to the new order, as they have a better perspective of things and opportunities to appreciate the various features of the socio-economic life at work today. And it is evident from various activities that this advanced section of the Agris, at least, has rendered best account of itself during all this period and followed the gamut of the day.

What the Agris need

Before approaching the problem of rural and agricultural situation of the Agris in this taluka, we try to understand through the Agri perspective their difficulties and requirements. This is based on a summary of answers culled from about 228 Agris to whom a copy of a questionnaire [5] was issued during the course of this sample survey. It was found that about 80 of them needed water in the first instance for drinking purposes, though no doubt they would require it for purposes of cultivation also. As many as 23 expressed their desire to have English education. Some 37 among them wanted pasture lands for their cattle to graze in their village area. Some 23 of them stressed the need for medical facilities and attendance of a doctor in the villages and a few of them even thought it necessary to have a veterinary surgeon for their domestic and field animals. About 13 of them felt the need for some sort of technical education in order to give economic assistance to make both ends meet and also to emerge from the general economic morass in which they are struggling. Having thus understood the view of the Agris we deal with agriculture and other pursuits followed by the Agris in Alibag Taluka.

Agricultural situation

The cultivation of salt paddy land, as it involves a peculiarity of its own regarding sowing, digging up sods of earth, getting the whole belt submerged under the flood of high tide about every ten years, to keep a ceaseless vigil on the outer bund for hours together during floods of New Moon and Full Moon days and other similar operations, the lot of ăn agriculturist from Kharapat becomes trying and hazardous.

A kind of species of reptile about a yard long, known to the Agris as 'Muner' or 'Chupha' is able overnight to bore a hole through the bund that circumscribes and protects the agricultural land. Through such a hole, the water which is so essential for salt paddy lands runs out within a short time, leaving paddy fields practically parched. Such a calamity causes very often serious damage to the crop standing in the fields. Some immediate step to prevent this disaster is absolutely necessary to destroy these reptiles by some way or other.

[5] *Vide* Appendices.

Long hours of watch along the arms of the estuaries running close to their fields, during tidal floods on the New Moon and Full Moon days in scorching sun by day and pinching cool breezes by night are likely to be curtailed if these villagers use for their guidance the small booklet of 'Tide Tables for the Port of Bombay' published every year by the Surveyor-General of India. Further, they will be able to meet the emergency in time when the flood is known to be above normal. What is needed is to observe the local difference with reference to the rise of tidal flood in the port of Bombay, which is quite a simple affair.

After all, the agricultural routine in this taluka, as elsewhere in Konkan, is entirely at the mercy of the monsoon with long periods of enforced idleness amongst rice cultivators. The agriculturists have, therefore, to follow various pursuits quasi-agricultural, horticultural and the like in order to improve income, all such operations being restricted by various factors such as water supply, nature of the soil and so on.

Some of the Agri farmers from the villages situated around the Kanakeshwar Hill and other parts have utilized this period of enforced idleness in agricultural, horticultural pursuits, worth emulating by other agriculturists, to improve income. Plantations of Tondali, various flower gardens, plantation of Alfonso mango groves, Shegat and Papai trees have been developed by these industrious people which have certainly improved their income. The great market of Bombay lying in proximity of this taluka with cheap means of transport is undoubtedly a great advantage.

Except flower gardens, most of the other plantations are developed in addition to their usual agricultural routine. Liberal Tagai loans granted by the present Government to farmers should be best utilized in raising wells to which all such operations owe their existence. Typical plantations are described below :

Tondali

A husband and a wife with occasional help of their children (two or three) can undertake the plantation consisting of about 100 'Tondali' creepers, the estimation of which is as follows : With preliminary investment of about Rs. 200 towards the cost of nets, iron wire and other articles and continuous labour of two persons for about a month and a half this plantation can be raised. With daily attendance of about two hours and manure worth about twelve rupees, this

plantation starts yielding fruit, worth about Rs. 10 per week, four months after they are planted.

Flower gardens

Plantations of various flowers like 'Gulachhadi', 'Ashtav', 'Gulab' (Rose), 'Newari', 'Aboli' and others extending over half an acre requires hard labour of four persons continuously for four months. Thereafter this garden yields flowers worth about Rs. 600 per month with Rs. 300 (approximately) towards the details of cultivation. This plantation must however be carried on as a main concern because the hours of attendance are very long and the period required being extended over months together.

Ghevada

This and other allied variety of vegetables, 'Valapapadi', are grown on the bunds of a paddy field. With nominal expenses of five rupees towards the labour for sowing the seed in the month of August or September, these creepers start giving fruit after four months for about four months (i.e. from January to April) with a total return of about Rs. 50 on the whole.

Alfonso Mangoes

Mango trees of the Alfonso type after about 6 years since they are planted yield about Rs. 15—20 each per year, the preliminary expenses in the preparatory period being about Rs. 50—55. These trees give fruit for years together. In the year 1948, the farmers, who owned such trees in the villages of Narangi, Satghar on the eastern side of the Kanakeshwar Hill, received about fifteen thousand rupees on the whole from the merchants from Bombay.

Shegat, Papai

The trees that are planted in the hedge that circumscribe and protect the agricultural holdings, yield about Rs. 3 and Rs. 5 respectively every year, without any appreciable expenditure being incurred upon them.

All these plantations yield fair income and are likely to improve the lot of the agriculturists who undertake them. After this we deal with other pursuits followed in this region.

Smithy, carpentry and others allied therewith being sporadic are not taken into account.

Dairy-farming

During the course of this sample survey dairy-farming was found to be a good side occupation in this taluka for an agriculturist with which he supplements his income by daily cash. The problem of feeding the milch-cattle on the agricultural estate during their barren period is not so acute as in the case of urban and suburban area. What the farmer needs in this case is an adequate number of stud bulls or buffaloes coming of a good breed and seedlings of a rich and luxuriant type of grass. Every agriculturist is able to maintain a few heads of cattle, which in many ways are useful for the purpose of agriculture as a source of dung manure or as beasts of burden.

Poultry-farming

This is another cottage industry which an agriculturist can easily take with profit. Every house in the country-side keeps a few fowls without incurring much expenditure upon them. This too gives the agriculturist an opportunity to supplement his daily income and to make some variation in his daily menu.

The villagers require some kind of veterinary assistance in fighting the contagious diseases, which attack fowls particularly in the months of May and June, during which months a regular epidemic among fowls invades the country-side and takes a heavy toll. A good breed of cocks should be made available to the agriculturists from a poultry breeding station situated at central place, where demonstrations for raising poultry under ideal conditions and in a scientific manner should be conducted. Cocks of good breed should be kept and facilities provided for mating them with fowls brought by the villagers.

Poultry-keeping is a cheap cottage industry requiring the attention of the villagers during all the seasons of the year. Every agriculturist can manage to have a few fowls to meet his household demand if not for sale.

At present some two or three indigenous breeds are known to these people, whereas there are as many as thirty different breeds of fowls prevalent in the United Kingdom.

Fishing

The estuaries of the Amba Creek in the Kharapat abound in fish of as many as 65 varieties, enumerated in the appendices, some of which are very delicious. They are caught by scoops or nets. During tidal hours a number of Agris may be seen fishing with their small circular nets (Asu) in the estuaries

by the side of their villages. The popular variety known as the 'Jitada' that abounds in his homeland, is a speciality served to his guest by the hospitable Kharapat host. Village folk catch the fish in the arms of the estuaries during the fair season to be served on their table. The 'Jitada' fish is caught and preserved in small fish ponds, known as 'Talai' in the salt paddy fields and it is thence removed as and when the need arises. This fish and other allied varieties are rich in phosphorus calcium and other nutritious ingredients. One cannot fail to notice an ichthyophagous Agri with his pearl-white set of teeth and healthy gums, an enviable asset for the towns-folk, who are unable to boast of such fine and strong set of teeth in spite of the habitual use of the costly denti-frice and regular dental treatment.

Although the selling of fish has been taboo so long among the Agris, some of them have been noticed to sell it privately if not openly. And the Agris can easily undertake to exporting the fish, especially the varieties like Jitada, which has a heavy demand in the market if they would modify their social belief and adjust themselves to the changing circumstances.

Husking Paddy

Husking paddy and pounding rice is another industry followed in almost all the rural homes. The labour employed in this industry is paid in kind and never in cash, which is all the while more attractive to them in the present days of rationing. Home-polished rice is more rich in vitamins than the rice polished in mill, though the former does not look as fine as the latter. Besides, bran and broken rice, usually available when paddy is husked at home and hand-polished thereafter, are not available when it is done in the mill. In the interest of the general health of the population in this taluka, whose staple food is rice hardly with any other variation and the rural labour, the rice mills should be permitted to mill the rice that is to be exported for marketing only. This measure is likely to conserve and preserve this quasi-agricultural industry of husking rice.

Salt manufacture

The manufacture of salt is an indigenous industry in which the skill of an Agri is outstanding—an industry which requires neither capital for its set-up nor raw material to be imported from outside. On a plot of the barren littoral or portion of land reclaimed from sea, the industry of salt manu-

facture is carried on with the use of salt water as the raw material and the aid of the solar heat and cheap human labour. As this industry was controlled by the British Government and restricted to some places only, it could not be taken up as a convenient occupation and as a source of improving income by the salt-land farmers. "The conditions and circumstances of salt industry are hardly different from those of the country's agriculture."[6]

The local villagers can manufacture on a suitable plot by the side of the estuaries some coarse salt, if not for sale, at least to meet the demand of their own and local consumers and thus exemplify the significance of their designation as 'Mitha Agris'.

Weaving

In addition to the various industries mentioned above, weaving of handloom cloth can be carried on as a small-scale cottage industry in a number of Agri houses. Ready yarn should be distributed from a local centre to the residents in the neighbourhood with instructions to deliver the cloth at the centre after it is woven. Spinning the yarn is a prohibitive work in view of the enormous time required with a very low return of wages.[7] The cost of the labour should be calculated at standard rates according to the amount of work executed and it should be made payable strictly after the delivery of cloth. It is desirable that this handspun cloth should be sold at depots under central authority, which should also be entrusted with the task of maintaining uniformity in the manufacture of cloth, who are further able to issue instructions to the weavers about the type and texture of cloth required on the market, to effect economy in its sale or to meet the local demand as the case may be Thus the local people will be able to weave cloth to meet their own needs of loin cloth, dhotees, saris and the like in their indigenous villages besides being able to improve their income.

But in order to carry on all these industries, the rural life must be stable, free from the grip of overpowering factors, some of which are always to be experienced in the midst of the rural Agri surroundings. A picture of the Agri village life is attempted in the next few lines.

[6] Shende K K., *Salt Industry of Bombay Province*, 3.
[7] Jathar & Beri, *Indian Economic*, Vol. 1, p. 269.

Village life

The life of the Agris, who are imbibed with the spirit of self-reliance, is not without its social or economic blemish in the corporate life of their community. As members of the human race the instincts of self-assertion, pugnacity and others are at times developed in social autocraticism, mutual conflicts and village fights—a phenomenon which is so peculiar to Maharashtra !

Usually an Agri village is divided into two mutually exclusive groups, the smaller of which consists of docile and reasonable people as compared to the other group under the control of a domineering social despot, whose clarion call musters the majority of villagers under his banner. Such groups being socially isolated hardly come together for a common purpose. I may cite an example of Vaghran, a village adjoining the eastern slope of the Kanakeshwar hill and situated in Kharapat, where some two years back dissensions amongst the villagers made living utterly impossible for the members of the smaller group, who had to desert their habitation for the time being and who were allowed to return home only after the cessation of a quarrel. Factions, party politics develop at all stages of local quarrels just to disrupt the prevalent pattern of village life. As residents of their villages even the innocent people are forced to join one or the other party for the fear of an individually independent life being denied and share the advantages and disadvantages of their party or group. At present the peaceful atmosphere of village life in Alibag Taluka is much disturbed by petty thefts, the ceaseless vexations and reciprocal recriminations and the activities of the local despots, the number of whom has grown at an alarming rate during the last two years of 1948-49. At the same time the Government exhortation to " Go back to the villages " and " Grow more food " goes on apace. It might be said in the light of our observations, with some trepidation, that the local country-side will not be a fit place for habitation for law-abiding peaceful citizens in the near future if the present trends go on unmitigated.

Hence a few lines are devoted to the organisation of the Home Guards, already introduced in this taluka, which, it is hoped, will help the ruling power to preserve peace and order in the country-side.

Home Guards

The organisation known as the "Home Guards", which was started with the idea of building up the morale of the people, to promote communal harmony and to inculcate the habits of self-reliance and discipline in the members of the public has a strength of about a hundred members almost all of whom are distributed at some places, like Thal, Varasoli, Alibag and Rewadanda, which are more or less important and large centres of population. With a view to maintain confidence and to maintain a sense of security in the present perturbed state of village life, this useful organisation needs to be set up in the villages also. The members enrolled in the ranks of the Home Guards should receive proper training in handling small arms and should be given some elementary knowledge of civic affairs of law. The members of the force should be given the task of keeping a vigil over their respective areas. Local persons are decidedly in a better position to detect a local offender or other socially bad elements. The organisation needs to be divided into territorial sub-groups with the headquarters situated at a central place. Such a measure, it is hoped, will help to improve insecure and disturbed conditions in the villages, especially in the Alibag Taluka, where the social stability of the village life is put at stake by a number of thefts, robberies and dacoities reported all over the area during the period of 1948-49. It will strengthen the hands of Government in maintaining law and order and with little expenditure, will teach the people to understand their responsibility and will mitigate the pressure of work of the already overworked police force stationed in the taluka.

Now there remain some problems, intrinsic with the rural Agri life, which are mentioned separately. They are :—

1. Tenants *v.* Landlords.
2. Agricultural Debtors and Money-lenders.
3. Prohibition.

Tenants v. Landlords

The poverty of an Indian farmer is chronic and phenomenal, especially when most of the population from various occupations is driven to agriculture as the main pursuit in life. Various factors like ignorance, illiteracy, customs and beliefs, uncertainty of the monsoon and other ravages of nature have already made the position of an Indian farmer miserable,

which is further aggravated with the transference of the ownership of his agricultural holding to a landlord, who has no more interest in agriculture, than in the economic return of his investment. Before the present regime there was no incentive for a farmer to improve income from land as in many cases he was merely a tenant at will and could be removed by his landlord even on flimsy grounds. Further, there was no fixity of tenure nor any protection against rack-renting. " Agricultural reform from the point of view of the peasant consists ", as pointed out by Prof. Brij Narain, " first in securing to him the fruits of his labour." [8] Hence, the Bombay Tenancy Act of 1939 was the first step taken by the Congress Ministry in the direction to improve the lot of an agricultural tenant, which was further amended to suit the prevailing circumstances in 1946. Finally it was passed as (Bombay Tenancy) Agricultural Lands Act in 1948 with some modifications in the Act of 1946, which aims at amelioration of the condition of the agriculturists, improved production and others.

Though this Act is promulgated to adjust and stabilize the mutual relations between the landlords and agricultural tenants, it has created multifarious troubles in practice and daily routine, all of which are none the better for either of them. The co-operation between an enthusiastic landlord and agricultural tenant has shrunk to the minimum in this taluka.

To mitigate this present disturbed condition, an appointment of a liaison officer to convey to both the classes, especially the illiterate element thereof, which can be easily led away by party exhortations, is the true spirit of the present enactment. It will go a long way in establishing mutual relations of both the classes, which are so strained at present. It will be in consistency with Government policy, who have declared their intention to protect the legitimate rights of landlords as well as to improve the economic condition of the agriculturists.

Money-lenders and Agricultural Debtors

The local money-lenders, who acted so long as a sort of a village bank for the agricultural inhabitants during the period of their economic depression and acute distress, gradually adopted such methods as to leave no source untapped for exploiting the farmers. But the picture is not without its other side. The illiterate farmer takes a loan with the pious

[8] Prof. Brij Narain, *India Analysed*, Vol. II, p. 31.

hope that sometime in the future, when he reaps abundant harvest, he will repay the loan, a hope that is as dubious and unjustified as it is beyond his means to fulfil. It is also experienced that money-lenders demand certain fixed amount of paddy in lieu of interest for the loan advanced, without calculating the cost of paddy in the market at the time of requiring it. In some cases the amount of interest is already deduced in advance at the time of lending it from the amount of loan itself to be given to the borrower. The illiterate farmer, who honestly believes in the integrity of the money-lender for maintaining proper accounts and in providence for a beautiful harvest, is often placed in a wrong box, as a result of his own foolhardiness.

Unforeseen agricultural disasters, various items of domestic expenditure and unexpected and unfortunate events in his life foil the attempts of a farmer to lay by some money towards the payment of interest of the loan, if not the loan itself. The amount due to this money-lender gradually keeps on mounting with the steady accumulation of unpaid interest on loan, until the debtor is financially crippled and finds it impossible to return the amount. Then he resorts to all sorts of dishonest and unfair means to repudiate his debts and in adopting such a course jumps from the frying pan into the fire of frustration and misery.

Hence the Government has tried to restrict the scope and the activities of the money-lenders by various legislative enactments from time to time with a view to give legal protection to the debtor farmer. Several Debt Conciliation Acts were passed to scale down the debts according to the paying capacity of the agricultural debtors. But these measures have not succeeded in relieving the financially and economically hard-pressed agricultural debtors, as these half-hearted and piecemeal measures never go to the root of the evil. The Bombay Agricultural Debtors' Relief Act of 1947 is the final measure.

From all this it will be realised that the situation will remain as it is and will never improve as long as an agriculturist is not made financially self-dependent. Heavy expenditure on marriage ceremonies in his family, funeral expenses, expenses on cart-races, heavy drink-bills as well as mutual quarrels, account for the chaotic budget of the agriculturist, which is in deficit. The position is further aggravated by want of pre-planned and proper estimate of the family expenditure and the farmer's inability to grasp the situation

until it overcomes him. A farmer who is taught to read and calculate for himself, will have a grasp of his position and will not become an easy prey to the unscrupulous dealings of the commercial and deceitful people.

The hopeless position of the farmer with regard to his finances will be further clear, when we note that even with the cessation of contracts between money-lenders and agricultural debtors, the lot of a cultivator does not seem to improve even with the liberal Tagai loans granted by the present Government in advance for the repair or development of the agricultural holdings. At present, as it was conveyed to me by the elderly people of the present generation of the Agris, the daily needs of an average villager have also multiplied, which require, if at all they are to be satisfied, ready cash in geometrical progression. "With the advance of civilization," to put it briefly, "daily requirements have increased in quality, quantity and variety."[9] In almost all cases these expenses of the villagers are to be met by the sale of their agricultural produce of paddy, this being the only main crop for sale and that too only once a year in this Alibag Taluka.

The ingenious local cultivators by growing a small plantation of Tondali, flowers and other vegetable take a loan from a merchant or middleman in Bombay, by way of an advance towards further supply of fruits, flowers, vegetables and other horticultural produce to them. Such an amount is rarely returned, after the cultivator stops sending his produce, which is very soon after the sum is borrowed according to the casual references by the merchants concerned. During the years 1948 and 1949 these merchants or middlemen have stopped making any advance payments to the cultivators in view of their sad experience.

The story of the Tagai loans advanced by the Government, if not running exactly on the same lines, does not differ much from the experience we have encountered in the field of transaction of loans. Details from the Tagai Office of the Alibag Taluka reveal the fact that the present Government, imbibed with the spirit of improving the lot of the tenant-cultivators, went on making advance payments in such increasing proportions since the year 1946, that the amount of such total advances that figure Rs. 40,000 at the start, alone swelled upto Rs. 4,00,000 during the year 1949.

The authorities concerned take precautions before advancing a loan by way of determining the exact economic need of

[9] Kumarappa, *Why the Village Movement*, p. 84.

the party approaching for the loan, the financial stability to return it. They take further steps to recover regularly the amount by instalments in the harvest season They are cautious enough not to advance a loan to the same party, who has failed to repay all his previous dues. In my personal interviews with the authorities, they narrated to me that only 25 per cent of such loans are voluntarily returned. And it is only with considerable persuasion and if necessary coercion that 50 per cent of the amount of the loan advanced is returned and 25 per cent is practically irrecoverable. According to the information collected the total Tagai loans advanced during the year 1948-49 (upto July) amounted to Rs. 3,25,000 distributed amongst 6,266 parties for as many as eight different reasons. In the light of the data collected by me the sad fact was borne upon me that the whole of the Tagai amount is not utilized for the purpose for which it is sanctioned. Further, illiterate farmers are at times led away to believe that the amount of Tagai is not to be returned and think the advance to be rather by way of financial aid and not a loan at all.

Hence it is suggested that there should be some restrictions placed on the dealings of the parties.[10] Undoubtedly the villagers are finding it difficult without the helping hand of a money-lender (*vide* conversation No. 4 in the appendices). The loan should not be given to the agriculturist, who needs implements, seeds or other things, generally concerning his agricultural routine. And in his interest the item of his necessity should be supplied to him—e.g. a plough, a bull and the like. The farmer who needs some such articles will ask for it and not for a loan in cash, simply because it is available and then use it for a purpose entirely at variance with what it was meant for.

Prohibition

Alcoholism is a vice to which the Agri is addicted. Throughout the Agri habitations drinking as an unmixed evil has created far-reaching effects both on the physical development and the economic stability of the Agris. Many Agris have left themselves to drink to poverty and degradation. During the period of this sample survey, and as I knew them before, there were as many as 80 per cent of the Agri males, who were habitual alcoholics and addicted to the habit of

[10] *Royal Commission on Agriculture in India*, p. 373.

drinking spirituous liquor, the percentage of those who did not drink being only about 10 per cent, the rest hesitating between occasional and habitual drinking.

Liquor was invariably served at the caste-meetings, marriage ceremonies, funeral rites for creating the necessary atmosphere and the spirit of the occasion in many villages, though in some cases they were stopped by the efforts of the social leader. Prohibition policy of the Government has driven this custom to enclosed places and into smaller groups of friends and relatives. The present prohibition policy of the Bombay Government has not much affected the drink habits of the Agris and as observed in Chapter IV of this work they have learnt to improvise some substitute for the Government distilled liquor when it is not available. As a result of enforced prohibition a number of secret distilleries are reported to be working in many villages. They provide country liquor of a crude kind when regular drink cannot be had at public places. It is often seen that even a firm-willed Agri, though persuaded or coerced to swear to give up his drinking habits, is not able to keep up his word for more than a few months.

In a village in Kharapat the members of a village council greatly impressed by the advice of a casual visitor, who was a complete teetotaler, hastily resolved that any inhabitant of their village, who drank thenceforth, would be socially isolated for good. In the heat of their excitement they failed to judge their capacity to honour the oath. Slowly and secretly the very relatives of the Panchas started to drink and they could not be adequately dealt with on account of their position, other connections and social prestige. One by one all the other members and the smaller folk imitated them and the whole village population returned to its alcoholic habits.

Hence mere propaganda about prohibition is of little value. Expenditure incurred in giving publicity to prohibition in the press is really of dubious value, as it hardly reaches the populace scattered over the length and breadth of the country-side, for whom it is really meant. Besides more than 75 per cent of the masses in this region are unable to understand the printed or written papers, and propaganda in the press therefore yields very little results so far as they are concerned.

What is needed is an intensive propaganda amongst the people by social leaders in every village with demonstrations showing the evils of the social vice of drinking. The message of non-indulgence in alcoholic drinks must reach the hearths of their homes and the hearts of their people and the evil

effects of alcohol continually dinned into their ears and indicated by repeated and strenuous efforts. The Agri females, almost all of whom have been fortunately away from such drink-habits and who are often required to bear the direct effects of the drink-habits of their husbands, would certainly like their spouses bereft of this evil habit.

Immediate action should be taken to see that the people engaged in the business of liquor manufacture are reinstated in other vocations or professions on some substantial and permanent basis, as they are the backbone of the real drink evil. Otherwise it is inevitable that in the absence of any other suitable remunerative employment these people should go on distilling liquor providing a running source of income.

Even then it is my personal belief that the evil of drinking cannot be completely eradicated soon. Many of the agriculturists and labourers crave for some intoxicating or stimulating drink during the period of hard physical labour and exertion They also feel its necessity in the rainy season " to keep themselves warm and fit " during agricultural operations when it rains cats and dogs, as conveyed to me by my Agri friends. There is no other substitute for liquor, which is so effective and so popular amongst the agricultural classes.

Besides, a number of people secretly carry on this business of distilling illicit liquor, which is financially very lucrative for them and involves little labour. They usually use spoiled jaggery for the manufacture of illicit liquor. The evil clique of such people and local merchants responsible for the import of this jaggery must be carefully dissolved.

On the whole the present picture of prohibition may be briefly sketched as follows . The people who do not drink have to pay additional taxes to make up for the deficit in the Government Budget as a result of the Prohibition Policy, whereas the alcoholics, who must drink, continue to get their peg of country liquor by hook or by crook. Like a double-edged weapon prohibition has proved disastrous both for the people and Government, firstly because there is a little visible good done to the people and much less to the Government Revenues.

— THE END —

APPENDICES

SPECIMEN LIFE SKETCHES

About six life sketches of the Agris in Alibag Taluka are reproduced here in order to have some idea about the life led in the Agri surroundings. They have been carefully chosen from different places and different strata of society to render them as representative as they can be. Out of these six one life sketch is of a woman. Names of the persons and places have not been referred or retained, simply to remove the personal touch.

(1)

I am a middle-aged Agri about 47 years old, born in this village. I do not know much about the past history of my family.

I joined the school at about my 7th year, but I left it after 2 years, as I was required to look after my cattle, 5 in number. From the 15th year I undertook all agricultural operations. We were three males in our family and one female. We worked hard. We were spendthrifts and we laid by some money. And we opened a little grocery-shop in a village, some ten miles away. At present I own that shop. My working capital is Rs. 5,000 and total transaction for the whole year comes to about Rs. 25,000. There are two servants in my shop. They are also Agris.

We two brothers divided our estate between us two years back, after the death of my father. (My mother died 10 years back.) My share of the estate includes 6 acres of salt paddy land and a small house. I have added 3 acres to it. Ornaments, gold and silver, put on by my wife are worth about Rs. 300. I have to pay a debt of Rs. 1,300.

I was married when I was about 15 years old, my wife being 9 years. I have three children, two sons and one daughter. I lost two more.

I regularly smoke and occasionally drink.

(2)

I am sixty-two years old, born in the same village where I am living at present. We were 3 children to our parents.

I tended my father's cattle from my 7th year and continued it till my 11th year. My father then sent me to a local grocer as domestic servant, who promised to advance a loan for my marriage. I served there till I was thirty, i.e. for 19 years. The loan taken was Rs. 300—further details I do not know. I left the service when the grocer said that my debt was paid with interest.

I have three daughters and one son. All the daughters are married. My first son-in-law comes from a village about 2 miles west of our village. Second comes from another village lying $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile to the south of my village. The third son-in-law comes from my own village.

My first daughter lives with me for last ten years as her husband does not like her and has taken another wife. My second daughter has come to me 2 years back with her husband and three children. My third daughter, though she lives in the same village, is not allowed to visit my house. Her mother-in-law is a strict woman.

My only son was married last year to a girl who comes from a village about five miles away in the southern direction. I incurred a debt of Rs. 300 for his marriage from a local grocer. I could not save much as my family is rather big with a little income.

We all work in the field, hire our labour whenever required. I have a supplementary income of Rs. 25 per year, as I am a musician.

I eat pan. I do not smoke, though drink rarely.

(3)

I am about 80 years old. I went to a local teacher when I was about 7 but left my education after 3 years as I was badly needed in agricultural operations and household routine. I was married at my 16th year, my wife being about 10 years old. I do not know whether my father took a loan for my marriage. The bridal price was Rs. 80. I worked as a boat-man on a country-craft that plied between my village and Bombay. I did a little business of my own.

I took another wife when I was about 30 years, as the first was feeble and bore no children. The second wife bore 10 children to me of whom nine are living.

At present we are seven members in our house. We cultivate about 7 acres of salt paddy land. My sons go to work in other fields as agricultural labourers. Two of my sons have a separate living.

I smoke regularly and drink some times.

My experience goes that sons usually have a separate living soon after they are married. And though old I have to work for my meals.

(4)

I am a resident of this village, though my father had come here from another village, situated about five miles away. We were in all three children to our parents.

From my 6th year I tended my cattle till I was 13 or 14, after which year I took to agricultural labour. I was married at my 17th year to a girl some six years younger than myself. The bridal price was Rs. 50. I married a second time at about my 35th year, as my first wife died of fever a year earlier. My first wife bore to me three children—one son and two daughters. My daughters are married to youths, who live in the same village.

My second wife bore to me five children, out of whom 4 are girls. All these children are minors.

I cultivate about $4\frac{1}{2}$ acres of land, out of which I own $1\frac{3}{4}$ acres. Every year I have to borrow about a hundred rupees during the monsoon, which I return after the harvest. Though myself and my wife, both of us, go and hire our labour, it is a problem for us how to make both ends meet.

I eat pan, smoke, drink liquor sometimes.

(5)

I am an old woman about 64 years old. We were in all five children to our parents out of whom only two daughters survived. I was married when I was about ten years old to a widower about 30 years old. I got three children all of whom died in infancy. My husband died when I was 40 years old. He was a farmer, who cultivated some $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres of agricultural land belonging to a landlord. I left that land two years back, as I was not able to manage it. I know midwifery. I go occasionally for husking paddy and pounding rice. It is sufficient to support one.

I have laid by some three hundred rupees with a local grocer at 6 per cent interest per annum.

I eat pan. I do not smoke, though widows of my age do it.

(6)

I am about 50 years old. I belong to the same village where I am living at present. My parents died before I was ten

years old. Since then I have supported myself. I do not go to my paternal uncle, as he was not in good terms with my father. My neighbours helped me. I tended cattle of other people or otherwise hired my labour. This way I saved about Rs. 250 and got myself married at about my 27th year.

Out of three children born to us, only one son is alive. My wife and I work whenever there is any necessity or we go idle otherwise. No doubt I have about Rs. 24 with me. But you cannot call it a saving as I have to purchase soon 2 blankets and a sari.

I smoke regularly. I require about 15 to 16 'Bidis' every day. I do not eat pan. Drinking, though I like, I cannot afford it.

VARIETIES OF FISH

A man's diet is determined by the crops and animals he is able to secure in his surrounding. As a number of tidal creeks that divide his homeland are rich in varieties of fish, it is no surprise to see that an Agri is so much of an ichthyophagous that his meal is seldom complete without a fish. What Day says about fish of India holds good about the fish found in the tidal fisheries of the Alibag Taluka.* A fishing place in an Agri homeland consists of simple tidal ponds into which the fish are carried by the tidal flood, and are left impounded by the ebb. Agri men and women, boys and girls, catch fish during the tidal flood with 'Asus' (circular nets), 'Bokshis', 'Baglis' (small and big bamboo baskets respectively), 'Pags' (fishing nets) and so on. This may be termed as creek-fishing which is different from sea-fishing and river-fishing.

The number of kinds of fish I collected from the Agri habitations in the Alibag Taluka is above seventy. A number of them does not have equivalents in English.

An Agri usually does not dry fish, which sort of fish is supplied to him by the local fisher-women. Dried fish is stored in an earthen jar covered with a piece of cloth pasted with mud after it is mixed with salt. It is specially reserved for the monsoon season when the downpour of rain makes fishing impossible in a local creek.

* Day, *Fishes of India*, p. 364.

TABLE No. 1

Varieties of Fish found in Alibag Taluka

(English names are given in brackets, where available, with the courtesy of the Fisheries Department, Sassoon Dock, Bombay.)

KOLABI (Prawns)	BOIT (Mugil sp.)	JITADA (Lates Calcalifer)
KATI (Pelloua Slademi)	KARALI (Chirocentrus Dorab)	RAVAS (Polynemus tetradacthylus
HEKARU (Serramus sp.)	CHORYA BOMBIL (Saurida Tumbil)	MASA (Sciaena-sua-dicanthus-miles)
PALA (Hilsa ilisha)	GHODA (Hippocampus sp)	BOMBIL (Harpodon Meherius)
MANDEL (Coiloia dussu mieri)	VAKATI (Trichiurus Savala)	CHIMBORA (Cancer pagurus Scylla serrata)
BHILAJI (Engraulis sp.)	TOLI (Belone strongylura Hemiramphus Cantori)	KANAT (Sphrua blochii)
SARANGA (Stromateus Cinereus)	PAKHAT (Oays—Trygon sp)	MUSH (Scoliodom sorra Trouch shark)
SHIMGALA (Arius sp.)	BHAKAS (Psettodes erumeli)	KHARAVAD (Ephippus orbis)
HALAVA (Parastromateus Niger)	KHAJURA (Lates Calcarifer)	SURAM \Y (Cybium guttatum)
VAV (Muraendesex sp)	TAMB (Lubianus rosens)	KHARABI (Gobins sp.)
NIVATI (Boleophthalmus sp.)	REPA	SALAPI
SHEGALA	CHIMANA	CHITANE
MUTHYA	KHARKATLA	DAKU
VADAS	KHAOOL	POCHA
BASHINGYA	CHIDA	BOKAD
USALWATI	ZILI KOLAMBI	GODA POCHA
JAVALA SUKA	AMBAR SUKA	DHOSA
BAGAJ	NORAP	GHESAL
KILASKI	KADAM	PENAKAY
SALASHID	GONDALYA	TEL SHINGARI
KHUBARI	CHIPTA	KHUBA KHAR
SHELA KUND	KHUBA CHOT	CHIKOTI
KUTRA	MURAY	VATYA
VARLYA KHUBA	GOMERI	BHOYA
SHENDYA MAHAKUL		

DIALOGUES

Introductory Remarks

Few specimens of conversations in Agri dialect with English translation covering various aspects of the Agri life are reproduced in the following pages to give an idea of the dialect of the Agris, their general attitude towards life and their mode of behaviour.

The translation is preceded by the detailed information as regards the background of conversations and the persons involved, with their sex and age ; the places where they have taken place and the approximate hours of the day as well. An attempt is made to render them as faithful as they can be and embodying the spirit of the original. Additional words required to bring out the sense lucidly have been put into brackets, when their mere rendering in English is felt to have been not adequate to convey what is exactly meant. No attempt is made to render the abuses in English, which are substituted by ' * * * '.

I collected in all 205 conversations with the following details :—

4	Soliloquies,
117	Dialogues, and
84	Conversations.

The total number of persons involved is as follows :—

Men	..	270
Women	..	264
Total	..	534

These conversations were collected from as many as twenty-two different villages, as mentioned below :—

Villages represented in conversations

Kusumbale	Dhokawde
Poynad	Parahur
Shahabaj	Chinchoti
Vaghran	Beloshi
Mankola	Gothi
Hashivare	Vadhav
Narangi	Kavir
Khidaki	Bapale

Kopar	Sudakoli
Saral	Chari
Kolgaon	Pezari

(1)

While fishing at low tide

This is a familiar scene in Kharapat, where the Agris go to fish in the tributaries of the Amba creek.

Nos. (1) and (2) are the two youths about 24 years old engaged in conversation. Nos. (3) and (4) join them later on, who are also friends.

SCENE : A house in a Kharapat village.
Time is about 4 o'clock in the evening.
Afterwards : A tributary adjacent to a village at about 4-30 in the evening.

* * *

(1) : "Hullo, what are you waiting for, The tide is fast running out now ! Hurry up. Otherwise * * * we will loose our place on the bank."

(2) : "Will you wait awhile or not * * * ? Let me eat my bread."

(1) : "All-right. Hurry up. In the meanwhile I will repair the torn part of my fishing net."

(2) : "Are you not taking your shirt to protect you from such pinching cold ? "

(1) : "Yes I have got it ; but a very little tobacco is left with me."

(2) : "* * *. It is always the same with you. Have you ever anything to satisfy your need, take these two pice ; go , and get a little tobacco from Mahadya, the grocer."

[No. (1) goes to the shop and returns with tobacco.]

(1) : "Well. Have you finished your work or not ? "

(2) : "Yes, I have."

(1) : "Let us then go quickly."

(Both of them proceed to the fishing place. There they see that somebody else has occupied their place.)

(1) : "You * * * ! Do you remove your net, Or shall I take this pole (to beat you) ? "

(3) : "* * * *. Come * * *. How dare you spread your net here ? "

(2): " * * * *. Whom do you think you are abusing in this way ? This is our fishing place. Do you get it ? Remove your net. Hasten with it. Or I shall knock out your teeth."

(3): " Come along. Do it if you are the true son of your father ! * * * Why did you not come first ? "

(1): " * * * Earlier than this ? Where are we to drive the fishing pole when the tide is full ? Am I to drive it between the thighs of your father or mother ? "

(3): " Between whose father's thighs do you mean to drive the pole ? * * *. You are humiliated by one and all. And now you want to spoil my name ? "

[No. (4) who is bit away gets excited. He comes near.]

(4): " * * * * What do you talk ? Get you gone ! Otherwise I shall hold you by your neck and knock you down ! "

[Nos. (1) and (2) who are afraid of (4) run away.]

---

(2)

Detecting the pilfering of a cucumber

A nephew, who stealthily steels a cucumber from the yard of his maternal uncle, by chance happens to attract his uncle's attention.

PLACE : A vegetable plantation, little away from the village.

PERSONS : Uncle—about 35 years of age.
Nephew—about 14 years of age.

TIME : About 6 p.m.

* * *

UNCLE : " Who was it, in the garden ? "

NEPHEW : " It was none else than myself, oh uncle ! It is I, Yesha ! "

UNCLE : " * * *, are you not ashamed to enter into this melon-plantation full of fruit ? And what are you carrying under your arm ? "

NEPHEW : " Nothing ; (it is) nothing. It is rather a long stone which I picked up and rounded hurriedly."

UNCLE : " Let me see how it is ! "

NEPHEW : " No, why should you (do so unnecessarily). Let me go my way. I was under the impression that there was nobody in the melon-plantation."

UNCLE : "But show it to me. Let me see it. Where are you going, you thief ? * * *, don't you speak a lie that it is a stone ? From where have you procured this cucumber ? Say it now ; otherwise I will catch you by your legs and I will break them."

NEPHEW : "What do you mean by 'whence' ? I got it from my plantation. What have you to do with it ? "

UNCLE : " * *, * * *, * *, you ask 'what I have to do with it ?' This cucumber is from my plantation. Accept it. Otherwise. . . ."

NEPHEW : "Uncle ! Think before you speak. What did it matter if I stepped into your plantation ? And do you abuse me for that ? This cucumber is from my plantation."

(The uncle holds him by his neck and addresses)

UNCLE : " * * *, you have been brought up to commit thefts. Isn't it ? Your father boasts of big things. And what do his children do ? * * * *, * * *, * * *, * * * * *, wait, where are you going ? "

NEPHEW : "Uncle, let me go my own way. Otherwise you have to take the consequences."

UNCLE : "Yes, yes. I know it. Whom are you threatening, I have seen many persons like you ! "

(He slaps his nephew in the face and snatches the cucumber from his hand.)

---

(3)

While taking his mid-day meals

An Agri about 45 years old had returned home late in the noon after a cremation ceremony. He had been detained there for a pretty good time. Hence he could not get his breakfast. He is hungry and needs his noon-day meal very badly.

PLACE : The kitchen room of an Agri house
Husband—about 45 years of age.
Wife—about 40 years of age
Son—10 years of age.

TIME : At about 12-30 in the noon.

* * *

HUSBAND : "Hurry up. Waste no time. Get the plate quickly."

WIFE : "Yes, yes. I am doing it."

HUSBAND : "I am hungry. I am quite exhausted. Had I not been for the cremation ? * * *, it was very tiresome. * * * I was not able to withstand it."

WIFE : "Your food is served. Please take your seat now ! "
(He takes his seat and begins.)

HUSBAND : "Good, it is good. The curry is little. What is it prepared of ? Let me see it. Wait. (He takes a handful of it with a flurruping noise.) Is it prepared from dry fish ? It is tasty. Let me have some more."
(The wife serves him with some curry and asks him.)

WIFE : "Shall I give you some rice ? "

HUSBAND : "Wait. Wait. Let me have it from the other (pot) which is hot. I do not like it cool. Babu is to have his meals yet, I suppose."

SON : "Yes, father. I have to take meals yet."

HUSBAND : "Then let him have that (rice). And let me have this."

WIFE : (While serving him) "See how much you want."

HUSBAND : "It is enough. No more."
(As the husband's meals are over, his wife instructs their daughter-in-law to keep water ready for washing his hands.)

WIFE : (To her daughter-in-law): "Lakusmi, go, give him a little water to wash his hands."

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(4)

Criticising the Money-lenders' Act

Two farmers meet each other on their way to Alibag in a ferry boat.

Nos. (1) and (2) are agriculturists about 40 and 42 years of age respectively.

PLACE : A ferry boat on the Sakhar creek.
TIME : 4-30 in the evening.

* * *

(1): "How far are you going ?"
(2): "As far as Alibag."
(1): "To Alibag ? Why ?"
(2): "For the amount of Tagai, that is being paid. I must reach (the office) by six o'clock (in the evening)."
(1): "If you do not go (today), will you not get it tomorrow ?"
(2): "No."
(1): "Why not ? Where is that officer going ?
(2): "He is to go on his tour. He will return after four days Tomorrow he will come to the 'Par' (of the banian tree in our village)."
(1): "Then will you not get it at the 'Par' ?"
(2): "Who would like to take in one's own village ? (The people will inquire) 'Who has taken ? How much ?' Who wants all this unnecessary curiosity ?"
(1): "Yes, that is also true !"
(2): "And once Tagai is gone there is no other way left."
(1): "Why not ?"
(2): "Don't you know that 'Sowcars' are extinct now ? Nobody is prepared to advance money."
(1): "But the Government itself is now advancing money !"
(2): "Now the Government gives loans ; but after calculating the whole amount. And that too once a year ! All the days are not same. At times some difficulties arise, be it as it may ! His (the sowcar's) rate of interest was one pice per rupee (per month). But our 'sowcar' would not refuse when approached (for a loan). He would at least advance a paltry sum What will he give now ? * * * ? That Act of Money-lenders has come into force. Nobody will now respond to your demand, even though you insist upon it."

---

(5)

A labourer scolding his indolent colleagues

Some Agri males from Kharapat have arrived in a group at a village, in the western part of the taluka to execute a labour contract in the fields. A senior member requests all

others to get up and begin working early. Some recalcitrant youths do not pay heed to his call.

PLACE : A camp in a village near the fields.

PERSONS : (1) A senior man aged about 45.
Devaja and Ganoba are his two lazy colleagues respectively aged 35 and 25 years.

TIME : At about 9-30 in the morning.

* * *

"Oh Devaja! How shall we complete this work, if we go on working this way? What will you carry home?"

DEVAJA : "What do you mean? We will carry home some cash."

(1) : "Take it from me that you will carry a load of rupees. Your wife will ask you, 'What work did you do? You simply have your meals and sleep by my side. Why for do you wander from place to place doing nothing?'"

DEVAJA : "What else then are we to do?"

(At this juncture Ganoba joins him.)

GANOBA : "Go, go, as if you are the only man who puts in hard work. Are we not men?"

(1) : "Look here, you are a youngster. What do you know?"

GANOBA : "What does it matter, if I am young in age? Do not let wag your tongue. I know you well. You have grown up like a male buffalo. Take this crow-bar and dig up the clods of earth. You think as if we have no guts, and as if you are the only efficient man."

(1) : "Enough. Hold your tongue. Do not brag much."

GANOBA : "Why? What will you do? My statement of facts has offended you? Is it not so?"

---

(6)

A tenant about her case

A female Agri tenant is proceeding to the Taluka Court at Alibag, where she is summoned to appear in connection with a suit filed by her landlord to give him peaceful possession of his piece of land. As she leaves her house and passes by a

village street, a youth comes out of his house and the following conversation takes place between them.

PLACE : An Agri house by the village street.
PERSONS : (1) An old woman about 50 years old,
(2) A youth of about 30 years of age.
TIME : At about 9-30 in the morning.

* * *

(2): "Oh sister-in-law, what's your intention ? How far are you going ?
(1): "Brother-in-law, I have to go to Alibag."
(2): "What is the purpose of your trip ? "
(1): "My landlord has filed a suit against me."
(2): "Then, is the case called up for hearing today ? "
(1): "Yes. Today is the day of hearing. That * * * seems to have a mind to take possession of the field."
(2): "Why does he ask for possession ? Don't you give him his share ? "
(1): "This year, I gave his share."
(2): "And the amount of revenue ? "
(1): "That too I paid."
(2): "Were you paying (the amount of revenue) for the last so many years ? "
(1): "No. Last year and once three years before that I paid it. What shall I state before the magistrate ? "
(2): "Then you have to say in the court that the field is yours and you are paying the necessary amount of revenue to the Government."
(1): "But I have now become old with my one foot in the grave. Why should I say like this ? "
(2): "Yes, yes. You must say like that."
(1): "But who will hear this case ? The Mamlatdar ? or the Sub-Inspector ? "
(2): "Such cases are taken before a 'Mamlatdar'.
(1): "Then which pleader shall I engage ? "
(2): "Where is the need of a pleader. You have to say only this much 'the field is mine and I pay (the amount of) revenue'. When is your son going to come ? "
(1): "He has been transferred to Mahad. I do not think he will come soon."
(2): "Will he not come (home) for Diwali ? "
(1): "Well, he may if he pleases. Well, let me go now. It is getting hot. I have to cover ten miles. Then I will reach Alibag ! "

(7)

Weighing the merits of a good daughter-in-law

A few months after the marriage of his daughter, a father goes to her husband's house to bring her back to his house for a few days. He first inquires from his 'soyara' about his daughter's behaviour in general before he comes to the main topic.

PERSONS : Husband's father—(1) aged about 52 years.
Wife's father—(2) aged about 50 years.
Husband—(3) aged about 25 years.
PLACE : The house of his married daughter.
TIME : About 8-30 in the morning.

* * *

(1): "Welcome ! you 'soyara' * Take your seat. How do you do ? "

(2): "Thank you. We are all well. How do you do ? Are all of you doing well ? How is Gomi ? " †

(1): "What shall I say about her ? She is one among a million (she is a jewel)."

(2): "What do you say ? (How) has she improved so much ? She was indeed like fire in our house."

(1): "I speak from the bottom of my heart, you 'soyara'. I have been watching her behaviour since the day of her marriage ; but on no occasion has she gone astray ! Why shall I tell a lie ? "

(2): "May my daughter continue to dwell in the same way at the house of her father-in-law ! We were rather anxious about the future of our daughter, as she was rather obstinate ! Well, then will you send her for a few days (at our house) ? "

(1): Addresses to his son—"Shall we send her ? You decide yourself."

(3): "We will allow her to go. But they have to send her back soon. We cannot pull on without her. My mother is rather indisposed nowadays and she cannot work."

(2): "All-right ! We shall send her soon. But please send our son-in-law to take her back."

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* One related through marriage usually used in the case of a spouse's parent.

† Gomi is the married daughter.

(8)

Judgment delivered at a Caste-meeting

A caste meeting is a familiar scene in the corporate life of the Agri community. Very often such meetings of the Agri villagers are held to decide local disputes involved in the course of their various activities in life. The parties involved have to take their matter of contention to the caste meeting and have their differences resolved.

In the conversation given below a neighbour lodges a complaint against another agriculturist, who has not repaired his outer bund, which has been washed away by running water of the high tide. This may endanger the fields of other agriculturists and hence steps must be taken to prevent further damage to the adjoining fields. The following is a scene of a caste-meeting which is attended by about 40 members of the community.

PERSONS : (1) Pancha—a caste headman about 55 years old.
(2) Raghav—40 years of age—Party involved.
(3) Halya—45 years of age—Party involved.
(4) Gana Patil—about 35 years old.
(5) Aged about 40 years.
(6) Aged about 45 years.
(7) Aged about 52 years.
(8) Aged about 38 years.

PLACE : On a ' par ' under a banian tree.

* * *

PANCHA : " Friends, the outer bund in the belt of our salt paddy fields was quite strong, but as far as the breaches in a part of this bund along the fields of Raghav Mhatre and his neighbour and Halya Patil are concerned (we notice that) they have not repaired them as yet. Now the month of Shimaga will see an extraordinary big tide ; and if the breaches are not repaired in time the whole belt of salt paddy fields will be submerged (in water). That is the subject-matter for discussion today at this meeting.

(After a pause, he continues.)

Look here brother Raghav and Halya ! What do you intend to do in the matter ? "

RAGHAV : "Wait. I am prepared to repair it. The length of the part (of the bund to be repaired) is ten arms long. So I will repair my portion of five arms in length. But Halya Patil complains, 'I am unable to do it for the present'. 'I have no money'. He further says, 'The breach in my bund is deep. Hence you must repair the bund to the extent of six or seven arms length'."

PANCHA : "Halya da, is it true what he says? You tell us now what you have to say in the matter."— "Do not waste time. Say it."

HALYA : "Friends, I offer my salutations to you all. It is a fact that the length of the breach along my fields is five arms. But I am a poor man. And I have not even a 'paylee' of rice at my disposal. How can I repair such a deep breach (in the bund)? Hence I am requesting Raghav Mhatre that he should repair the breach for six and a half more arms in length, or his fifteen men and mine ten will together repair the whole breach (in the bund)."

RAGHAV : "Why should I send fifteen men? If at all it comes to that, I will depute only ten."

(4): "He is right."

(5): "What will it matter if he deputes fifteen? Is it impossible for him to send five more?"

(6): "No, not that!"

(7): "Yes, yes! What else (do you mean) if not in that (way)?"

PANCHA : "Wait friends! Silence please!"

HALYA : Addressing to Raghav—"Look here friend, I am poor and you are rich. What does it matter if you send five more men?"

RAGHAV : Replying to Halya—"What do you say? Is money so cheap? And do you think that the meeting will sanction your proposal? (Make the request) and let me see." (He addresses now to another man in the meeting) "Oh Narda, you at least speak in the matter."

PANCHA : "Enough. It will be a subject of a hot discussion. Hence, the judgment, which we the caste leaders are going to pronounce, shall be final."

(The leaders go aside, discuss among them and come back to the assembled meeting.)

PANCHA : "Raghav Mhatre should repair the breach to the extent of six arms in length and Halya Patil only four arms. The expenses of Re. 1-4 of this meeting should be defrayed jointly by them both (namely Mhatre and Patil)."

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(9)

Criticizing their daughters-in-law

A daughter-in-law invariably becomes an interesting topic for criticism amongst the old Agri women-folk. The position of the mother-in-law, soon after her husband's death, becomes subservient and more often than not she is at the mercy of her daughter-in-law, who at times ignores her completely.

PLACE : The front part of an Agri house.

PERSONS : Two old women—one sixty years old and the other 65 years old.

* * *

FIRST WOMAN : "Where has your daughter-in-law gone to work ? Listen please ! Where have you sent your daughter-in-law to work ?"

SECOND WOMAN : "She has gone to reap at Mhadya's. The elder one has gone for some other work."

FIRST WOMAN : "How lofty and disdainful are her airs. The way she puts on her garment. The way she walks ! When she sits down to comb her hair, she takes nearly two hours by the clock to dress her hair."

SECOND WOMAN : "Where has your daughter-in-law gone ?"

FIRST WOMAN : "My daughter-in-law has not gone anywhere today. Have we not husked the paddy yesterday ? That rice is to be pounded. I have asked her to pound it (with instructions to) 'Keep everything ready. By that time I will join you'."

SECOND WOMAN : "Your daughter-in-law is really docile ! She does not go 'thouing and theeing' anybody. She will mind her own business. My (daughter-in-law on the other hand) is wanton. She will never speak

anything good to anybody. All alone she eats by the fire-place. After her return from the fields in the evening does she attend to any domestic affairs ? No, not ever ! Her parents have never instructed her to work. She goes on all the while with her husband, who is also uxorious and henpecked."

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(10)

Bride's relatives complaining about the mismanagement at a marriage pandal

A party of the bride has gone to the village of the bridegroom for the nuptial celebration. They however find that no arrangements are made for their lodging and boarding, though they were assured of every facility. The bride's party waits for some time for the necessary preparations to be made. But a senior member of the party gets excited when he finds that the cause of the delay is due to nothing but negligence on the part of the party of the bridegroom.

PERSONS : (1)—is the uncle of the bride about 45 years old.
(2)—is a relative of the bridegroom aged 50.

PLACE : The marriage pandal before a small Agri house.

TIME : At about 11 a.m.

* * *

(1): "Now these people are really useless. They (lit . . . you) have invited us to this place for the nuptial celebration but have you made any preparations for us ? Just see."

(2): "Yes, I know ! What time does it require to make such preparations."

(1): Are you not going to cover this pandal at least with some sail-cloth or you don't intend to cover it at all ? "

(2): "What time will it take to spread the cloth ? It is an hour's work."

(1): "Hullo, look here ! Where have you erected a fire-place to cook our meals ? Haven't we come with the bride from such a distance, simply to starve ourselves ? We have, indeed, made fools of ourselves to have come to this place to celebrate this marriage."

(2): "Oh. Soyare! Do not loose your temper in this way. We shall make all the necessary arrangements for you."

(1): "Yes! But when are you going to make them. Have you any sense of time or not? We have been without our meals since morning. Have you ever thought of that?"

(2): "Then come along! Let all the members of the bride's party have their meals! The meals are ready."

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(11)

An account of a caste meeting

The outer bund which protects the belt of salt land from the water of the creeks must be well looked after. A single breach in this bund will mean that the whole area will be submerged under the flood of a high tide bringing in its wake panic and destruction to the inhabitants. Here one of the Agri farmers, who does not repair the breach in this particular portion of the bund, adjoining his paddy fields, is taken to task by his neighbouring cultivators.

This incident is divided into two conversations: (1) One of them takes place on a field lying close to an outer bund. (2) While the other is a scene of a public meeting in the yard of a local temple.

First part:

PERSONS: (1) Ganya, (2) Yetya, (3) Rama } aged about 45, 42 and 35 years respectively. All Agri farmers.

PLACE: A field.

TIME: At about 8-30 in the morning.

* * *

GANYA: "Oh Yetya-da, Yetya-da, Come here for a while. Look, what is this."

YETYA: "Yes, I am coming. Yes, I am coming."

GANYA: "Dear Brother, you also please go ahead (a little) and see it with your own eyes."

RAMA: "Oh Ganya! Why are you calling me? * * *. Oh what is this my God? The breach is still not repaired!"

GANYA: "Please see it for yourself, the last flood wrought havoc in the fields. Now is the time of the high flood of 'Shimaga'. Still he has not repaired the breach in the bund."

RAMA : "You are impotent."

GANYA : "Why ? What have I done ? Because I spoke to you in the matter ? "

YETYA : "It is not so. Why do you refer the matter to us ? You refer it to the whole village (in this way) 'Oh ye village inhabitants, such a deep breach was created in the bund and the whole belt of the salt paddy fields was affected. What are you (all) people doing so long ? "

GANYA : "I get it now. I'll immediately arrange for a common sitting of the village meeting. I shall arrange to hold a meeting. I will begin the mission at once."

All of them disperse. Ganya (No. 1) goes home, and thence to the house of a Pancha, with a request to hold an urgent meeting of all the caste fellows from the locality. Accordingly a man (known as 'Bombalya') is sent around the village, who proclaims as follows :—

"Ye (villagers) all of you gather together at the place of the village meeting after your meals are over ! "

Accordingly, at about 2 p.m , a meeting of the local Agris is held. It is attended by about 50 male Agris.

Second part :

PERSONS : No. (4) — 50 years old.
No. (5) — 35 years old.
No. (6) — A Pancha 65 years old.
No. (7) — 45 years old.
No. (8) — 53 years old.
No. (9) — 38 years old.
No. (10) — 32 years old.
No. (11) — 40 years old.
No. (12) — 42 years old.

PLACE : Place of a village meeting, near a local temple.

TIME : At about 2 in the afternoon.

* * *

(4): "Oh Ramabhau, who has arranged to hold (lit. to proclaim for) today's meeting ? What is the trouble ? There is nothing so far as I know ! "

(5): "Ganya Bhagat, who lives by the side of the Banyan tree, has arranged for this meeting. Has he come or not ? Oh Ganya, come forward ! "

(Gradually all the people gather at the meeting place. When the people agree to commence the meeting a local leader opens the topic as follows.)

(6): "What have you to say? Come in front . . . this way. And now begin."

(7): "Friends, a breach has been erected by the last tidal flood in the outer bund along the fields of Balya Halya. Now, it will soon be for the next tidal flood. Yet he has not repaired the breach; and hence this meeting is held to deal with him."

(6): "That is quite right. Where is that Balya Halya? Did you listen to what was said?"

(8): "Yes."

(6): "Do you admit the charge?"

(8): "Friends, I admit that I am to be blamed. But during these two months my children are starving. What shall I do? Shall I provide them with meals or shall I arrange for the repair of the outer bund?"

(6): "Look here. The breach in your part of the bund, will let the full flood submerge the whole belt of salt paddy fields. What about that?"

(8): "But pray, tell me. What am I to do?"

(9): "If he is unable to do that, the other members of his fraternity should undertake to do it."

(10): "You, * * *, * * *! Who are you to preach us? And why should we repair it?"

(9): "* * * * *! Why then do you continue as members of the same fraternity? What do you say? Ha-ha-ha!"

(10): "Now see the thing for yourself."

(6): "Well, Halya-da, what do you intend to do now?"

(8): "I cannot repair it so soon."

(9): "That is why we say that the members who have a common fraternity should repair it."

(6): "Keep quiet. Why do you quarrel. We are here (to settle everything amicably). Why do you discuss of other things?"

(11): "Now, it's getting very late. The Panchas should now give their verdict without delay."

(6) "Well, let it be so now. If he (Halya-da) is not able to repair the breach, we all the villagers shall jointly repair it. . . ."

(7): "Is this called judgment?"

(6): "Wait, wait. It is not over! Just listen to this!"

(13): "Speak on."

(6): "And after the next harvest he is to pay us Rs. 100. Do you agree to this part of the judgment ?"

(10): "It is correct."

(7): "If not, what else can we do ? What is the remedy now ?"

(6): "Expenses of this meeting will be borne by Ganya Bhagat."

---

(12)

A trip on Bali raja day

Cart-driving, especially during the cart-races, is a popular recreation amongst the Agris. In this dialogue an Agri youth, who has only one bullock, persuades his friend to yoke his cart.

PERSONS : Chandar—a youth of 32 years.
Devaja—another youth of 35 years.

PLACE : A village street.

TIME : At about 1-30 in the afternoon.

* * *

CHANDAR : 'Hullo, friend ! Have you not yoked your cart today ?"

DEVAJA : 'No, I have not another bullock to make a pair."

CHANDAR : "But don't you know that I have one ?"

DEVAJA : "Yes, yes ! It is so !"

CHANDAR : "Then do you intend to come today ? This is the day of Bali raja."

DEVAJA : "I would have come. But my 'Tondalis' are to be watered. Since morning I was busy in storing the bundles of paddy stalks. So I thought of doing it in the evening. I have now a sip of tea and then I will go to water them."

CHANDAR : "What work you are speaking about. Day to day we water our 'Tondalis'. What is today ? It is a Bali raja day.* All the people, by jove, take their carts for a race."

DEVAJA : "I agree with you. But. . . ."

CHANDAR : "What 'but' ? What harm will it do, if you do not water your 'Tondalis' for a day only ?

* The day in Diwali festival when the cart-races are held for the first time after the monsoons are over.

Then you do come. We will take the cart: and drive slowly up to Chondhi. Then we will have a peg each! Work is always there. What is this life? What little enjoyment we can get, we should take it."

DEVAJA: "All-right. Let us make a move."

---

(13)

Boys playing Iti-Dandu

Agri children play games like 'Iti-Dandu' by the side of a village grazing ground, once the cattle have started browsing on the grass. Here we see three young Agri boys during the course of such a game.

PERSONS: (1), (2) and (3) are Agri boys about 10, 15 and 12 years respectively.

PLACE: Open place outside a village.

TIME: At about 4-30 in the evening.

* * *

(1): "Oh Nagya, do you come to play? Another partner has also come."

(2): "How shall we divide ourselves?"

(1): "We two together, against yourself, all alone!"

(2): "How will it work?"

(1): "Yes, yes. What is wrong? You are an expert."

(2): "All-right. Who is to play first?"

(1): "You."

(2): "Shall I play first? Get aside. Are you ready?—Look here, the game will be of two hundred points."

(1): "Take this . . . you go away. We are ready. Go on. Start it. He has hit a good stroke—Go quickly."

(3): "I can't go every time."

(1): "Yes, ready. You stand at a distance. * * Catch it. * * * you have missed it."

(2): "It is over. You play."

(1): "Let me play first * * *. He caught it (iti). It is a wonder. I am out. All-right you play."

(3): "Ready. (He begins to play). The iti has gone far away. Now, who would catch it?"

(2): "Go on."

(3): "Get aside, will you? The 'iti' will hit you. I am hitting it in that direction."

(2): As No. (3) goes on hitting—"One—two—three. You have missed. You have missed. You are out."

(1): "No, not so. The last stroke (of dandu) touched (the iti) a little. From this place we can count five lengths of dandu."

(2): "What do you say ? * * * ! I shall kick you on your bottom if you deny (that he is out). Why do you whine and weep like that ? "

---

(14)

About a band of musicians

During the nuptial celebrations, Muslims are at times called in as musicians. Some of the Agris do not like this. They invite their own band of musicians. This conversation, dealing with this topic, shows us the nature of controversy.

PERSONS : Three women—(1) 30 years old, (2) 40 years old, and (3) 45 years old.

PLACE : A field.

TIME : At about 9 in the morning.

* * *

(1): "At present you are not sending for a band of musicians. Why is it so ? "

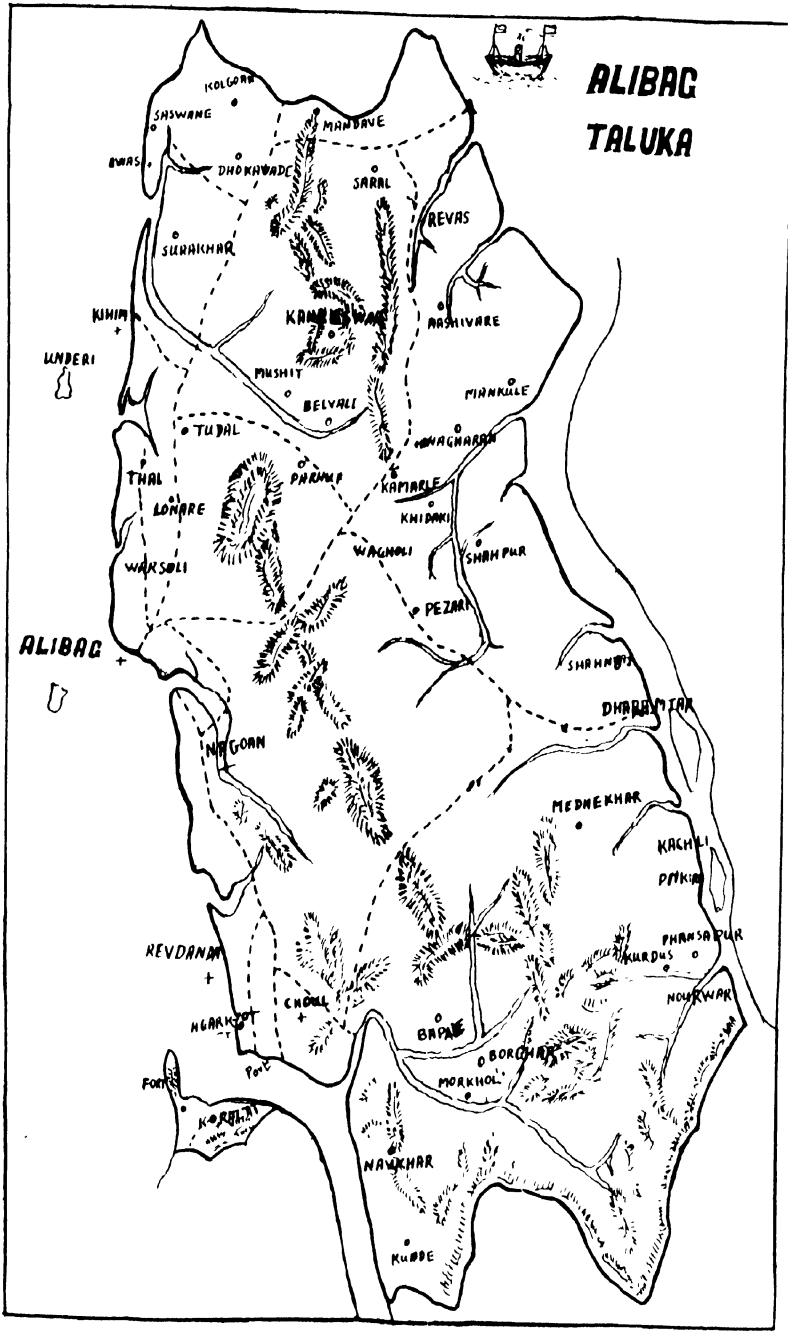
(2): "We are to perform some religious ceremony. And why do you then invite such sorts of persons ? Everything is in disorder. I do not agree to this."

(1): "But they simply play on their instruments. What else do they do ? Do they come inside ? What does it matter if they happen to be Muhammadans ? "

(2): "I cannot accept that. I do not want this intermingled and disordered state of things. That is why I did not send for the musicians at all."

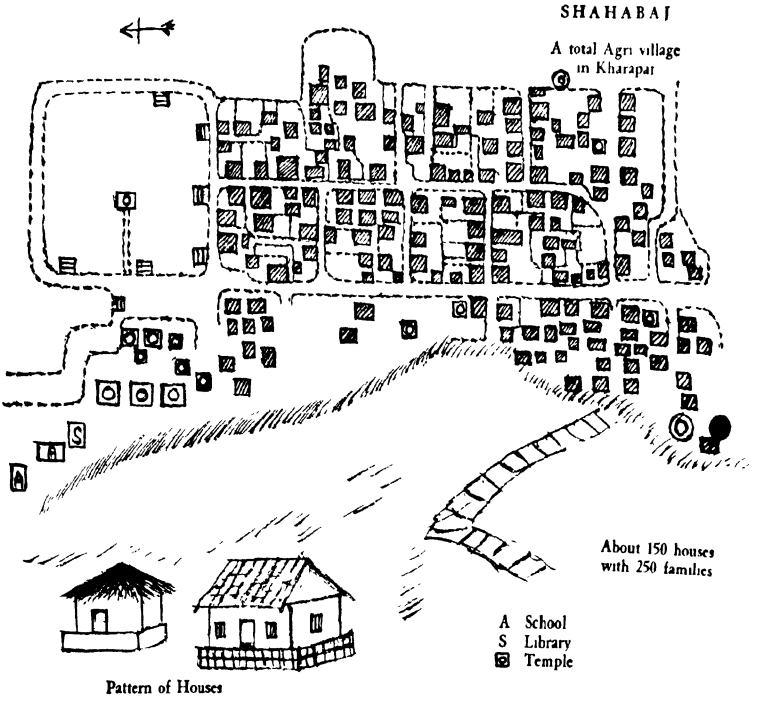
(3): "But at present is it not so everywhere ? Have they not polluted the shrine of Vithoba (at Pandharpur) ? Who can believe in these people ? Anybody (among them) may do as he pleases ! "

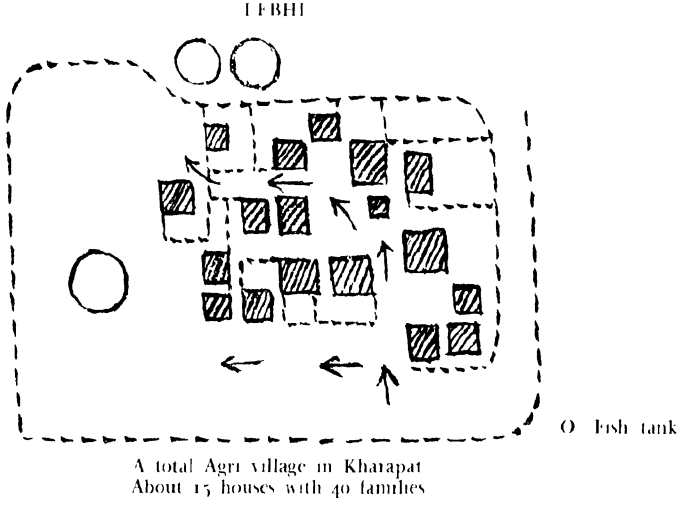
(2): "At present everything has changed. Nobody wants God. No one cares for religion. Men have given up everything. That is why the monsoon is also (irregular). When all have given up the established code of behaviour, why should they (natural phenomena) alone continue to follow the code of behaviour ? "


ALIBAG
TALUKA
KOLGAON
SHIWANE
MANDVE
DHOKAWADE
SARAL
REVAS
SURAKHAR
KIHIM
KANHERWADI
ARSHIVANE
UNDERI
MUSHIT
BELVALI
MANKULE
TUDAL
NAGHARAN
THAL
PHAWLE
KAMARLE
LONARE
KHIDAKI
WARSOLI
WAGHOLI
SHAHPUR
PEZARI
ALIBAG
SHAHAPUR
DHARAMTAR
NAGAON
MEDHEKHAR
KACHALI
PAKIM
PHANSAPUR
KURDUS
REVDANDA
CHAUL
NOWKHAR
HEARKOT
BAPAN
BORCHARI
MORKHOL
FORT
KORLAI
NAVKHAR
KUDDE

PLANS OF AGRI VILLAGES

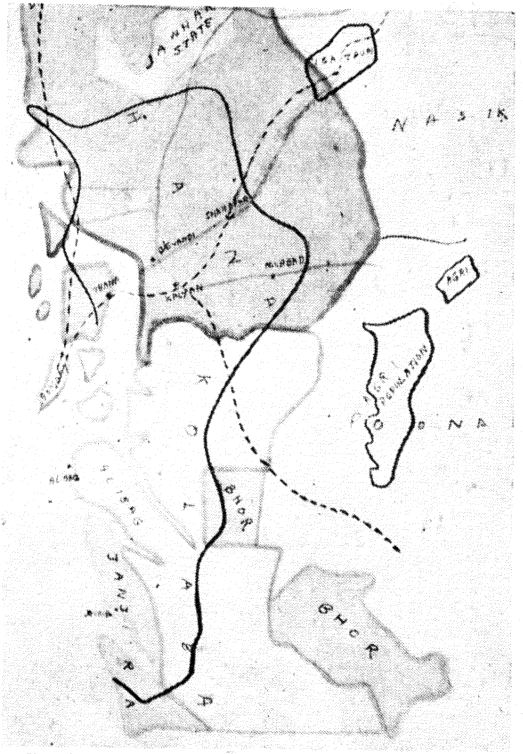
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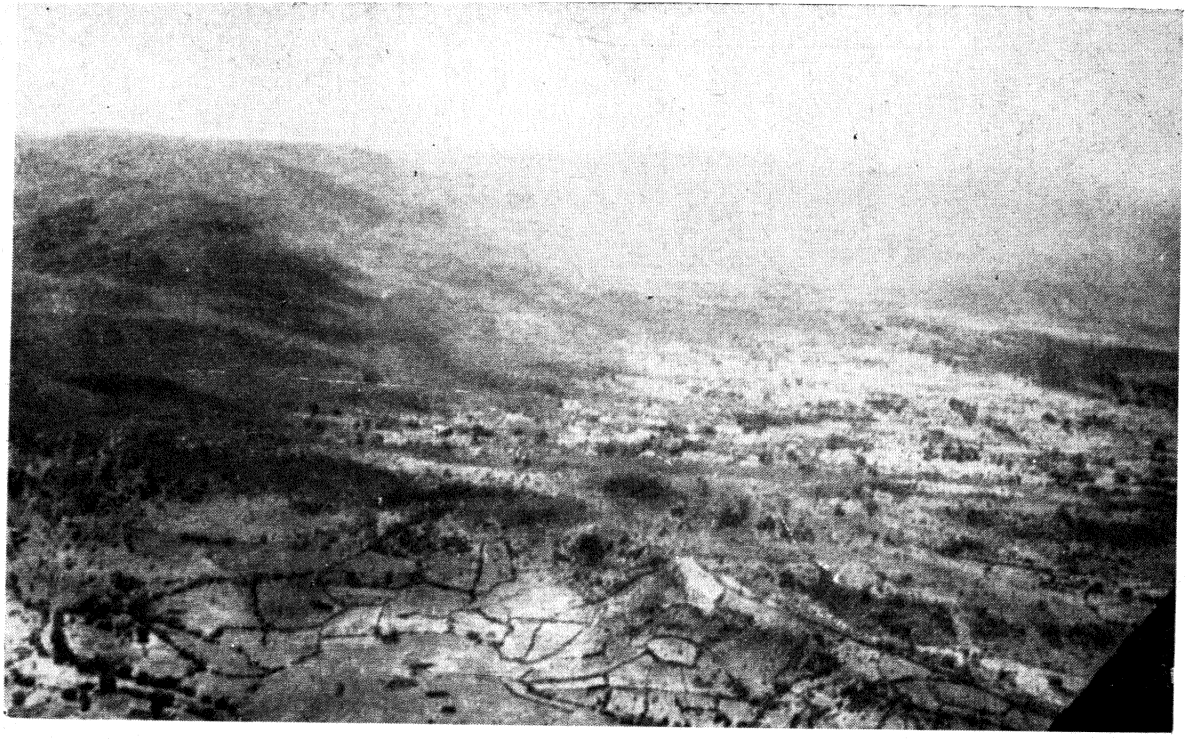


A total Agri village in Kharapat
About 15 houses with 40 families

Note.—Arrows show open space usually used as a way across the houses.



Section of Western Coast of Maharashtra showing the area of Agri population.



Southern part of Alibag Taluka.
(The plane was 2,000 ft. above the Kankeshwar Hill.)



A part of the Kharapat extending for miles along either side of the Amba Creek.



Diagram showing Annual Rainfall for the period 1930-1946 in Alibag Taluka.

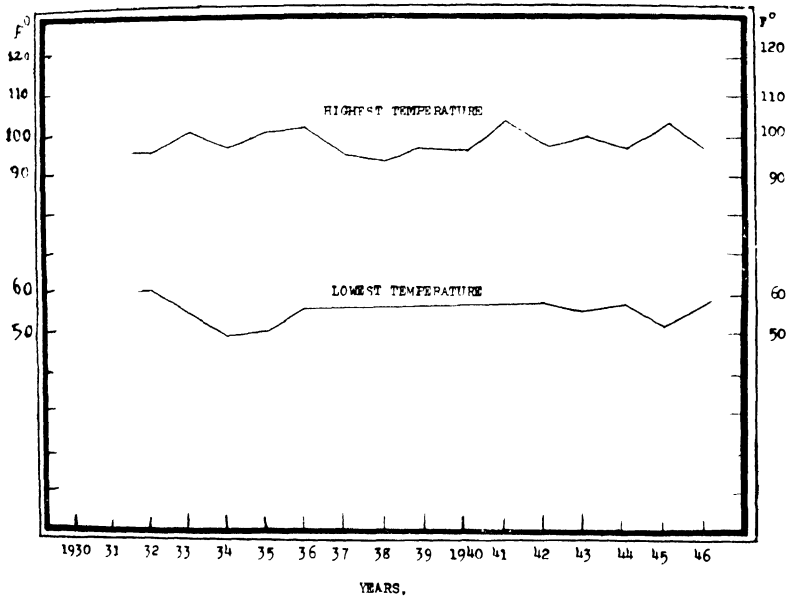
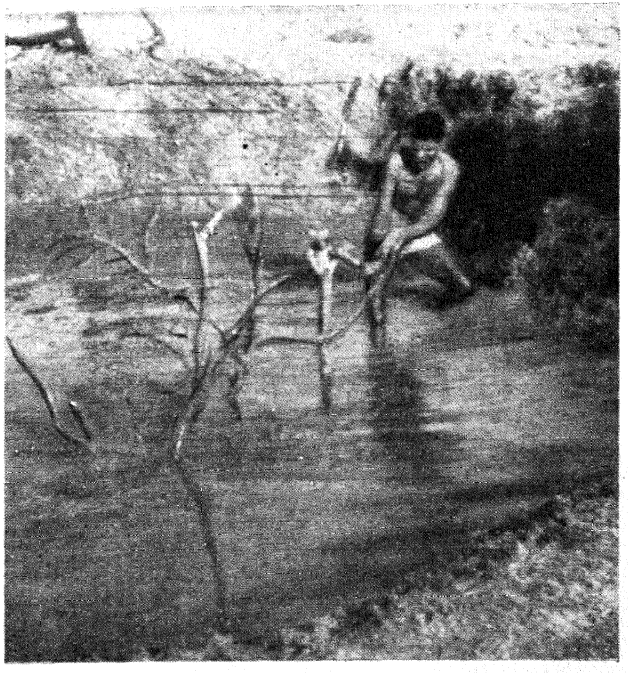


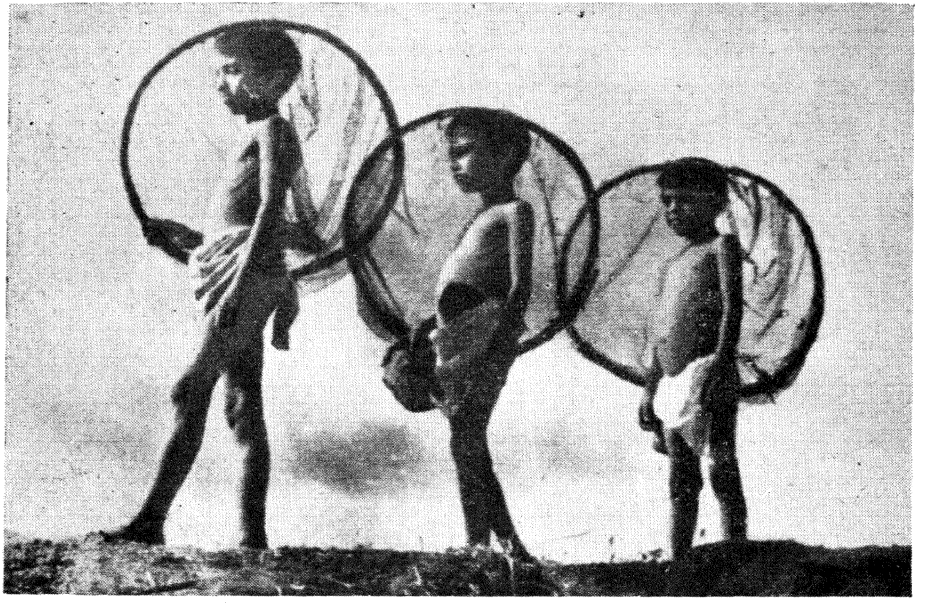
Diagram showing Highest and Lowest Temperatures for the period 1931-1946 in Alibag Taluka.



A small Agri boy learns to fish in shallow water in an arm of an estuary close to his village.



An Agri is pulling his net in a local fish-pond, known as 'Talai' by the Agris. Branches of a tree are especially fixed in the bed of a fish-pond where fish can take shelter.



Three Agri boys with their fishing equipment. The circular nets are known as 'Asus'.



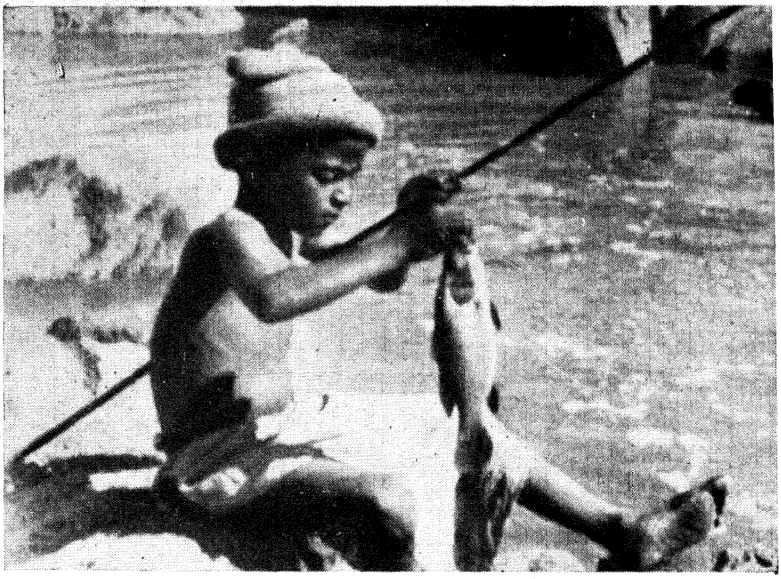
An Agri father and his son catching crabs in the salt marshy soil along the Amba Creek.



Agri girls fishing with 'Asus' in a local arm of an estuary close to their village.



Mass fishing in an Agri village. Note the use of circular nets, handled by one person and square-nets handled by two or more persons.



An Agri boy with 'Jitada' fish—a delicious and typical fish of Kharapat.



An Agri boy smiling with a crab in his hand. He is carrying a 'Pensan' in his left hand, though it is an agricultural implement not required for fishing.



The salt paddy fields of Kharapat require good cultivation. There sods are removed with the help of human labour instead of ploughing. The man on the extreme left and the other in the centre are digging sods from the soil with 'Pensan'—a typical agricultural implement of Kharapat.



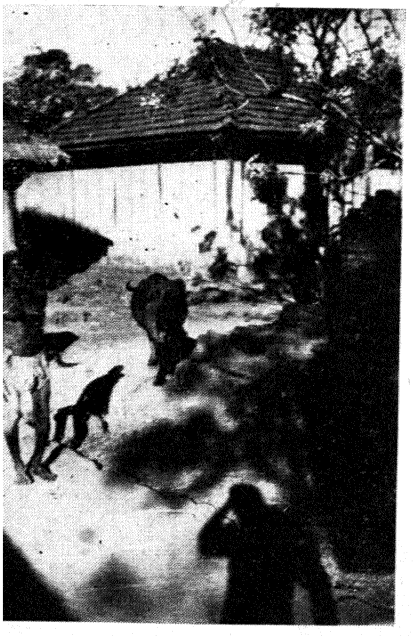
Leisure hour during the harvest in Kharapat. The workers are hungry and must be given some rice and fish-curry. Members of all the ages and both the sexes are present in the fields. Amidst the rural Agris, two Agris from Bombay also are seen enjoying the free air of the fields.



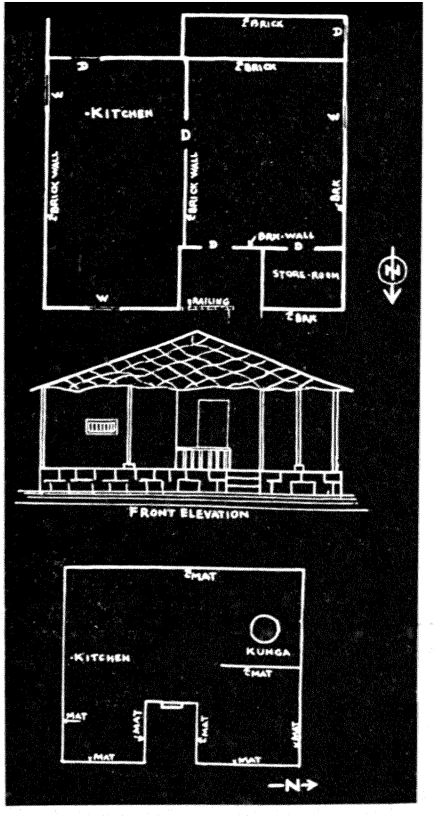
Bringing fuel (six miles from the home) in Kharapat.



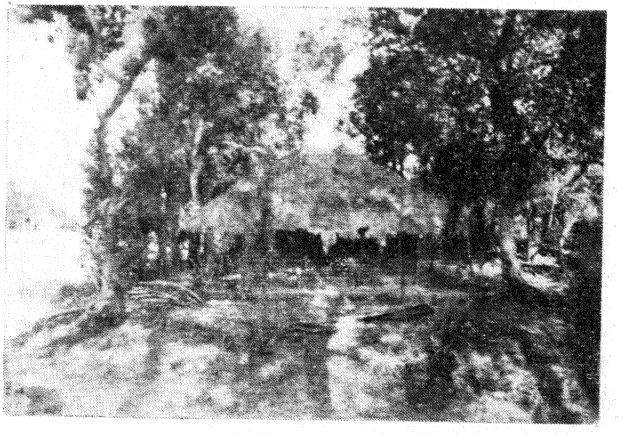
Transplantation in full swing in a field in Ashtagar.



; humble resident of a village in
.rapat has not moved beyond ten
:s from his village, though he is
above 50.

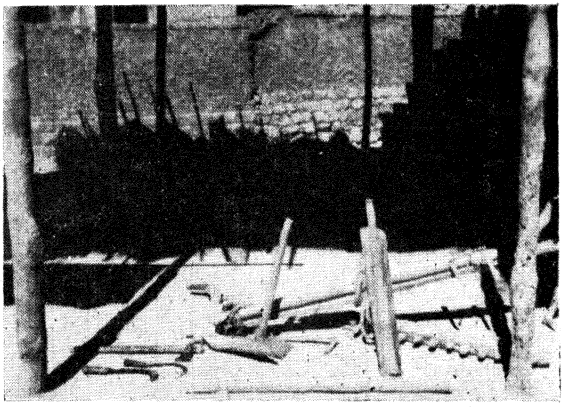


Plan of a typical Agri house.



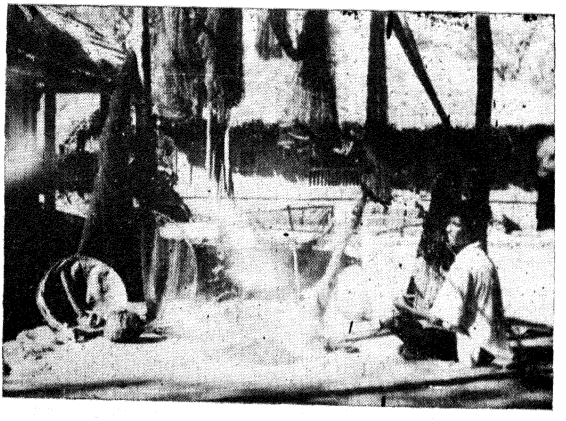
A TYPICAL AGRI HOUSE

It has a thatch-roof and it can be constructed with materials available in the homeland of the Agris.



AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS OF THE AGRIS

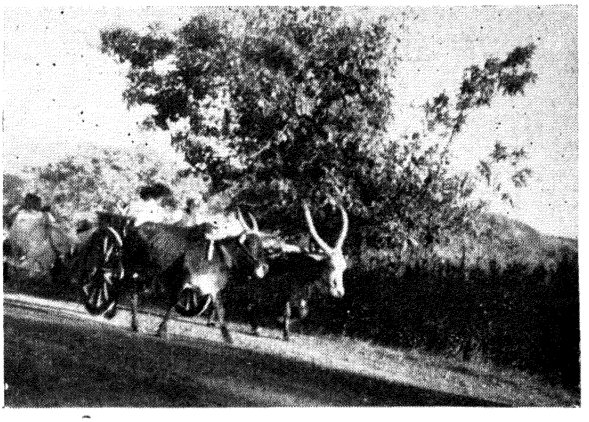
'Sickles' and an 'Axe' are on the left. A 'Powrah' and a 'Penson' are leaning against a plough. 'Datere'—a wooden comb is below the plough. A 'Crow-bar' is in front.



FISHING IMPLEMENTS OF THE AGRIS

From Left to Right—

'Yendi', 'Hila' (Cloth-net), 'Asoo' (Circular nets), 'Harkala' (a sort of Wicker), and 'Bokashi'. (On the extreme right an Agri is weaving his net.)



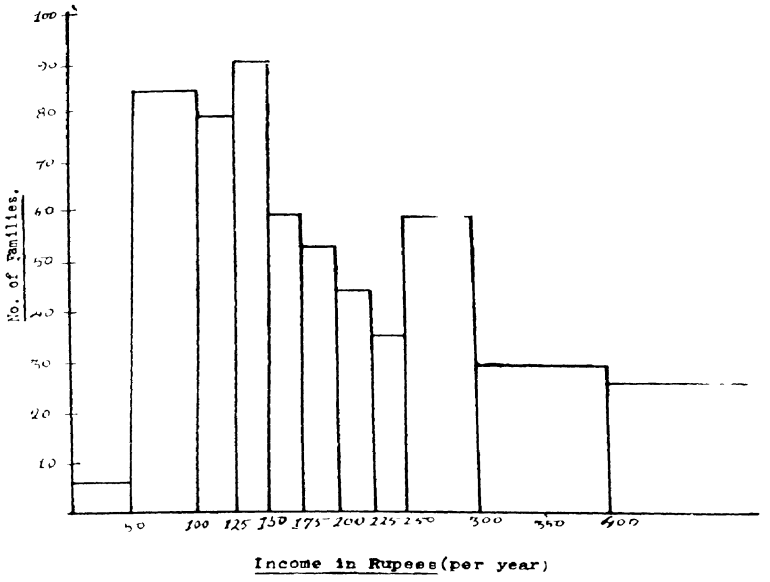
CART RACE

This is a typical feature of Alibag Taluka. The man seated to the right of the coachman watches if another cart tries to overtake his.

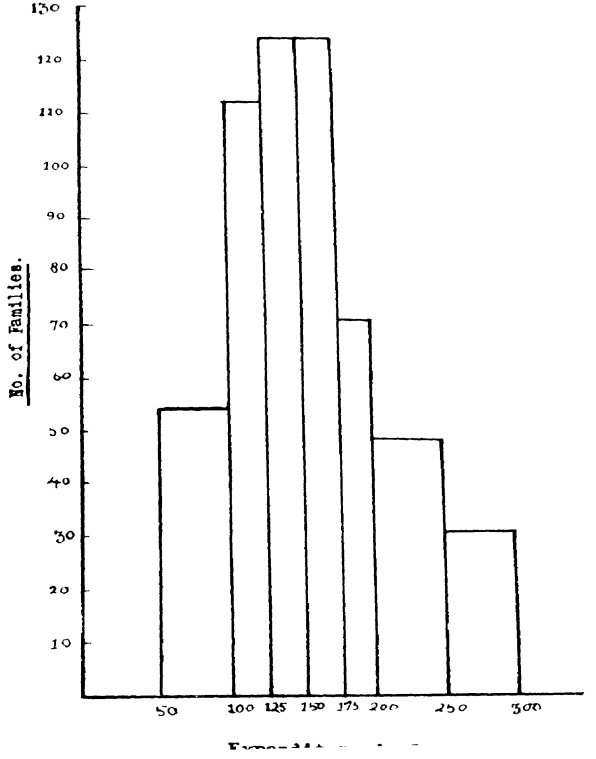


A VILLAGE BAZAAR

It is held in the open where the villagers can sell what they produce in their fields and purchase what they use.



Distribution of 564 Families according to Income level



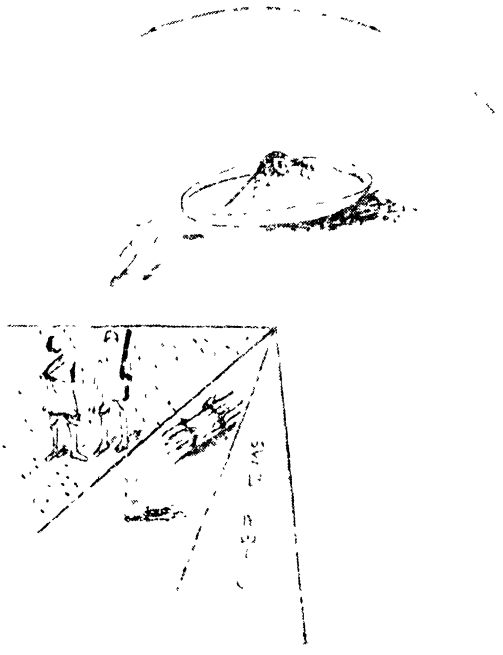
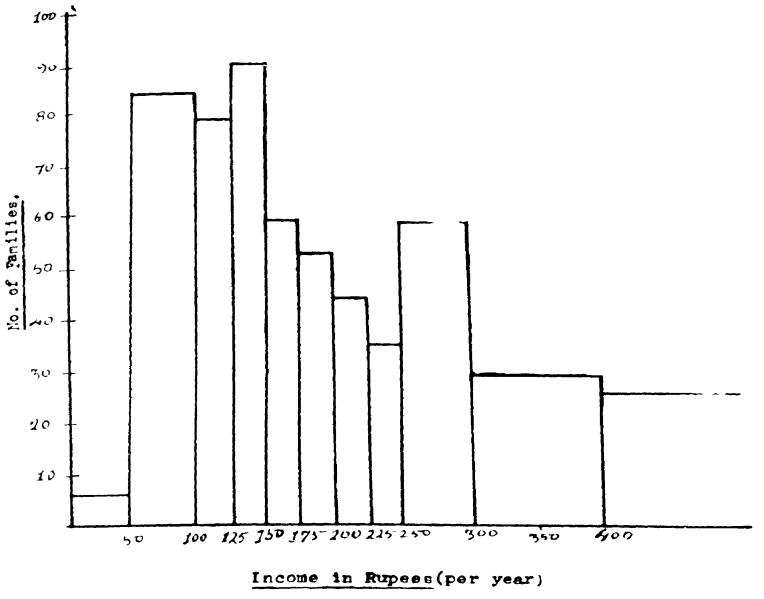
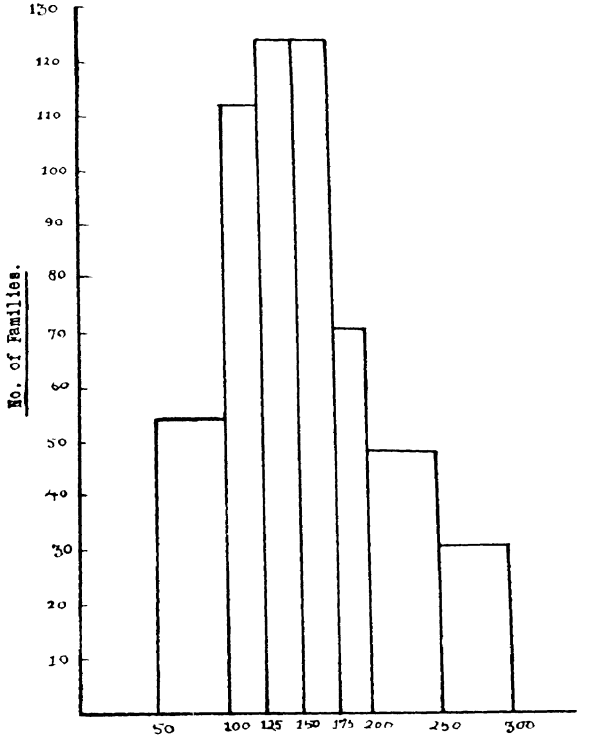


Diagram showing details of Average Expenditure of an Agri family



Distribution of 564 Families according to Income level.



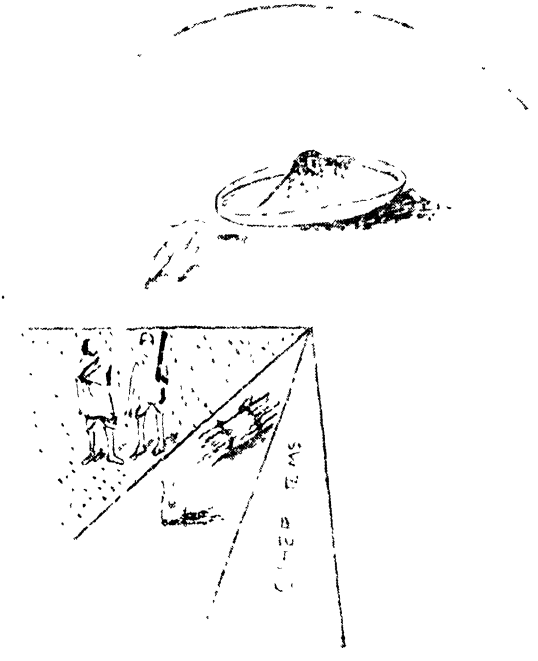
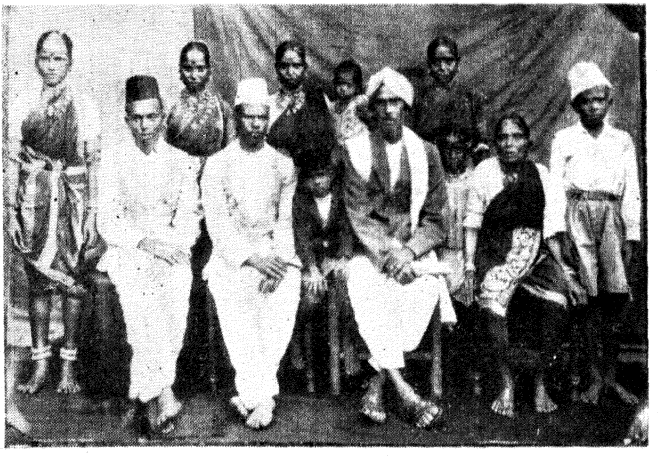


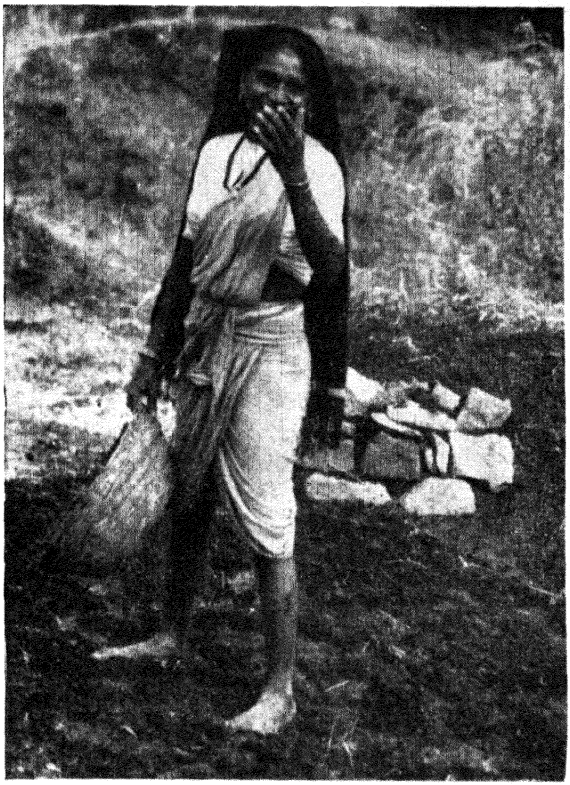
Diagram showing details of Average Expenditure of an Agri family



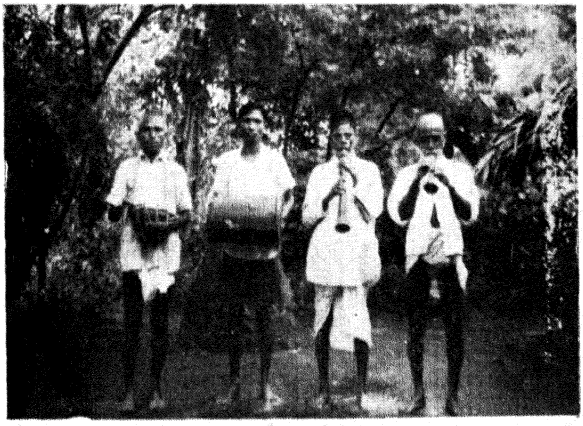
Picking tomatoes in her plantations. This is a newly married girl in one of the Agri villages in Ashatagar.

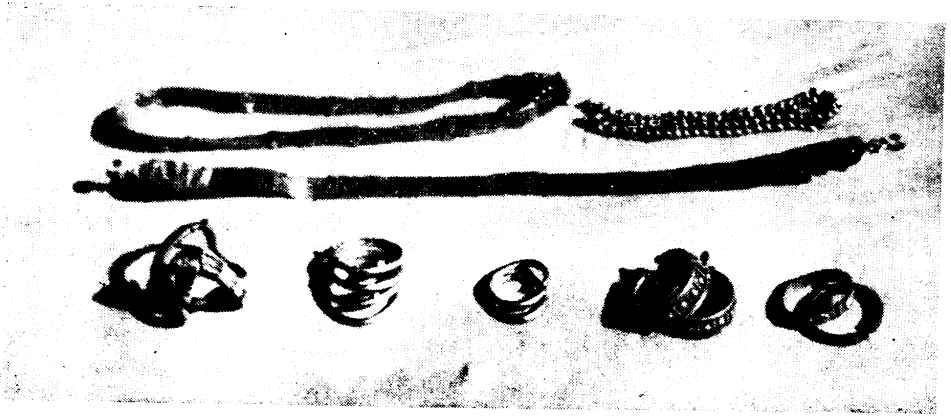


A group photograph of the members of four generations of an Agri family.



A Kharapat Agri woman while working in her field; she must cover her head with 'Khonda'—a blanket. Her manner of dressing in sari is very suitable for agricultural work.





SOME OF THE ORNAMENTS WORN BY THE AGRIS

First line (from left to right)—'Karasura', 'Sankhali'.

Second line (from left to right)—'Kamarpatta'.

Third line (from left to right)—'Bahute', 'Kadi', 'Bargot' and 'Patalya'.

Ornaments in the first two lines are worn round the girdles. Except 'Bahuta' which are worn on the arms, all others are worn on the hands.

(15)

Over a lost Nose-ring

An Agri woman has lost her nose-ring, which has become a source of anxiety to her.

PERSONS : Two women—(1) about 35 years old.
(2) about 70 years old.

PLACE : At the house of a landlord, where they have come for work.

TIME : At about 5-30 in the evening.

* * *

(1): "Friend, I have lost my nose-ring. I cannot recollect how it happened and how it was lost."

(2): "What do you mean by 'How it was lost ?'"

(1): "I removed it (from my nose) and put it in a box. It has disappeared from that place. It had four pearls on the four sides. I searched and searched for it; but it cannot be traced."

(2): "Then do you not invoke the aid of some deity (through its Bhagat)."

(1): "I sought the advice of that Bhagat. His calculations say, it must have been stolen by somebody. It is carried in the (southern) direction of Choul."

"I tried to invoke the aid of our (village) deity also. She advised me (through the Bhagat) 'you keep on searching for it; you will find it.' But friend, where am I to search for it ? And in how many places am I to search ? Friend, as a matter of fact, I kept it in a box. Perhaps it must have fallen somewhere, whilst keeping inside. My daughters then swept the house in the evening, I presume. They did not worry much over it whether it contained any things (precious stones) or not. Then it must have fallen on the dunghill. There somebody found it, and she must have carried it."

(2): "But what is the advice of the deity ?"

(1): 'It is this. Some woman must have taken it. She must have liked it very much. And she has carefully preserved it. Now it is lost!"

(2): "What should be done now ?"

(1): "Friend, I am feeling very uneasy. What shall I say ? It was worth about forty-five rupees. How can I afford to lose it ? I am patiently watching the developments. I'll wait for a couple of days. Otherwise, I'll approach

the Bapa of Rewas. I will invoke his aid as the last resort ! "

---

(16)

Discussing marriage prospects

A marriage is an inevitable event in an Agri life. A boy has to get married, when he is about the age of 18-20 years, notwithstanding the financial difficulties at home or otherwise. In this conversation two Agri men are discussing about the marriage of their younger brother. The wife of one of the brothers also takes part in the conversation.

PERSONS : (1) An Agri youth about 35 years of age.
(2) An Agri youth about 45 years of age.
(3) Wife of No. (1)—30 years of age.

PLACE : The courtyard of an Agri house.

TIME : At about 6 in the evening.

* * *

(1): " Brother, Raghav has now reached marriageable age. Do you intend to get him married or not ? "

(2): " This year the monsoon is bad. It did not rain during the Hasta constellation and how will our ' sweet ' agriculturing land yield any crop ? The salt paddy land is already submerged under water. How to get the money ?

(3): " Brother-in-law, I have my ornaments like ' Gathala ', ' Vajra-tik ' and others, which are all brand new. Besides, I have two hundred rupees with me. I will hand over all these to you if you intend to arrange the marriage (of our brother-in-law)."

(1): " Look here brother, your sister-in-law seems to be anxious over it."

(2): " Brother, what does she know ? How will Rs. 200 be enough to defray all the expenses. And then are we to make fools of ourselves ? "

(1): " Sakhya-da, our Raghav is now 22 years of age. How long can we allow him to remain single ? I shall arrange to pay for clothes and other articles. You may pay it back according to your convenience."

(2): " All-right, I must seek the advice of everybody. But do you know where we can find the girl ? "

(3): " Brother-in-law, proposals have been brought by good people like Ganu Patil, and Bala Patil, an inhabitant of Chari."

(2): "We are poor, we should not go in for girls from rich families. We rather prefer the poor ones!"

(1): "Sakhya-da. Please think it over. If you want to enhance the relationship there is a girl in the elder family (of the elder brother) of my sister-in-law. Whatever work you give her—whether you ask her to go for fish, to bring firewood from the hill or to cook meals for twenty persons (at a time), she is capable of doing it."

(3): "Brother-in-law, my brother-in-law's wife is all the while urging me in this matter. But our relations might get the impression that all the brides are coming from my father's family. Hence I am keeping silent.

(2): "The family is also good. They will listen to what we say. Have some sweets now."

(3): "Brother-in-law, it is settled then. Tomorrow I shall go there and ask (my brother) Ambudada to give his consent."

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(17)

A quarrel between a husband and a wife

A domestic quarrel is not an unfamiliar incident in the life of an Agri habitation, for no two persons can completely agree on all matters and occasions In this dialogue a quarrel between a couple is seen, which is due to a few coins.

PERSONS: Husband about 40 years old.
Wife about 35 years old.

PLACE: The kitchen room in an Agri house.

TIME: About 8 in the evening.

* * *

HUSBAND: "What has happened to the coin pieces? Who took the coin pieces from this place?"

WIFE: "Coins as such how many were they?"

HUSBAND: "* *, * * *. What do you say? I had left with you one rupee and ten annas."

WIFE: "Yes. But how many days have elapsed since then? For the (last) eight days you did not arrange for fish, nor for betel leaves, nor for areca nuts. How will the money suffice this way?"

HUSBAND: "Why, did I not bring the betel leaves? Or did your father go to Mandwa."

WIFE : "I say, you have no business to refer to my father."

HUSBAND : "What do you talk ? I shall give you a slap and kill you on the spot."

WIFE : "It is a long way before you do it. It is because you have arrived at my parental house that I am getting my sari and glass bangles. Otherwise, when I was at Saral, I used to get a detached piece of human excrement."

HUSBAND : "As if your father was giving us there those (things)."

WIFE : "I say you have no business to refer to my father."

HUSBAND : "* * *. You are thinking too much of yourself."

(He gives her two slaps ; she is naturally more excited.)

WIFE : "Why should I not think highly of myself ? I depend upon you neither for my glass bangles nor for my bodice. You look after your own things. I have all hopes placed in my parents. I sell so much of the milk they leave with me. Some of the money I keep for ourselves. And now you have an eye upon that. And you ask every time 'Whence have these coin pieces come from ?' Yet I used to say, my mother has kept them with me. And I would save all those coins to spend when I would require to bring from the shop, say two pice-worth of sweet-meats for our babies. And in spite of this you are under the impression that I have stolen (some of) your money ?"

HUSBAND : "* * *. Definitely you are proud of yourself. I have warned you a hundred times that you must not refer to their (your father's) money."

(He gives her two more slaps.)

'It is on account of you(rself) that I have become a pauper."

WIFE : "As if I (have) squandered all your estate. And my mother has purchased some pieces of land (with that). Not to refuse, she has only celebrated the marriage of her son."

HUSBAND : "Yes, I know you. What type of a woman you are ; I know it fully well."

WIFE : "Do you really ? You do not. It is on account of them (my parents) that you can enjoy your hobby of car-driving and keeping bullocks. Otherwise you would have got only my father's shoe."

HUSBAND : "As if all of these were brought from your father * * *."

WIFE : "You have been warned not to refer to my father (in this way)."

HUSBAND : "Why not ? What can you do ? * * *. Really you are conceited."

WIFE : "Why should I not be so ? For my marriage you gave me your mother's ornaments. And those too you have returned to her ! You did not spare even a broken bead. You did not spare any ornament of (for decorating) my head. You never thought of keeping a necklace for me. You gave them back everything. And you have an eye upon what little I have brought from my parental home When that too is finished, you will be completely satisfied. Now I ask my father not to bring for me even a pice-worth article. You are going to bring all the household necessities. Isn't it ? Do it from now."

HUSBAND : "No * * *. As if they (your parents) will furnish you with all that you require. I will bring all the necessary articles. But you must not chew betel leaves."

WIFE : "You will be satisfied only when I do not eat betel leaves. After all (my husband) is hard pressed for whatever few betel leaves that I chew. Yet I never question him, 'Where did you go ? How much money have you spent ? How much liquor did you drink ? Or what else have you done ?' Even then it is my bad luck that he should always ask me, 'How much money is spent ?' He thinks as if I steal the money from him and send it to my mother's (home). But, if at all, even a pice is kept by me, I swear, I will suffer for it."

(The husband is puzzled and he quietly goes away.)

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(18)

Canvassing on behalf of a widower

The father of a girl is anxious about her marriage, though amongst the Agris it is the boy who has to make an offer to the girl. In this conversation, an Agri is persuading his friend to give his consent to his daughter's marriage to a widower, though the father of the girl is apparently unwilling to do so.

PERSONS : (1) Father of the girl about 40 years old.
(2) A male of about 45 years.
(3) Another male of about 35 years.

PLACE : A ferry boat (plying between Mandwa and Bombay).

TIME : At about 2 in the afternoon.

* * *

(1): "Oh Bala-da, will your Shankar get through (the examination) this year ?"

(2): "Oh yes. Why ? What's your intention ?"

(1): "I mean to say, my daughter has reached a marriageable age. I am going to make him our offer."

(2): "I do not bother about his marriage. He has to get through the examination. Then we have to think over the matter."

(1): "Why not get him married this year. Now he is a grown-up boy."

(2): "Let him continue with his education. A wife is there for one's whole life."

(3): "Well, if he does not intend to marry, why don't you consider the case of our Bhagat from upper 'Pada'.* Go and make him an offer. He will approve (of your daughter)."

(1): "But is he not a widower ? How can I give him my daughter ? My daughter, I say, is not so overaged."

(2): "What does it matter ? A widower is preferable. He will not trouble much your daughter. He has got some money. Besides, he is not so passionate."

(1): "But is he not a widower ? Yet you harp on the same string !"

* A part of the village.

(3): "Yes, yes, I know it. Listen to what I say. Even a widower as such is preferable. He is employed in Bombay. He has only a couple of children by his first wife—a son and a daughter. The whole of his establishment is settled. Only a wife is wanting. Then think it over and let me know. I will come to you tomorrow in the noon."

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(19)

Instructions for preparing mango-pickle

Some of the Agri women, though well acquainted with the daily cooking of their meals, are not experienced enough to make some special preparations. In the following dialogue we read of a woman who does not know how to prepare a mango-pickle.

PERSONS : First woman aged about 40 years.
Second woman aged about 25 years.

PLACE : Under a mango tree on the field.

TIME : At about 2-30 p.m. (while engaged in collecting mangoes).

* * *

SECOND WOMAN : "Friend, do you know how to prepare mango-pickle ?"

FIRST WOMAN : "What is there in it ? (It is a simple thing.)"

SECOND WOMAN : "But the mangoes (brought for pickle) are very raw. How is one to prepare pickle from them ?"

FIRST WOMAN : "Cut them a little and fill their 'posteriors' with chilli powder. And add a little condiment powder. Don't you know such a simple thing ?"

SECOND WOMAN : "Who prepares it every now and then ? It is prepared only once a year. That is why I seek your advice. Besides, you know it well."

FIRST WOMAN : "Yes, yes, as if I came from Bombay preparing pickles at every stage (on my way). What is there in it ? And who prepares it ? '

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(20)

Quarrel during the Sakharpuda Ceremony

On the eve of the Sakharpuda ritual, before the actual marriage takes place, the betrothal of the parties concerned is formally announced. Here, in the following conversation, the relatives of the bride complain against the attitude adopted by the bridegroom's people, when the bridegroom is reported to have disapproved of the bride after the final arrangements are made.

About 40 people have gathered in a pandal at the bride's house.

PERSONS : (1) An old woman about 50 years of age, who is a relative of the bride.
(2) A male relative of the bride about 25 years old.
(3) A male relative of the bridegroom about 40 years old.

PLACE : A pandal in front of the bride's house.

TIME : At about 8-30 in the evening.

* * *

WOMAN : " (From inside the house) " They did not say anything when they came here to see the bride. Why do they complain now that she is dark and pitch dark. A number of people frequented (our house). And now they remark that the bride is black, as black as one coming from Calcutta. Were they blind at that time ? "

(2) : This (news) has fallen on our ears also. Let us think over the matter at the proper time. Otherwise it will be rather difficult afterwards, for yourselves as well as for us."

(3) : " Who has said and what ? I do not know anything. As far as I am concerned I have not uttered a word."

(2) : " ' Who has said what,' Everybody has spoken thus to the bridegroom. He did not say anything at first in reply. Afterwards he was shedding tears all the while. He was worried because they were very much after him (with the remarks) ' How dark is your prospective wife ? ', ' as dark as one coming from Calcutta ', ' you refuse her '. Well, was she fair

then at the time when you fixed (the marriage)? And now she has changed into a dark colour. A number of his relatives go on criticizing in this way. We shall not tolerate it. We are not going to stand for it. It does not matter much if our daughter does not get married this year; we will postpone it to the next year. But we do not wish to have any trouble afterwards."

WOMAN: (Again speaks from inside) "At this stage if you go on speaking in this way, what sort of treatment will you give her afterwards? No, we do not want that. The matter must be decided here and now; as long as there are some members in the pandal. We do not want any intricacies hereafter."

(3): "But I assure (you all that) I did not open my mouth. Our son (i.e. the bridegroom) has also not said anything. Let anybody from amongst the people gathered here in this pandal (stand up and) say which person from our house has said it."

(2): "Then you mean to say that such a rumour was set afoot for nothing. Is it not your duty to check its spreading?"

(3): "Yes, yes. But what can I do if the people said like that? Do you not believe in me, when I say that I have not said it?"

(2): "What can I do? You must go and inquire into who has set afoot this rumour in such a way. You must guard against it."

(3): "(should) I (do it)?"

(2): "Yes, yes! You yourself. Do you follow (what I say)? You must have had your hand in it in some way or the other. Was the rumour set afoot automatically?"

(3): (Addressing to a respectable old man in the pandal) "Brother, you give your decision in this matter. I did not utter anything. I am not to be blamed. And why do these people reprimand me in the presence of all the gathering? And I have to listen to such words, which I never did before, what is this? Bro-

ther Mahadeo, you at least show me the way in this matter."

(2): "Well, it is certain, then, that you have not said anything. Then you keep quiet. I wanted to be assured that you did not set the rumour afoot. Now, I know, what course I am to adopt."

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(21)

Settling the marriage

A mother of a marriageable youth pays a courtesy visit to another woman from her relation, whose marriageable daughter would make a suitable bride for her son.

PERSONS: Woman No. (1) mother of a marriageable girl aged 45 years.
Woman No. (2) mother of a marriageable boy aged 50 years.
Man No. (3) husband of No. (1) aged about 50 years.

PLACE: The house of a girl's mother.

TIME: At about 1-30 in the noon.

* * *

(1): "Welcome, Dharmubai, you have come after a long long time."

(2): "What shall I do my friend ? It is impossible to be free from the cluster of my children. Besides, I have to attend to the weeding of my salt paddy fields, go to a hill (to get firewood). What shall I do ? All alone as I am, how shall I manage all this ? "

(1): "Friend, every house has its skeletons. Am I attending to a small quantity of work (in your opinion) ? But it is good that the services of Kashi are available for me. Otherwise I would have been in my grave long ago. But you have come after many days. On what mission have you come, oh Dharmubai ? "

(2): "Not exactly that way. Isn't it true that fruit of jujube tree at your place has ripened ? I have come to hit a stick there." (That is, I have come to make an offer for your daughter.)

(1): "That is a fact my friend ! But the master of our house (my husband) says that he is not prepared to get his

daughter married unless he receives ninety rupees in cash."

(2): "Friend, your demand is indeed exorbitant. Allow me to say that I will not pay you ninety rupees, but (I will get for my daughter-in-law) 'gathe', 'vajra-tika' and a necklace and forty rupees! This much I can assure you."

(1): "How will this be sufficient, friend?"

(2): "Look here, Kamalubai, you are from our circle of relations and hence I have a mind to get my son Kasha married to your daughter, a girl from our relation." (The husband of first woman No. (3) comes from inside.)

(3): "Dharmubai, I have listened to all what you have said. Now let us have a *via media*. You should have only 'Bargoth', 'Patalya' and an ornament (for decorating hair) in addition (to what you proposed) and take away my daughter. Go, it is settled from this day."

(2): "All-right Is it settled? When shall we have liquor? I'll send him (my husband) this evening and then (both of you) fix up the programme."

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(22)

Decorating an image of Gauri

The festival of Gauri is popular amongst the Agris In the evening on the day of her arrival an image of Gauri is prepared with a kind of grass, mask and pair of hands made from paper.

PERSONS: A mother about 40 years old.
Her daughter about 20 years of age.

PLACE: Front part of an Agri house.

TIME: At about 7 in the evening.

* * *

MOTHER: "Have the 'Terada'* stalks been brought?"

DAUGHTER: "I had asked that * * * Raghya to bring them. But I do not know where has he gone as yet. What sort of a boy * * * is he?"

* Kind of grass.

MOTHER : "And haven't you asked him to get 'Naga-yeli' creepers as well ?"

DAUGHTER : "Mother, dear mother, I forgot to tell him. But does not that * * * know it ? Has he never seen the Gauris ? (i.e. their images being prepared)."

MOTHER : "He is a confused chap, who knows whether he will bring or not."

(The boy presently arrives with the necessary material.)

"First get now some thread—either of coir or something else."

(He brings a piece of thread, they make legs and hands and a mask of a paper.)

"Ha-ha my friend, have you first washed them ? And worshipped as well ?"

DAUGHTER : "No."

MOTHER : "Damn it. Whom shall I blame ? My fate ? You * * *. You do not know the simple thing washing these 'Terada' stalks ! * * * *. Are you human beings or someones else ?"

DAUGHTER : "I asked * * * to wash and worship them. But that * * * went jumping like a 'Nivata' fish to that Jomi's (house)."

(The image is then prepared without further discussion.)

MOTHER : "Please get your pretty sari and your 'got patalya' and 'vajra-tika'."

DAUGHTER : (Bringing them from inside) "Take these."

MOTHER : "But must she not have a nose-ring in her nose ?"

DAUGHTER : "Have a nose-screw instead."

MOTHER : "You * * is she a modern school-going girl to wear a nose-screw ?"

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(23)

A fish vendor

A fisher-woman with her load of fish is a habitual visitor to the Agri village. In Kharapat fish is usually bartered for rice and the quantity of rice earmarked for rice is specifically known as 'fisher woman's rice' ('Kolaniche Tandul'). The

women-folk are well known for their granulous behaviour in bargaining. The ensuing conversation gives us a peep into the feminine nature of the vendor and the buyer in this particular transaction.

PERSONS : (1) A fisher-woman aged about 35.
(2), (3) and (4) are Agri women aged 40, 42, and 25 years respectively.

PLACE : At about 2-30 p.m.

TIME : Court-yard of an Agri house.

* * *

(1): "Buy my 'sukat' and 'mandel'*, ye women! Buy my 'sukat' and 'mandel'.*"

(2): "Look here. Come this way, you fisher-woman. Come into the court-yard. There is some nice shade and you will not get the sun."

(1): "Help me with my basket (to lower it down)."

(3): "How do you sell this dry fish?"

(1): "I barter it at the rate of two 'twenties' for a measure of a 'paylee'."

(2): "Dear fisher-woman, yesterday we took it at the rate of three-times-twenty and five in addition."

(1): "Look my woman, how nice they (dry fish) are. I will barter them at the rate of two-times-twenty (fish) for a paylee measure (of rice)."

(3): "Oh fisher-woman, are we not required to give you nicely pounded and unbroken rice? At present a 'khandi' of paddy is not available even for five hundred rupees."

(2): 'The rain is so whimsical. How are we to maintain ourselves?"

(3): "Well do give (us) at the rate of two-times-twenty and fifteen more."

(1): "Take it my woman, take it. How much do you want?"

(2): "I have only a 'paylee' of rice to barter (with you). That would serve my purpose. But be careful of your measure."

(1): "Please do not say so, my woman, you may watch measure to measure. What have I to do with it? Look here, this is in exchange for one paylee of rice."

* Names of varieties of fishes (dried).

(3): "Give me in exchange 'Ambar' for one paylee (of rice). Please do measure it properly. Haven't you shaken it ? Shake it thrice."

(1): "All-right. I'll act up according to your instructions. I am shaking it."

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(24)

Shortage of rain

The monsoon in India is by its nature so whimsical that it has always told upon the attitude of a farmer towards life. There is a series of alternating hope and despair in the agricultural routine of the Agri village. In this dialogue two farmers are discussing the prospects of rain.

PERSONS : (1) Farmer—a male Agri about 45 years old.
(2) Farmer—a male Agri about 40 years old.

PLACE : A tea shop.

TIME : At about 7-30 in the morning.

* * *

(1): "Now the rain has totally disappeared. Take it from me. Now, how shall we get water ? The rainfall has turned on its heels away from us. To this day it hasn't rained even during the 'Mriga constellation'. It seems their period also will be dry."

(2): "Then, I ask, when is it going to rain at all ? "

(1): "Who knows when ? Who knows the exact details of the rain ? Now the duration (coinstantaneous with this) of this tidal flood (of full-moon day) has also gone dry. If at all it rains, it will do so during the 'Arada' constellation. Otherwise it will not rain (this year)."

(2): "What do you mean by 'it will not rain ?' The paddy fields have been totally parched. One does not know whether it will be necessary to sow paddy again. Who knows what will happen ? "

(1): "But where is the paddy to be sown ? And how can it be sown ? No paddy is left."

(2): "Go and find it at Sowcar's if you can."

(1): "It will not be available. Now the Money-Lenders' Bill has come into force. He will refuse to give it (paddy) flatly. Whatever was left has been consumed. Now keep quiet."

The Original Text of the Dialogues in Marathi

1. While fishing at low tide

१ : आर ए बघतस काय? आथां जोऱ्ह वटाला लागला आसल! लवकर चल. नाय त रांडच्या, जागा जाईल आपली.

२ : आर थांब साल्या, भाकरी तर खाव दे.

१ : बरां लवकर आटाप. मी माझ बोस्कीचा खोला जरा फाटलाय तो शिवत.

२ : आर पन आसल थंडीन. आंगानचा घेतलास कां नाय?

१ : हो पन तमखू जुरुसाच हाय.

२ : रांडच्या तूं आमाच भिकारी. कंधी तुज जवल काय पुरा मिलाचां नाय. या घे दोन दिरक्या न हान म्हाद्या वान्याच करशी तमखू.

१ : बरां तुझां आटापलां कां नाय?

२ : हो झालां.

१ : चल तर लवकर.

(After they have reached the fishing place.)

१ : ए गधरीच्या काऱ्हतस कीं नाय बोस्की काय घेव येऱ्हा?

३ : तुझ्या ऽ यला ऱ्हंव. ये साल्या. तुजी हिंमत असली त इथ मांड बोस्की.

२ : ए. ए. ए. कोऱ्हला रे साल्या बोलतस? आर यो आमचा मांडा हाय. समजलास? उरव बोस्की. नाय त दात पारुन टाकीन.

३ : खरे जर बापासचे पोटचा आसलास तर पारशील. गप्पीच्यांनू तुमाला लवकर यवाला काय व्हतय?

१ : रांडच्या लवकर! जोऱ्ह भरला असतां येऊन तुज काय बापासच नाय त आशीच गांडीन येऱ्हा माराचा?

३ : कोनचे र बापासच गांडीन येऱ्हा मारतस? रांडच्यानू झवून झवून सगल लोकांच जवलशी घेतांव न आतां आमची आब्रु नेवाला बघतांव?

४ : ए. ए. काय रांडच्यानू बोललांव? जातांव कां नाय? कां धरुं मान न देव फेकून?

2. Detecting the pilfering of a cucumber

मामा : कोन रे त्यां कुरनांन हाय?

भाचा : कोन नाय र मामा! मी येशा.

मामा : रांडच्या, भरल काशीन तुला यावाला सरम नाय? वाट न त्या काय गबलन हाय र?

भाचा : नायर, काय नाय ! त्यो एक लाब्रा डगर मिलला तो घेतलाय भरकन गुंडालून.

मामा : बगूं बगूं , कसला हाय तो !

भाचा : नको कन्हां उगीच ? मी आपला जातय. मना वाटला काशीन कोन हाय नाय.

मामा : पन दाखव दाखव. चाललास कुटं ? आर तूं चोरा ! रांडच्या डगर म्हनून खोटा जापतस काय ? कोरशी हानलीस ही काकरी ? सांग नाय त ढेंगा धरून उखरून टाकीन.

भाचा : कोरशी म्हनजं ? आमच कुरनांशी हानली ? तुला काय करांचा ?

मामा : साल्या, तुज्या ऽ यला झंव. तुला काय कराचा म्हनून बोलतस ? ही काकरी माजं कुरनांची हाय ? खरां बोल. नाय त आथां —

भाचा : मामा, तोंड सांवरुन बोल. तुज काशींशी आलू म्हनून काय झालां ? तूं काय शिया देशीव ? ही काकरी माझं कुरनांची हाय.

(The uncle holds him by neck and addresses.)

मामा : रांडच्यांनू चोऱ्या कराला शिकलव काय ? बापूस म्होट्या म्होट्या बाता मारतय, न पोरा काय करतांन. त दुसऱ्यांच काशीन आपल आशीस पासली घालतांन. थांब चाललास कोटं ?

भाचा : मामा बऱ्या बोलान सोर. नाय तो बग हो ?

मामा : जार जा, कोन्हला भीति दावतस ? तुज सारखं लय बगितलन.

3. While taking his mid-day meals

नवरा : घे, घे, लवकर घे. ठावला लवकर कर.

बायको : घेतय, घेतय.

नवरा : भुकावलू मी. शाप थकटलू, मरतीकाला नाय जेलतू ? भारी तरास. मायला झंव, नकोसा झाला.

बायको : वाढला, वाढला ! बसा.

नवरा : बेस, बेस ! कालवन हाय जुरुसाच. कसला हाय ? बगूं बगूं . थाब. सुकटीचा ? घे घे. बेस हाय. आनखीन घे.

बायको : भात वाढूं ?

नवरा : थांब. भात गरम हाय तो घे. थंड नको. हाय ना बाबू जेवाचा ?

मुलगा : होय बाबा, मी जेवाचा !

नवरा : मग ल्याला होईल तो. मना घाल योच.

बायको : बगां किती ल्यां.

नवरा : हा, बस, पुर.

बायको : लकुसमी, जा गो, जुरुसा पानी देस हात धवाला.

4. Criticising the Money-lenders' Act

१ : कुटसं चाललंव ?

२ : आलिबागा.

१ : आलिबागा कला ?

२ : तगाइच पैस हान ना मिलाच ? आज सा वाज पर्यन बोल् जावाला हवा.

१ : नाय जेलास त उद्यां नाय मिलाच ?

२ : नाय हो.

१ : कां नाय ? कामगार कुठं जातय ?

२ : जावाचा हाय बोल् फिरतीवर. येईल चार दिसां. उद्यां येईल पारावर.

१ : मग उद्यां बोलूं थितं पारावर नाय मिलाच ?

२ : कोन जातय गांवानच्या गांवांन ? कोनी घेतलन ? किती घेतलन ? नाय त्या कटकटी कुनाला ह्व्यान ?

१ : नाय, त्या पन बोल् खरांच.

२ : न बोल् एकदा तगाई जेली, मग दुसरा काय नाय.

१ : कां नाय ?

२ : आतां शावकार बोल् खपल नाय ? कोन पैस नाय देईन हो आतां !

१ : पन सरकार देतय ना ?

२ : आतां सरकार देतय, हिसाब करुन, त्या पन वरसातून येकदां. वारा व्हतय. वखत व्हतय. कसा का होईना रुपायास पैसा याज त पैसा याज. पन सावकार हाक मारली त 'नाय' नाय म्हनाचा जरा तरी आसरा करील. आता काय देईल ? चोट ? सावकार कायदा हाय ना आतां ? कोन नाय दारांशी उभा करी हो !

5. A labourer scolding his indolent colleagues

१ : देवजा, असा काम करुन कसा जमाचा ? घरी काय नेशीव ?

२ : काय म्हंज ? पैसा नेव.

१ : हां नेलस गठला बांधून ! बायको इचारील, "काय हो कामा करतांव ? जेवतांव नी झवतांव नुसत ? कला गांवान गांवा हिंडताव ?"

२ : मग आनखी काय कराचा ?

३ : आर जा, तूच आला बापया मोठा काम करनार ! आमी नाय काय बापय ?

१ : आर तूं लान हाईस, तुला काय समजतय.

३ : लान असला त काय झाला, नारदा, उगीच जापूं नकोस. हाईस माहित जा. वारलास मोठ्या मुशासारखा. बहिन, घे बघूं पहारय. न कार ढेपां. बगतय बहिना ; जसा काय आमच्या गांडीन गू नाय. तुजाच हाय.

१ : बरा लई बटाटूं नकोस.

३ : कां काय करशीव? खरा बोललूं त्या झोंबला ना?

6. A tenant about her case

२ : काय वन्हने. काय बेत? कोन्ही कर निघलीस?

१ : भावजी. आलिबागा जावाचा हाय.

२ : काय यवजून चाललीस?

१ : त्या शावकारानी दावा केलाय.

२ : मंग आज तारीख हाय काय?

१ : हो आजची हाय. ताबा मांगाचा हाय वाटत मेलला!

२ : कां ताबा मागतय? मक्ता तूनी देतस नाय काय?

१ : यंदा दिला मक्ता.

२ : न धारा.

१ : धारा पन लावला

२ : इतक वरसां तूंच लावीत व्हतीस काय?

१ : नाय गुदस्तां न चौगस्तां लावला. काय सांगू मी कोर्टान सरकार पुन्हं?

२ : तुनी कोर्टान सांगाचा. जमीन पन माझी न धारा पन मीच लावतय!

१ : आथां पन मी म्हातारी झालूं. आर्धी हारां सर्गावर गेलीन. आथां काय असा सांगाचा.

२ : हो हो आसाच सांग तूं.

१ : पन ही केस कोटं उभी राहील? मांमलेदारापुढं कां फौजदारापुढं?

२ : तुमच्या केशी मामलेदाराच पुढं उभ्या राहतान.

१ : मंग वकील बिकील कोन कराचा?

२ : वकील काय कराचा? तुनी एवराच सांगाचा. माजीच जमीन न मी धारा लावतय! तुमचा लेकूस कधीं यावाचा?

१ : त्याची महाडला बदली झाली. तो कसला येतय.

२ : दिवालीला नाय यावाचा वाटतय?

१ : आलां त यहील. बरां मी जातय. पांच कोस चाललां पायज. तवां अलिबागा येईल.

7. Weighing the merits of a good daughter-in-law

१ : या सोयऱ्यांनू. बसा. बरा हायना?

२ : आमचा बरा हाय. तुमचा कसा काय? ठीक हाय ना? गोमी कशी हाय बोलू?

१ : काय सांगू सोयऱ्यांनू. लाखान् पोर हाय लाखान्!

२ : काय बोलतांव? काय कधी हतकी निवाल्ली? आहो घरां असतांना आग व्हती आग!

१ : खरांच सोयऱ्यांनू. लगन झाले दिसापासून बगतय. पन पोरीची जरा पन चुकी नाय. खोटा कल्हा सांगू?

२ : बाय अशीच नांदो सासर म्हंज झाला. अहो आमाला वाटला बोल पोरीचा कसा होईल न कसा नाय. हाट्टीच भारी! मंग धारतांव न तिला चार आठ दिवस?

१ : काय र बाबा! झाराची ना? काय त्या बग!

३ : हो धारु पन लवकर हानली फायज. तिच्या शिवाय आमचा जमाचा नाय. आमच्या बायला पन बोलू जरा बरां नसतां. काम पन व्हईत नाय.

१ : बरां लवकर पाठवून देव? मग हानाला पन जांवयानांच झारा.

8. Judgment delivered at a Caste-meeting

पंच : मंडलीनूं. आज पर्यंन आपल खारीचा काठा चिकार बजवूत व्हता. पन राघव म्हात्रा व त्याच शेजारचा हाल्या पाटल या दोघांच बंदीस्तीला खांडी जेल्या व्हत्या. त्या आजून त्यांनी भांदल्या नाय. आथां बोल शिमगचा म्होटां उधान यहील. आनी खांडी भांदल्या नाय त सगली खार बुरल! मंघून मंडलीनू आज जमात भरली हाय!

राघव : थांबा. मी खांड भांदाला तयार हाय. पन दोघवांची मिळून धा हात बंदिस्त हाय. तवा मी पांच हात भांदीन बोलतय. पन बोलू हाल्या पाटल जापतय "मी तुरुत भांदाचूं नाय! माझ जवल दिरक्यां नाय! दुसरा असा बोलतय कीं, माझी वडांची खांड हाय. तव तुनी सार सा सात हात भांदली फायज."

पंच : काय हाल्या दा! या खरां काय! तुजां काय म्हनना आसल त्या सांग. .... येल नको लाव; बोल.

हाल्या : मंडलीनूं मी सगल्यांना हात जोरतय. माजी पाच हात बंदिस्त खरी. पन मी घरचा गरीब हाय. अन माज घरन पायली भर चांदूल नाय. मंग मी इतकी खोल खांड कशी भांदू? तवा मी राघव म्हात्र्याला सांगतय "किं तूं साड सा हात खोंड भांद. नाय त माझ धा बापय न तुज पंदरा बापय मिलून खांड भांदू."

राघव : मी कार पंधरा देईन वाटल्यास धा देईन?

४ : बराबर हाय.

५ : त्यान दिलन त काय व्हईल? पांच गड्यांना म्हांग काय हाय?

६ : छट तसा नाय!

७ : हो, हो, तसा नाय त मंग कसा?

हाल्या : आर मी घरचा गरीब हाय न तूं हाईस शिरीमंत. दिलस पांच बापय त काय व्हतय त्यांन?

राघव : वा काय जापतस काय तूं? आर पैस घरांन पिकतांन काय? आन या मंडली कबूल करतांन काय? इचारा पाहूं? काय नारदा! तूं तरी बोल!

पंच : थांबा. यांचा वाद लई व्हईल. आथां पंच जो आमी न्याय देव तो दोघवांनीं कबूल करावा.

(They go aside, discuss among them and come back.)

पंच : राघव म्हात्र्यांनी सा हात न हाल्या पाटलांनी चार हात बंदिस्त भांधावी. बैठकीचा सव्वा रुपया दोघांनी अगदूर द्यावा.

9. Criticizing their daughters-in-law

पहिली बाई : सून कुटशी गेली कामाला? बोलूं सुनसला कुठं धारलीस कामाला?

दुसरी बाई : हो लानीला गेली ते म्हाद्या सांच्या हथ. मोटी धंदा लावाला गेली.

पहिली बाई : काय तिचा नखरा! काय नेसल न काय चालल! डोई उकलाला बसली कीं ती पकं काढी तो दोन तास व्हतान!

दुसरी बाई : तुजी कुठं गेली?

पहिली बाई : आमची नाय आज कोटं गेली. भात दल्ला व्हता नाय काल त चांदूल सडाच व्हत. त सांगितलन सडाला. "मांडा कर तथ पर्यन मी येतय."

दुसरी बाई : तुजी सुनस फार चांगली. बिचारी कोन्हला "आर तुर" बोलाची नाय. तिचा आपला काम न ती! पन आमची बारमोडी! कंदी कोन्हाशी चांगला बोलाची नाय! कंदी कोन्हाला जरा वसत देईल? कद्दी नाय. यकरीच चुली जवल बसून खाईल. कामाशी आल्यावर कंदी काम करील काय? छ! मुल्ली नाय! तिच्या आशीबापासनी तिला बोलू शिकवलीच नाय काम कराला. नवऱ्या जवल गुलगुल गोष्टी बोलत बसतय सदान कदा. तो पन हाय तसलाच बाईल बुध्या.

10. Bride's relatives complaining about the mismanagement at a marriage pandal

१ : आथां मात्र यांची कमाल झाली. आर तुम्ही आमाला इकर लगन कराला बोलावलांव ! पन तयारी काय हाय काय ? बगा.

२ : आर ! तयारी कराला किती उशीर ?

१ : आर पन मांडवाला शीर तरी लावाचा की नाय ? की आसाच बोरका ठेवाचा ?

२ : शीर लावाला किती उशीर ? एक तासांन शीर लांव.

१ : आर पन आमाला जेवनाला चुल बिल केलन कां नाय ? आथां आम्हीं इतक लांबशी नवरी घेऊन आलूय त काय हथं उपाशी मराला काय ? झक मारली न इकर लगन कराला आलूं !

२ : आर सोयऱ्यानू. आस पिसलूं नका. सगली यवस्था करुं.

१ : आर पन ती व्हवाची कंधी ? काय टाईम बिईम हाय कां नाय ? सकाल-पासून आथां पर्यन उपाशी हांव. पन तुमी याचा इचार केलाव कां नाय ?

२ : मंग चला पाहूं सगली वराडी मंडली जेवाला ! जेवन तयार हाय.

11. An account of a caste meeting

गन्या : ओ येटया दा. येटया दा ! जुरुसा इकर य. या बग कायता ?

वेटया : आलू. आलू.

गन्या : भावोजी. तुमी पन वरतीच व्हा जुरुस. न पा काय त्या आपल्या सवताऱ्या डोल्यांनी.

रामा : काय र गन्या. कला हाक मारतस ? अया अया ! या काय असा ? ही खांड अशीच ?

गन्या : बगा आथां. मांगच उधानानी सत्यानास केला. आथां या शिमगचा उधान आला. पन त्यांनीं आजून खांड भांदली नाय.

रामा : आर तुमीच पुचकें !

गन्या : कां काय केला ? तुमांना जापलू म्हनून काय ?

वेटया : तसा नाय आमाला काय इचारतस ? सगल्या गांवकऱ्यास इचारा तुनी. "आर इतकी म्होटी बंदीशीला खांड जेली न सगल खारींचा सत्यानास झाला. तरी पन तुमचा गांवकऱ्यांचा लकस हाय काय ?"

गन्या : समजलूं काय त्यां ! तरी आतांच बैठक धरतूय. काय झाला तरी गांवकीन न्याय न्हेवाचा. मी बैठक भरीन. तारोतार जातय.

After a while a "Bombalya" is sent around.

He proclaims :—" आर आज ज्याच त्यानी जऊन खाऊन घटान्यावर जमा व्हा ऽ र ! — च."

Accordingly a meeting is held at about 2 p.m.

४ : का राभभाऊ. बोलू आज हाक कुनी मारली? काय भानगड हाय? गावांत त काय नाय!

५ : वडा जवलच्या गन्या भगतान सांगितली हो हाक माराला! कुट हाय तो? आला कां नाय? ओ गन्या, ये म्होर ये.

६ : काय म्हनना याय तुमचा? या अस म्होर या न सांगा.

७ : मंडलीनू गेल उधानाच अगदूर पासून वाल्या हाल्याची खांड जेली. न या दुसरा उधान आला. तरी पन तो अजून खांद भांदी नाय. तवां त्याजवर जमात भरली हाय.

६ : बराबर हाय. कोट हाय बाल्या हल्या? काय र. तूनी ऐकलास ना?

८ : हो!

६ : मंग गुन्हा कबूल हाय ना?

८ : मंडलीनू. मना गुन्हा कबूल हाय. पन आज परेन दोन महिन माजी पोरा उपाशी हाईत. त्यांना खावाला घालू कीं ती खांड भांदू.

६ : आर पन तुजे खांडीमुल सगली खार वुरतय त्याचा काय?

८ : आर पन मीनी करुं तरी काय?

९ : त्याचेन जर नसली होईत तर त्याच भावबंदांनी बांधावी!

१० : आर तूं गधीच्या आमाना कोन सांगनार? न आमी काय मंघून बांधू?

९ : चूत म्हार्निच्यानू. भावबंदीन रातांव कला? काय बोलतां? हा. हा.

११ : बगा तुमीच.

६ : बरा हाल्या दा. तुजा काय बेत हाय तो!

८ : माज्यान काय ती एकट्यान बांधव नाय.

९ : म्हनून आमी म्हनतांव. भाऊबंदांनी भांदाव्या.

६ : चीप बसा. कला भांडताव? आमी हांव ना हथं. नाय त्या गोष्टींची भानगड कला करतांव?

११ : आमाला आथां वखत व्हतय. पंचांनी काय तो न्याव लवकर करावा.

६ : बरा. आसूं दे आथां! मी काय सांगतय त्याचेन जर खांड बांधवेल नाय, तर आपन गांवकरी मिलून खांड भांदू या.

७ : वा. काय पन बोलू न्याय?

६ : आर हो पन पुरा नाय झाला. ऐका त खरा.

१३ : बोला.

६ : आनी पुढचं पिकाला त्याच जवलशी शंभर रुपय घेवाच. काय न्याव कबूल.

१० : बराबर हाय.

७ : नाय त मंग काय कराचा? आथां काय विलाज!

६ : बैठकाच सवातीन रुपय भगतान द्यावाच.

12. A trip on Bali raja day

चंदर : काय भावोजी. आज गाडी बिडीला जुंपली कां नाय?

देवजा : नाय रे. जोडीला खोंडच नाय.

चंदर : पन बोलू माजां हाय त्या नाय काय ठावां?

देवजा : हो हो. हाय खरा!

चंदर : मंग बोलूं येतांव काय? आज बलिराजाचा दिवस हाय.

देवजा : आलू असतू र. पन माजी तेंडला शिपाची व्हती. सकालपासून भार टाकायच व्हत. मंग बोल सांजची शिपूं. आथां बोलू जरुसा च्या घ्येव न मंग जाव.

चंदर : कसला काम? रोज त्येंडला शिपाची. आजचा दिवस कसला? बलिराजाचा! सगल लोक काय मायला झंव गाड्या घेऊन जातान.

देवजा : त्या खरां पन.

चंदर : पन काय? नाय येक दिवस तेंडली शिपली त काय व्हतय? मंग येतांव ना? जराशी जुंपू हलहलु जाव चोंढीपर्यंन. थितं घ्येव थोडीशी! काम काय? हाय रोजचाच! हाय काय, जीवान करुं मजा झालं तेवढीच.

देवजा : बरा त मंग चला.

13. Boys playing Iti-Dandu

१ : नाग्या, बोलू चलतस ना खेलाला! हा बापया पन आलाय.

२ : कस कस ध्यावाच?

१ : आमी दोघवजन, तूनी येकटा!

२ : या कसा जमाचा?

१ : हो हो त्याला काय व्हतय? तूं हाईस वस्ताद.

२ : बरा त चल. पयला कोन खेलाचा?

१ : तूं.

२ : मी पयला कोलूं? लांब व्हा. रेडी. बोलू दोनशेची कवाडी हो.

१ : घे बग. लांब हो. रेडी. चल खेल. मारलन फटका जाम. पल लवकर.

३ : मी नाय र जात सारखा सारखा.

१ : हो रेडी. तूं लांब रा. च्यायला पकड! हत साल्या! सोडलास घे!

२ : झाला. तूं खेल.

१ : माज्या जवल दे भवानी. आयला झंव! घेतलन. कमाल हाय! जिकलन. बरा त तूं कोल.

३ : रेडी, गेली लांब ऊं कोन झेलतय?

२ : चालूं दे.

३ : पैस हो पैस हो. इटि लागल हो. मी तिकरं मारतय.

२ : एक, दोन, तीन! नाय लागला. तूं मेलास.

१ : छट, तसा नाय, शेवटचा बोल जुरुसा लागलय. हथंशी पांच व्हतील.

२ : काय म्हनतस? साल्या, लात घालीन गांडीवर नाय म्हनशील तर. असा लडतस कल्हा?

14. About a band of musicians

१ : आथां बोलूं तुनी वाजंत्री बोलवीस नाय? त्या असा कां?

२ : आपन बोलू चांगला देवा धरमाचा करावा अन य असल लोक कला हवन? सगला घोटाला! या नाय आपल्याला सुधर!

१ : अगो त्ये नुसतन वाजवतान. दुसरा काय करतान? कां आंत येतान? त्याला काय व्हतय मुसल असल म्हनून?

२ : नाय बोलू मना त्या पट नाय. ही बोलू भानगडच नको. म्हनून मीनी वाजंतराच नाय बोलवली हो.

३ : हल्ली या सगला असाच नाय काय? पंढरीचा नाय काय इठोबा बाटविला? काय सांगावा या लोकांना! कोनाला काय वाटल त्या करतय.

२ : हल्ली सगला फिरला. देव नको धर्म नको. मानसानी सगला सोडला. म्हनून मंग पानी पन असाच या. सगल्यानींच जर ताल सोडला मंग त्यानी पन काय म्हनून काईम ठेवावा काय?

15. Over a lost Nose-ring

१ : बाय माजा मोती हरवला ग. मना काय झाला कसा गेला त्या समज नाय.

२ : म्हनज. त्या गेला कसा?

१ : मीनी काढून ठवला ट्रंकन. थितशीं त्या गेला. चार बाजूला चार मोती व्हती. मीनी कित्ती शोध केला पन सांपड नाय.

२ : मंग देव बिव खेलबिलास कां नाय?

१ : मी नी भटाला इचारला. तो म्हनतो "त्या कोनी तरी न्येला. चौला कडच्या बाजूला गेला."

देवीला खेलवली. ती म्हनतय "सोधीत रा म्हनज मिलल." अगो सोधीत कुट रावाचा? कुट कुट म्हनून सोधाचा? मी नी बाय ट्रंकन म्हनून ठेवला. आंत ठेवतांना खाली पडला असल. मंग केर काढून पोरी-बिरीनी टाकला. सांजशी येल व्हती. नायी त्या कला बघतान. काय हाय न काय नाय. गेला असल गवरा बिवरावर. तिथशीं कुनाला तरी त्या मिलाला. आनी तिनी त्या नेला.

२ : देव काय म्हनतय पन?

१ : देव म्हनत "कुनी तरी बाईनी त्या नेला असावा. तिच्या जिवाला तो लागला हो. तीनी जतन ठेवला आहे. तो आथां ग्येला त्यां.

२ : आथां काय करावा?

१ : मना गो बाय अगदीं चैन नाय पड. काय सांगू तुना. पंचचालीस रुपयाचा माल! एवरा नुकसान व्हऊन कसा जमल? मी पहातय काय व्हतय त्यां. दोन दिवस दम धरतय नाय तर मंग जाईन रेवसच्या बापाकड. त्याला नायतर खेलवीन.

16. Discussing marriage prospects

१ : काय र दादा! राघव मोठा झालाय. लगन बिगन करतस काय?

२ : अंदू पानी नाय. हत्तीचा पावूस जेला. ढापर वटी जमीन, कशी पिकाची? खारी जमीन चुरकी. कुठशी हानाच पैस?

३ : भावजी, माझ हाईत दागिन. गांठला, वजर टीक! अगदी नई कोरी हाय! दोनस रुपय हाईत. लगन करत असलांत तर देईन बगा.

१ : बग र दादा वोवनीची तयारी दिसतय.

२ : अर तिला काय? दोनस रुपयांनीं भागल? मंग काय दात पारुन ध्यवाच हाईन?

१ : सक्या दा, राघव बावीस वरसाचा झाला. आनखी किती म्होटा कराचा! मी देईन कापर सामानाच पैस. दे कधीं मिलतील तवां.

२ : बर बा! इचार घेतय सगल्यांचा. पन मुली कोठं लक्षान हायेत?

३ : भावोजी, म्होट्या म्होट्या घरच्या मुली सांगून येतान. गणू पाटील. चन्हीच वाल पाटील.

२ : आपल्याला गरिबाला शिरीमंताच्या पोरी नको. गरिबाची बरी.

१ : सक्या दा, नात चालवायच असल त बध बा वोवनीच्या मोट्या घरंची सगल्या कामांन हुशार! झोलाला सांगा, डोंगराला धारा, इस मानसांचा रांधाला सांगा, तयारी!

३ : भावोजी, आमची वोवनी अगदी पाठीस हाय. पन, याच भावा बांधवाना वाटाचा "बगा सगल्या मायेरच्या पोरी हानतय" म्हंगून मी भीत भीत बोलतय.

२ : बरां हाय ठिकान. सांगू तसा व्हईल. काम्हा गोर.

३ : भावोजी. मंग ठरला हो. मी उद्यां जातय. आन आंबुदादाला इचारतय.

17. A quarrel between a husband and a wife

नवरा : दिरक्या काय जाल्या ? हथल्या दिरक्या कोनी नेल्या ?

बायको : दिरक्या, दिरक्या तरी कितीक व्हल्या अशा ?

नवरा : तुज्या आयला झंव. काय बोलतस ? येक रुपया धा आन. तुज्या जवल दिल त.

बायको : हो पन. त्याला दिवस किती झाल ? आट दिसान तुमी नाय बघितलीव मासली. नाय बघितलीव पाना. नाय बघितलीव सुपाऱ्या. अशा दिरक्या पुरतील तरी कशा ?

नवरा : कां पाना मीनी नाय हानली ? कां मांडव्या तुजा आशीचा झवता गेलता ?

बायको : आशीचा झवता बोलाचा काम नाय हो तुमचा.

नवरा : काय बोलतस ? मारीन कानफटान, नी करीन ठार हो. जागच्या जागी !

बायको : मारलीव, मारलीव, घ्या. माझ्या आशीच्या घरी आलव म्हनून मला चोली बांगडी तरी व्हतय. नाय त व्हतं सारलां तवां मिलत व्हती गुवाची खरपुडी.

नवरा : नाय त तुज्या आशीचा झवता देत व्हता.

बायको : आशीचा झवता काडाचा काम नाय हो तुमचा !

नवरा : तुंज्या मायला झव. तुला आलाय नखरा.

(He gives her two slaps. Naturally she is more excited)

बायको : नखरा नाय येईल ? नाय बांगडीला वशाली. तुमच नाय चोलीला वशाली. तुमचा तुमीच सज करतांव. मीनी आपला असावा माहेरच्या आशेवर. त्यांचा एवढा दूध मी हथं इकतय. त्यांचा आर्ध्या मुर्ध्या दिरक्या मी ठेवतय. त्याच्या वर तुमची नंदर. "या कुठच्या दिरक्या ? या कुठच्या दिरक्या ?" तरी आपून, "हाईन आयन दिलेल्या" असा सांगावा. त्या दिरक्या जमवून जमवून कुट लागली तर पानां, कुट लागली त दोन पैशांचा मुलांनां खावाला, मी दुकानांवरशी हानतय. तुमाला तरी वाटतय माज्यांच्याच ठवल्या.

नवरा : मायला झंव. तुला नखराच आलाय. तुला मीनी सांगितला शंभरदां. त्यांच्ये कडचे दिरक्यांचा मना सांगू नको.

(He gives her two more slaps)

नवरा : तुज्या मुल तर मी इतका भिकारी झालूं. मायला झंव.

बायको : तर? तुमचा काय थोडा इस्टक वाटेला लावलाय? अन माज्या आशीनी थोडी जमीन घेतलीव? काय नाय म्हनाल पुताच कर मात्र फेडलन!

नवरा : अगो. हाईस माहिती घ्ये. तूं कशी हाईस ती. मी वलखून हाय तुला.

बायको : वलखलीव, वलखलीव, घ्यां! त्यांच मुल त गाड्या न जोड्या नाचवाला मिलत्या! नाय त व्हता माज्या बापासचा खेटर.

नवरा : नाय त तुज्या आशीच्या झवत्या कडून हानल्या.

बायको : तुमाला सांगितला "आशीचा झवता बोलूं नको".

नवरा : नाय त काय? माजी शेटा उपटनार हाईस? नाय त? मायला झंव तुज्या. तुला भारीच नखरा आलांय.

बायको : नखरा नाय येईल? लग्नांन आयेच घातलव दागिन. ते पन त्रिच्या उरावर घातलव. नाय ठेवलाव फुटका मनी. नाय ठेवलाव डोईचा. नाय ठेवलाव गल्यांचा. सगला घातलांव त्यांच्या उरावर. आन माहेरचा काय हाय त्याच्यावर हाय तुमची नंदर. त्ये येकदा जलला, मग तुमच डोल व्हतील थंड ... आथां मी सांगतय बाबाला "मला येक दिरकीचा हानूं नका". तुमी आनतांव ना सामान घरां? पुरवा आथां.

नवरा : नाय, तुज्या मायला झंव. तीच सगला सामान हानून पुरवतान? हानीन मी सगला सामान. मंग पाना खावूं नको.

बायको : हो! तेवढी पानां नाय खाल्ली म्हंज व्हतील तुमच डोल थंड. येवून जावून मी पानां खातय त्याचा पडलय त्यांना. तरी आपन "कुठं गेलव? किती पैस खपल? किती पैशाची दारु खाल्लीव! कां काय केलाव?" आपन कंधीं इचारावा नाय तरि जलला! त्यांचा आपला हाय त्या हायच. "कति पैस खपल? कति पैस खपल?" त्यांना वाटतय जसा काय ई माझ्यांच पैस काढून, आईच्या घरां डबोला पोचवीत असेल. पन जर तुमच्यांशी येक दिरकी ठवीन तर माज्या अंगावर उठल.

18. Canvassing on behalf of a widower

१ : ओ बालदा! तुमचा शंकर अंदू होईल काय पास?

२ : हो! कां? काय बेत व्हता?

१ : नाय म्हटला आमची सोकरी झाली लग्नाची. आमी बोलू सांगून येनार व्हतू.

२ : एवड्यान् कला बघतय मी? अजून पास व्हईल, मंग बोलू काय तो बेत!

१ : अंदू उरकून घ्या. आथां झालाय बापया तो.

२ : जुरुसां शिकूं दे. मंग हाय बायको जन्माचीच.

३ : बर. तो नाय म्हनतय त वरच्या पाड्यावरच्या भगताकड बघ. जा तिकड सांगून. तो करील पसंत.

१ : पन तो बिजवर हाय ना? त्याला कशी द्यावाची? माझी सोकरी वोलू तशी लई मोटी नाय.

३ : त्याला काय व्हतय? बिजवर वरा रे। तुज्या पोरीला लई तरास नाय देनार! त्यानशी हाय चार पैस बालगून. पुना त्याचा हाय नरम नरम.

१ : पन तो बिजवर ना? तुजा आपला खरा!

३ : हो पन ठाऊक हाय. मी सांगतय त्या ऐक. बिजवर बरा. मुंबईस नोकरी हाय. पहिली दोनच मुलां हान्. येक सोकरा न येक सोकरी. सगला संच जमलेला हाय. बायकोच काय ती कमी. मंग काय तो बेत सांग. मीनी उद्यां दुपारचा येईन हो.

19. Instructions for preparing mango-pickle

दूसरी बाई : बाय. आंब्याचा लोनचां कसा ग भराचा?

पहिली बाई : काय हाय त्यांन?

दूसरी बाई : लोनच्याच आंब अगदीच कचवट गो. त्या भराच तरी कस?

पहिली बाई : अगो. जरा जरास कापाच. नी गांडीत तिखट भराचा. अन जरासा मसाला भराचा. एवढा माहीत नाय?

दूसरी बाई : वारंवार कोन घालतय? वरसांतून येकदां घालनार. म्हनून इचारत. अन तुला बोलू माहीत हाय.

पहिली बाई : हो तर! मी आलय मुंबय पासून लोनचा घालून. त्यांन हाय काय अन करतय कोन.

20. Quarrel during the Sakharpuda Ceremony

Woman—(from inside the house) "मुलीला बोलू पहाला आली तवां नाय बोलली? आतां का म्हनतांव "मुलगी हाय काली, काली." धा जना येऊन गेली. नी आथां म्हनतांव मुली कशी हाय "काली काली कलकत्या-वाली". तवां कुठं व्हत डोल?

२ : आमच्या पन कानावर आलाय. वखतावरच काय त्या होऊं द्या. मांगशी जड जाईल तुमाला पन नी आमाला पन.

३ : काय कोन बोलला ? मना तर बाय ठावां नाय. मी तर काय बोलू बोललं नाय.

२ : काय कोन बोलला ? सगल्यांनी सांगितला नवऱ्या मुलाला ! पहिल्यांदा तो काय बोलला नाय. नी आथां बोलू तो लडत व्हता. त्याला तरास दिला. त्याची पाठच काढली. "तुजी बायको कशी हाय, काली काली कलकत्या-वाली. तूं नाय म्हन." कां तवां गोरी व्हती ? ठरवलीत तवां ? नी आथां बोलू काली झाली ? सतरा जना म्हननार आमाला नाय खपाचा· आमाला नाय सुदराचा. नाय आमच्या पोरीचा लगीन अंदू झाला तरी चालल. अंदू नाय त पेस्तर सालीं बघूं. पन नाय नाय त्या कलागती नको मांगशी.

हो आतांच जर तुमी एवांशी असा बोलतां आमच्या पोरीला तर पुढं काय कराल तिचा ? छट. तसा नाय त्या नकोच ! आत्तांच्या आत्तां न्याय होऊं दे ! माण्डवांत चार मण्डली हाईत तिथपर्यन्तच ! मागशी बोल भानगडच नको.

३ : पन मीनी सांगतय मी बोल्लूं नाय. आमचा पोरगा नाय बोलला. एवढ्या मंडलीनी बोलू सांगावा की आमच्या पैकी कुनी असा बोलला.

२ : मंग एवढी बोंब उठली ती उगीच काय ? त्याचा नको काय बंदोबस्त कराला ?

३ : हो. हो. पन लोका बोलतान त्याला मी काय करनार ? मी नाय ना बोललूं ?

२ : काय करनार म्हंज ? तुमी जाऊन इचारा ? असा इचाराचा तुमचा काम हाय ? ही बोंब कोनी पाडली ? याचा बंदोबस्त केला पायजे तुम्हीं.

३ : आमी ?

२ : हो. हो. तुमी सवता ? काय समजलन ? यांत काय तरी तुमच्याच अंग हाय. नाय तर उगीच काय अशी बोंब पडल ?

३ : भावोजी, याचा न्याय तुमी करावा. मी काय बोललू नाय. माजा अपराद नाय. अन मना एवढ्या लोका देखत हे कां बोलतान ? नाय नाय त्ये शब्द मना ऐकाला लागतान. ह्या हाय काय ? महादेव भावोजी तुमी तर पहा.

२ : तुमी नाय ना बोललव ? मंग तुमी चीप असा. मना याच हवा व्हता. तुमी काय बोंब पाडली नाय आथां काय कराचा त्या मी बगतय.

21. Settling the marriage

पहिली बाई : काय धर्मु बाय, बरच दिसांनी आलीस अगदी ?

दुसरी बाई : काय बाय करुं ? यां पोरांच्या जोजवाल्यातून कोठच जावाला नाय मिल ! त्यांत पुना खारीनची कांडवणी करायीची. डोंगर घेवाचा ; काय करुं ? येकरी मी कोठ मंधन पुरुं ?

पहिली बाई : अग बाय सगल्यांचा त्येच. मी तरी काय थोरा याप करतय? पन काशी हातांशी हाय म्हनून बरी नाय त मी कधींच जेलतूं मसनांत. पन बरच दिसांनीं आलीस. काय काम हाय धर्मु बाय?

दुसरी बाई : तसा काय नाय, पन आलतूं आपली सज तुमच कर. बोर पिकली नं? तं आलुय आलवट माराला.

पहिली बाई : त्या बाय खरां. पन घरधनी बोलतय. मूर्तीमन नवूद रुपय घेतले बगर काशीला कोनचेच करे द्यावाची नाय.

दुसरी बाई : लय नाय तूं पैसे मागतस. मी सांगतय मी नवूद रुपय काय देवान नाय पन गांठे, वज्रटीक न गलनचा, अन चालीस रुपय इतका मात्र करीन.

पहिली बाई : इतकन कसा बाय होईल?

दुसरी बाई : कमलूबाय. बग तूं माझं नातनची म्हनून माझ काशाला नातंनचीच तुजीच पोर कराची हाय.

पहिल्या बाईचा नवरा : धर्मुबाय तुनी सांगितलास त्या मी आईकला. आथां तुझा नको न माझां नको. तूं फक्त बारगोठ, न पातल्या, न डोकीनचा इतकां जास्त कर. न पोर घेऊन जा दिल्ली आज पासून.

दुसरी बाई : बरां! ठरलां मंग! दारु कधी खातांव? मी त्यांना सानची धारुन देत. नि करा काईम बेत.

22. Decorating an image of Gauri

आई : हानल काय गो तेड?

मुलगी : त्या मेल्या रव्याला हानाला सांगितला. त अज्जून मेल्याचा पत्ता नाय. काय मेला पोर हाय?

आई : आनखी नागयेली हानाला सांगितल्यास कां नाय?

मुलगी : अगो बये! इसारलू सांगाला! पन त्या मेल्याला ठाऊक नाय? कधीं गौरी बघीतल्याच नाय?

आई : काय सांगावा! त्यो मेला हाय धुंदीन. हानील का नाय हानाचा?

(A boy arrives with the necessary material.)

पहिली : आथां काथची दोरी नाय त सुतल हान पाहूं.

(He brings a piece of thread and they prepare hands, feet, and a mask.)

अगो बये! ह धवलस काय? पुंजलस काय?

मुलगी : नाय.

आई : आथां काय माझ कर्म्याला हात लावूं? अरे मेल्यांनू, तुम्हाला हे तेड धुवाच सुद्धां समज नाय? राणच्यांनू मानसा हाय कां कोन हां?

मुलगी : त्या रांडला सांगितला धवाला न पुंजाला. त रांड जेली निवटी सारखी उरत त्या जोमीच कर.

(The image is then prepared without any further discussion.)

आई : हान ग तुझी धाकटी सारी. न तुज्या गोटपाल्ल्या. न वजर टीक.

मुलगी : त्या घे.

आई : अगो! पन नाकांन नथ नको का?

मुलगी : नाय त घाल चमकी!

आई : आगो रांड. आथांची सालनची पोर हाय? त तिच चमकी घालाची!

23. A fish vendor

कोळीण : सुकाट मांदील घ्यागो बायांनू. सुकाट मांदील घ्या.

२ : हकर यगो बाय! ओ कोलनी आय! ये याच खलन गे. बरी हाय सावली. ऊन नाय लागाचा.

कोळीण : हात लाव गो, आया!

३ : कशी दिलीव वाकट्यांची फारी?

कोळीण : दोन दोन इसा.

२ : आगो बाय! काल आमी तीन तीन इसा न पांच पांच घेतली.

कोळीण : अया, देख चकोट हातीन. दोन दोन इसा देईन पायलींची.

३ : कोलनी बाय, चाऊल कस मडगोल घालाला लागतान? पांचशें रुपये खंडी हाय कोठं भात?

२ : बाय! यो पाऊस असा. कशी आपली पोटां भराची?

३ : दोन इसा न पंधरा देतस काय?

कोळीण : घ्या गो बायांनू, घ्या तुला कितकंची पायजे?

२ : मना येक पायलीची. बस. सोई माप.

कोळीण : नाय गो आया. देख देख मापन माप. मना काय करवाचा हाय? ही घे पायलीची झयली.

३ : मन्ना बाय पायलीची आंबार दे. सोई भर हालवलीस नाय. तिनदा हालव.

कोळीण : देख. त बाय हालवतय.

24. Shortage of rain

शेतकरी १ : आथां पाऊस बोलू गेला जा. आतां कुठला पानी? पान्यान शाप गांड दाखविली बहिन. आजवरि मिरगाचा पाऊस पड नाय. बहुतेक त्ये जानार कोरड!

शेतकरी २ : मंग बोलू पानी यनार तरी कवां?

शेतकरी १ : कवां काय? ल्याच्या घरशीं कोन आलाय? आतां या तान गेला सुका. आतां आरदाचा आला त आला. नाय तर नाय.

शेतकरी २ : नाय तर नाय काय? राव शाप करपटल जा. फिरुन पेराला लागतान काय? कुनी सांगावा?

शेतकरी १ : पन आतां पेराला भात हाय कोठं? आनी पेराचां कसा? भात हाय कोठं आतां?

शेतकरी २ : शावकाराकड मिलाला तर पहावा.

शेतकरी १ : मिलला जा आतां? झालाय ना शावकार कायदा? आतां दाखवील घंड्या. व्हता तवढा खावून खपवला. आतां बस आंड चोलीत.

FOLK-SONGS

Some of the folk-songs sung on various occasions, festivals and ceremonies and current amongst the Agris, are given in the following pages :

The songs sung by the Agris may be grouped as—

(1) Bhalerya Songs,
(2) Vaghya Murali Songs,
(3) Lullabies,
(4) Shikka Songs,
(5) Gauri Songs,
(6) Shimaga Songs.

in addition to (7) Marriage Songs, otherwise known as 'Dhavalas', not to be sung on any occasion other than marriage.

Groups 1 and 2 are usually sung by male members only.

The rest of the songs are in the custody of women.

All these songs have been preserved orally in the absence of any record, as most of their custodians are illiterate. These songs are a rolling mass of songs to which the Agris, especially women, seem to be adding their own.

Some devices embodied in these songs in order to help individual memory to preserve them are given below :

(1) 4 or 5 lines are repeated as a whole with a slight variation in one line, e.g.

लिंबन बाय एक पाना झाली
लिंबन बाय दोन पाना झाली
लिंबन बाय तीन पाना झाली — as in a Gauri Song.

(2) Repetition of the same line with a slight change, e.g.

तव त्या मालिनीन दिवाबत्ती केली हो
तव त्या मालिनीन गोटुगुरला केला हो
तव त्या मालिनीन ओटुघाटु केला हो
तव त्या मालिनीन चुलदान्या पेटविला हो
as in a Turmeric Song.

(3) The last part of a line is a burden

साखरगोंडे रईवाले रईवाले सये रईवाले
माहेरा येती हवलुबाये ग हवलुबाये सये हवलुबाये
as in a Shimaga Song.

(4) At times a middle portion of a line is a burden

घाटावरशी आली धनगरा आली धनगरा त्यांची सातशें मेंढरा हो
as in a Marriage Song.

(5) Every alternate line is a burden of the song

मने राई ग मने भाई ग as in a Shimaga Song.

(6) Some part of the previous line is carried forward in the following line with a slight change, e.g.

दुरुन पायला सा जाऊन घाव टाकला
त्यावरी घाव टाकूनी त्याचा वंडा पाडिला as in a Gauri Song.

and the like.

Specimen translation of some of these is intended to give some idea about the original songs in Agri dialect.

A GOURI SONG

(1)

The cloud thundered in the sky
The deities carried on their amours in the open !
They thence proceeded to the palmyra groves
Of betel nut and coconut !
The foresters there asked them (questions)
" How far are you going, oh you deities ? "
" To seek Radhika, the fair daughter of the Sun,
In marriage that is our sole mission."

(They replied)
" You will never get her,
Take it from us, no not ever ! "
(How does Radhika spend her days ?)
She dresses her sister-in-law's hair
And watches over her mother's fire.
She converses with the Sun
And seated on the bed she reads the scripture.
She tends her brother's cattle.
Her bath-room is of vermilion colour,
And her coverlets vermilion and red as the flame.
Her daily linen is basketful.
She took her basketful of clothes,
And went to the river-bank
To wash her clothes there.
She removed all her ornaments
And her necklace of nine strands as well
And placing them on the bank of the river
Radhi took her bath there.
She finished her bath,
Put on her silken garments,
And a blouse of multi-colour,
She put on her ornaments
And carried the basket with her.
Govinda, the cowherd,
Assumed the form of a bird,
And under this garb carried her necklace away !
Radhika then visited her Tulsi grove,
Where she worshipped the Tulsi plant,
And looked into her mirror.
(She realised) Her garments were in order
But for the necklace !
She ran away in haste.
Radhi ran to the river-bank.
But could not find it there.
Radhi then returned home,
Asked her mother to prepare ' ladus ' for her.
And said " I am going in search of my necklace."
She crossed the village-border,
And met a woman gathering dung there !
Radhi said to her,
" Oh thou woman you who collect the dung
Do you know where my necklace lies ? "
(The woman asked)

"What will thou reward me with ?"
"With bangles and attire," Radhi said.
"I care not for your bangles and attire."
(Quoth the woman that collected the dung)
Radhi left the place in haste,
And saw a village cowherd.
(Radhika asked him)
"Oh brother, you who look after your cows !
Will you tell me where my necklace lies ?"
He countered
What will be my reward ?
Radhi replied,
"I shall give you a black blanket
And a beautiful stick."
(Thus pleased with her offer he directed her)
"My lady fair, do then go to the red garden yonder.
Pluck the buds of the Jai flower,
And cast them at Govinda's chest,
As he lies in his sleep nearly half dead."
(She went away and did as she was told)
And Govinda awakened and opened his eyes.
(She then asked him)
"Oh you Govinda, the cowherd brother !
Can you tell me where my necklace is ?"
(Govinda replied)
"What will thou give me ?"
(She answered)
"I shall give you half the kingdom, my boy"
(He said)
"I care not for your kingdoms,
You share my bed with me for the night ?"
(She replied)
"I shall share your bed with you for the night."
So they spread the bed under a mango tree,
And put their mats upon it.
He placed the necklace beneath his pillow.
He kept a cock under the bed by his head,
And a dog at the other end he laid
Then at the dead of night,
When Govinda was fully lost in sleep
She stole her hand below his pillow
Took out her necklace with a dip
And (Radhi) took to her heels !
Govinda got up from his sleep (He said)

"You cock, my enemy
Did you but crow,
I would not then let Radhi go.
Did I but get up,
You cock my enemy,
I would not Radhi go.

The song is sung with variations in last lines.

(2)

SHIMAGA SONGS

You people of Rai of sugar-plumes,
You people of Rai, Oh friends, ye people of Rai!
Our Haulubai is coming to her mother's house,
Haulubai, Oh friend, Haulubai indeed!
Their fields are amongst the hills,
Amongst the hills, Oh friend, amongst the hills!
The (forests on the) hill-sides are a-fire,
A-fire, Oh friend, a-fire!
And the deer there are weeping bitterly,
Bitterly, Oh friend, bitterly!
There the deer is full of milk,
Full of milk, Oh friend, full of milk!
That milk is for our baby,
For our baby, Oh friend, for our baby!
Oh you my baby, you morning star,
You morning star, Hari, as a morning star!
The Sun sends you his greetings,
His greetings, Oh Hari, his greetings!
And the moon will be your toy,
Your toy, Oh Hari, your toy!

(3)

Tender indeed are the gooseberry fruit of the gooseberry tree.
Tender indeed they are, Oh friend, tender indeed!
The ash-coloured deities have arrived from (remote) strange lands.
The ash-coloured ones, Oh Hari, the ash-coloured ones.
And have placed their cots in front of stranger's houses, and Raja Devaji sits thereon.
Devaji, Oh Hari, Devaji.
Haulubai wears steel bangles on her hands and carries a charming baby in her arms
Likened to the moon, Oh Hari, likened to the sun.

MARRIAGE SONGS

(4)

" As prophecised in the heaven
It has come down on this earth !
There has been an offer for our daughter.
Go and consult her grand-father."
" Her grand-father has given his consent."

(5)

Listen, oh ye women, Rai is husking (paddy) and Rukmin is pounding.
Please show the bridegroom his way !
Ah, now he has reached the brim of the tank ;
So it is time now to milk your cows.
Look the bridegroom has now arrived in the yard.
Children, do not go in the court-yard now.
Look, the bridegroom has now arrived at the tamarind tree by the side of the main gate.
Receive him not with your hair undressed and unkempt.

(6)

After taking bath at the confluence of the rivers the deities have arrived
With golden sandals on their feet !
Under their yellow umbrellas these deities proceed
To the marriage ceremony to act as chief hosts.

(7)

Ah indeed, she (this little girl) was playing with her small winnowing basket and bicker.
She was engrossed in playing with a small doll.
While she was playing she caught the attention of ' Hasha Mhatre '.
And ' Hasha Mhatre ' is tempted (to ask her in marriage for his son) and hence ' Masanya Patil ' will get himself honoured.
(He says) " We will now be related,
" Let us forge this relationship and hasten to the house of a priest.
" And consult him about the favourable stars.
" We will take our seats on sandalwood stools (planks).

The names involved are the names of the fathers of the daughter-in-law and son-in-law.

" And from a golden plate we will have our grub."
She has put on a nine-stringed necklace, secured after searching seven seas.
Fortunate indeed is our ' Chandrubai ' to have a father-in-law.
A father-in-law is but another father, who will address her as ' Baye '.
Fortunate indeed is our ' Chandrubai ' to have a mother-in-law.
A mother-in-law is but another mother, who will give her a noon-day meal.
Fortunate indeed is our ' Chandrubai ' to have a brother-in-law.
Brother-in-law is but another brother, who will address her as ' vahini '.
She has put on . . . . . etc.
Fortunate indeed is ' Chandrubai ' to have a wife of a brother-in-law
Wife of a brother-in-law is but another sister who brew up trouble in for her in the household work.
She has put on . . . . . etc.
Fortunate indeed is ' Chandrubai ' to have a sister-in-law.
Sister-in-law is but another sister, who will vie with her in doing less work.
She has put on . . . . . etc.
" Give up and forget your little winnowing basket and a bicker."
Give up and forget your game of bassinet too !
" Oh younger sisters, it is now upon you to look after this house.
As I am leaving for my father-in-law's place."

ORIGINAL FOLK SONGS IN MARATHI

भलेऱ्या

हौशा रे मला गोंडा दे, हौशा गेलाय नागांव शायरा
तिकोनी गोंडा पाठवील दण्डाला रुमाल लाल लाल
मखमाल झेंडा फुलेना, हौशा रे माझा गोंडा दे

* * *

नाचतय रे पोर गंगू फटाकरी
नागांव करनी बसतील नवऱ्या वाजवरे सोयरी तिटानी मोवरी

* * *

वाटेवरची केशरी बामाय जातय सासरी
डोईचा केवडा बामायला बामाय जातय सासरी

* * *

माझा तांडला होडी जावूं दे बंदरा
तांबडा कोळ्या तांडलाला तांडला होडी जावूं दे बंदरा

* * *

कातच ना पोफल माझा, चुना कोणापाशी मागूं रे
सारे सारे राती, गालावर हात, गोष्टी कुणाला सांगू रे.

* * *

देव कोणाच्या घरी माझ बायुला ग
मराठ्यांच्या घरी देव काय बायला, ढेपा काढतांना जन्म जाईल रे

* * *

गवत पोरी गवत गो, झांझुर्लीचा गवत गो
घोकवडकर पोरे मातले, दाण्डेकरनीना हवन गो.

* * *

काली चोली वर मोल्याची झाली
आग्र्याची बीबी, ढेपाशी उभी, पोर सईवारली

* * *

नवी नार पान्याला गेली गोंडा विसरली
कुशा भाऊच्या बावीवर गेली हांडा विसरली

* * *

आठशे खिडकी नवशे दारा कोन्या वाटेन गेली ग नार
केवडा भरुन तीनी केला शिनगार कोन्या वाटेन गेली ग नार

* * *

ताडा माडाच कमल् बायगो दादान दवना हानलय काय
दादाचा दवना भरशीव काय मांडव्याला झपाटा मारशीव काय

* * *

शेवंती हारा फुलांचा गजरा वावीन खोवीन विठोबा तुजला

* * *

गाबडी गुबडी डोई गो तुजा पती मेलाय गो
कपालाला कुकू नाय तीच्या गो तुजा पती मेलाय गो

* * *

सांजशी पारा शीतल वारा माझा कोंबडा कोनी नारीनी दडवीला
जेग नारीच्या कन्या खाल्या ते ग नारीनी दडवीला

* * *

वटावलीना लावल्यान डोली लांब लाब किलशी वाढतान हो
नारंगीकरनींच्या फाटक्या चोल्या ल्यानशी बोंडुकल्या दिसतान गो

* * *

वान्याची पोर येक उभी दुकानी आडवा पदर तिचा उभा थाना
सामान हानाला गेला रामा ल्यान दोन थाना धरील

* * *

शेवंती फुलेल्या तुजा राजाराम कोनी गे नेला
गोंधा नवरा हौशीनी केला तुजा राजाराम कोनी ग नेला

* * *

बेडकाची उडी कठीन पोरी भिवूं नको बेडकाला
सांजचा येईल मांडीवर बसल भिवूं नको बेडकाला

* * *

सवतीच्या बालाला रे धका लावूं देव नको
सवत गेली राना, मोडी आसोन्याची माना,
आसोन्याचा पान तिथ रामाचा ध्यान,
तिघांचा येक दाण्डू, मधी गवल्याचा बंडू

* * *

माझ आई गो बाबाना सांग आले वराला देऊं नको
उंबईचा वर आलाय गो बाय तुझ मनामधी हाय तरी काय?

* * *

गो रे गो, लोट गो पालना
गौरीच्या गल्यांन बांधलाय लोढना.
गो रे गो, लोट गो पालना.

* * *

भटाची पोरी तूं भोजन कर
भोजनाला झालाय येल माल्याच्या पोरीनी मांडलाय खेळ

* * *

सावल्या हरि मला पंढरी जावूं दे
चारी फूला काढूं दे देवाला वाहूं दे,
सावल्या हरि मना पंढरि ने.

* * *

मलगो मालनी गांजा तंबाखू
मालीन गेली दारा तिच्या गांडीन खिरला वारा

* * *

सोन चडी बाय करतस काय? धरमतरीवर ठेवलाय पाय.
नवरा आला न्यायाला! शाट नाय माझा जाय.

* * *

शेता बांधावर उभी जमना बाय, सुभान्या वाट तुझी पाहताय ग!
चोली पातल हानली जमना, सुभान्या वाट तुझी पाहताय ग!

* * *

वाटेवर खोपटी टिकमिकी दिवा, म्हातारा नवरा नको रे देवा.
चांगला पोऱ्या कां नाय केलास म्हातारा नवरा कला ग केलास.

* * *

सांजचा पार झालाय बोडकी म्हनतय चला
भावजी तुमी आज केहिमाला चला

* * *

दर्यान तारु लोटूं नको सांनची सुनसला धाडूं नको
चोली पातल देवूं नको सानची सुनसला धाडूं नको

All these songs are sung with variations with names of places and persons concerned

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वाघ्या मुरलीचीं गाणीं

आर मांडला रे फर मांडला
त्याच फरावर जांभा घोडा
जांभा घोडा हरपत जाय
जांभा घोडा तरपत जाय

* * *

हौस मजला पंढरपूरा जावाची
कंदी देशील भेट आध्न्या होईल
मागे जावाची
इठोबा माजा बाप हो
धरील माजा हात नेईल मज राऊलांत
रावल देवलांमध्यें गर्दी मिलाली साधवांची
कंदी देशील भेट आध्न्या होईल
मागे जावाची

* * *

राय पुसे चंद्रावली
कोण तुझा वली
सातशे गोपाल
कानोबा वली

* * *

राजकटी रायरस्मी दोरा
गोपान देईन माजा विक्रम राजा रे
कापशीचा कापूस पिंजला रे
गोफ इनला रे
गनपती दारी गोफ इनलाय रे टांगलाय रे

* * *

नईच्या वालूवर खणल डोरे
गुरा ढोरांना बांधल झर
नला उघर बा नलावर पानी
वल्लख घेऊन आलं र गुरु पानी पिल्ले रे

* * *

मोठ्या देवा तुजा देऊल कुठ नांदे रे
दारी बिंद्रावन झाड तुलशीचा
तुलशी तुलशी तूं माझ वंशी
मोकल केशी दंडवत घे

* * *

आली चंद्रायेल बाई
आरे माज्या धाकल्या दिरा
मजला ने र माहेरा
तुजला नेईन माहेरा मजला हासेल सोयरा
भरभर मुठी उरव गुलाल
शिमगा खेले मदन गोपाल

* * *

थान पितो उगाच रडतो
घे घे बाई मुलाला
नको लड्डू बाला घेता कडेवरी
पाच भरवा पिंवला चाफा शिरी
रामाच्या तुरा हो
अंजनीच्या पुतर मारुती याच
ध्यान धरा हो

आल्यांत जाय मल्यांत जाय
आंब्याला शिपना घालीत जाय
आंबेची ढांगली चीचेवरी
आंबेची ढांगली ढिम ढिम गले
सुकाली बायको शिमगा खेल

* * *

आवसे पूनीमेचा वाजलय बारा
दर्यान उल्हास केला
माल्याचा मला भराशी आला
चाप्याचा परमल झाला
माल्याच्या हातचा तुरवा झुलत झाय

* * *

मिऱ्या डोंगरी येक सोनार वसे
सोन्याच फास घरवीत असे
फासे धरुनी मोर गुतवीले
आरे आरे मोर दे सुरंगी डोले
पायाकडे पाहून मोर खलखला लडे

अंगाई गीतें

खोतनी आये खोतनी आये सलाम गो
खेलतील तुमच गुलाम गो
खेलतील तसे खेलूं दे
वडाची पानें जोडूं दे
वडाचे पानाला बोट बोट चुना
आये गो आये तुला सातजनी सुना
येक सून गेली रावला
तिथशी आनला कावला
कार कावल्या काकस नाय
आर्धी भाकर मांगस नाय
अर्धें भाकरीचा पोपेटा
पिठ्या पिठ्यानी झोपेटा

पिढा गेला रागांनी
त्याला खाल्ला वाघानी
वाघानी केल तांबड डोल
दादानी हानल बिदी घोड
बिदी घोड्यांच्या टापर शिंगा
ति गो लिंगा देवाची
येक येक बैल इकावा
शंभर दावा जिकावा
शंभर दाव्याच बैल कुठ गेल
बैल गेल मल्यांत
तीस तीस कोंबडा तल्यातू
तीस तीस कोंबड्याचा केला रायता

मिर्ग्या पोराला जेवु घाला आयता
मिर्ग्या पोर चोर सा
शेजारणीचा मोरसा
मोल नाय मोल नाय मोलपतरी
खंडेरावाची पन पतरी
पन पतरीत काय लकाकत
लकाकतय लकाकतय बेराची काडी
मामोजी बसलत जेवाला इंझन वारा घाली
भटणीन बसल्या जेवाला
चोली बिरडी काढा
वइवर सुकत लावा

* * *

आंबट शेंबट खांदी भेंडी आली शाय
मामाचे लाडके लेकी आवण खाल्ला गाय
खाल्ला तर खाऊं दे किती मारु रंभे
रंभियाचा गा देवलाला खिडकी सात खांब
खांबण खांब ताशी गेला
येकच केला पिढा
त्या पिढ्यावर कोन बस बाला सारा येडा

* * *

आवढान पोरी बाव गो
त्या बाविन पोरी वुडशील गो
आंब्याची खांदी धरशील गो
आंबा नाय पन जंभेला
जांभलीची जांबला पिकलीन गो
माझे दादानी जिंकलीन गो
माझा दादा शिदोरी
घरदार बांधलय डोंगरी

* * *

पल गो पोरी पल गो पोरी वाटेवरशी
दादाला येऊं दे घोड्या वरशी
हाच काय दादा येतई
पान सुपारी खातई
दादाच्या घोड्याना सरसाखल्या
महिमान बहीन धाकली
तिचे कपाली टीकली
टिकली मिकली सासुर्या जाय
सासरच वाट चिच आंव खाय
चिचानी दात बाय आंबले
आंबेले तर गोटनी जाय
गोटनीच्या गाया इवाल्या
खरवस काढून पलाल्या
खरसान लुगडी माखेली
माखेली तर धोवाला देव
धवता धवता फाटेली
फाटली तर शिपी घरा देऊ
शिपीन शिपी पलाला
बलिच्या खोपटीन दडाला
बलीची खोपटी चिटवाची
आय झव त्या शिप्याची

* * *

येरे कोल्या भाटांशी
चिंबोरा हानलाय खारटांशी
नांग्या खुब्या बायला
मधला वुडा बाबूला
बाबूला झाला थोडा
बयच मुस्कट फोडा

सटीचीं गाणीं

धरतीचा केला पाटा कनिकाच केल हो दिवे
कापूसाच्या केल्या वाती परसूदाच्या केल्या हो जोती

निंगडीच भार गो येती सटु माय पूंजनाला
वान्या घरच्या हळदी येती सटु माय पूंजनाला
रुयांच भार गो येती सटु माय पूंजनाला
आतारा घरची कुकवा येती सटु माय पूंजनाला
माल्या घरची फूल गो येती सटु माय पूंजनाला
सूपारीच्या गोनी गो येती सटु माय पूंजनाला
नागयेलीची पाना येती सटु माय पूंजनाला
उदगल्यांच पुड गो येती सटु माय पूंजनाला
शेंदुराचे पुड गो येती सटु माय पूंजनाला
नारलीच नारल येती सटु माय पूंजनाला
कासारा घरच दिव गो येती सटु माय पूंजनाला
तेल्या घरची तेला येती सटु माय पूंजनाला
कुलंब्या घरच चांदूल येती सटु माय पूंजनाला

* * *

बोलवा बोलवा पाथरवटी
बांधा बांधा न्हानुल्या चीरेबंदी
त्ये हो न्हाने माता धवी चंदरु बाय बालंती
माता जो धवीता दोये हाती केसूल झडकीत
नानीये भोवताली लावीयेले निगडी वाफे
ल्यांनी वाफे बालू माके चंदरु बाय बालंती
नानीये भोवताली पैरीला हा जीर
गुढी हो उभारीली दीरा पांडु म्हात्र
नानीये भोवताली पैरीला हो राया
गुढी हो उभारीली भाया चंदर म्हात्र

* * *

उशा उशा गो बाहुट तिच पायतरा पायतरा दिवूटे
गोपाल म्हात्रा ये गोपाल म्हात्रा ये कोलगांवा गाव खोती केली हो
ल्यांही नातवाची पाचवी जागवीली हो

* * *

सटु माये सटु माये तुमी कोठे जाता हो
आमी जातय गोपाल म्हात्र्याच्या घरा हो
आमी नाय जातय किरपणाच्या घरी हो
तिथ नाय होत आमचा सनेमानू

* * *

ढोल टिमक्या वाजती वाघ्या मुरल्या नाचती
शिवासनावरि दिवट्या जलती गोपाल म्हात्र्यांच्या
नींगडीचे भारे गो येती सदुमाय पूंजना

* * *

समुद्रा काठी सटी गो सये
आमी जातूय तातोबा बालंती घरी
तातोबा बालंती घरी आहे काजू
चंद्रुबाय मागतय देव धर्माचा राजू

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गेलू व्हतू गेलू व्हतू बोंडिये काय राना हो
तिथ पाहील तिथ पाहील चंदनाच काय रुक्ष हो
त्याचा हानीला त्याचा हानीला चंदनाचा दूरका हो
त्याचा घडवीला त्याचा घडवीला चंदनाचा पाटु हो
त्या पाटावर बसली त्या पाटावर बसली चंद्रुबाय बालंती हो
वटी भरावी वटी भरावी वामन म्हात्रे भारजेची हो

गौरीचीं गाणीं

आकाशी मेघ दणाणला
प्रकाशी देवांचे ख्यालू
देव गेल नारळी वनांत
देव गेल पोफली वनांत
बनकरी पूसूं लागल
"देवा तुमचा कुठवरि येना?"
"राधिका सूर्याची कन्या
तिला आमी आलू परणाया"
"ती तुमचे हाती कशी येत
पावूं दे पैका वहीत"
वहिनीची येनी घालीत
आईची चुला संभाळीत
सूर्याशी गोष्टी सांगत
पलंगी पोथी वाचीत

भावाची गुरां राखीत
तिचि बा हिंगलाची नानी
तिच्या बा अग्नि पासोड्या
तिचि बा मोटभर धूनी
घेतली मोटभर धूनी
राधी गेली नदी किनारी
धविली मोटभर धूनी
काढीला सर्वा शिनगार
काढीला नवसर हार
हार ठेवला नदी किनारी
राधीनी अंघोली केल्या
पीतांबर नवली नेसली
घातिली मदन कंचोली
घातिला सर्वा शिनगार

घेतली मोटभर धूनी
गोविंद गुरा राखीत
गोविंद पकशा झाला
राधीचा हार तो न्याला
राधी गेली तुळशी वनांत
तुळशीची पुंजासी केली
हाती घेतला आरसा काय फनी
सरवा शिनगार हाई
नवसर हार तो नाहीं
राधीनी धाऊ मारिली
राधी गेली नदी किनारी
नवसर हार तो न्हाई
राधी बा घराशी आली
"कर आई भूकच लाडू
कर आई तानेच लाडू
मी जातय हाराच शोधी"
गावाचे बाहेरी गेली
पुढें भेटली शेणकरीण बाई
"आगो तूं शेणकरणी बाई
सांग माझे हाराचा लाग"
"मला तूं काइग देशी?"
"देईन तूला चोली बांगडी"
"मला नको चोली बांगडी"
तीथून राधी झडकली
पुढे भेटला गायचा गव्हारी
"आर तूं गायचे गव्हाऱ्या
सांग माझे हाराचा लाग"
"मला तूं काइग देशी?"
"देईन तुला काला कांबुला
देईन तुला खुलखुली काठी"
"जा ग तूं लालू बागांत
खुड गो तूं जाईच्या कल्या
मार गो त्ये गोविंदाचे शाती"
गोविंदा नीजचा धुंद
गोविंदा जागासा झाला
"आर तूं गोविंद गऊल्या
माझा तूं हारसा देशी
देईन तुला आरधा राज्य"
"मला नको आरधा राज्य
होय येके रातीची रानी
होईन येके रातीची रानी"
आंब्या खालीं टाकिल्या बाजा
वर बा टाकल बिछान
हार बा घेतला ऊशाला
कोंबडा ऊशाला ढाकला
कुतरा ग पायतरा ठेवला
गोविंदा नीजेचा धुंद
गोविंदाला नीजर आली
घातीला ऊशाखाली हात
हार बा घेतला काढूनी
राधीनी धावू मारीली
गोविंद जागासा झाला
"आरे तूं कोंबड्या वईन्या
तूं तर आरवला असता
मी तरी जागा झालूं असतू
आरे तूं कोंबड्या वईन्या
राधीला जाऊ नसती दीली"

Vide English rendering Song No. 1 (page 353).

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आखाडी ये गो येकादशी
कार्तिकीची महिमा मोठी
साधू जाती पंढरीशी
संत जाती पंढरीशी
गल्या तुलसीच्या माला
हर हर विठ्ठल वाहीला
सखूच्या दारावरन गेल
सखूच्या मनी देव भरल
सखू गेली पानियाला
हांडा ठेवला बावडीवरी
चुंबल ठेवली बोकलावरी
सखूनी धाऊ गो मारिली
सखू संता मिलती झाली
सखूच्या शेजारणी भागूबाया
सखूच्या सांगातनी भागूबाया
सांगत गेल्या सासूपाशी
सखूच्या सासूनी धाव मारिली
धावत शालेजवलि गेली
"आरे तूं तूकारामा बाला
शालेतूनी यावा बेणां
सखू गेली पंढरीला"
तुकाराम बालानी धाव मारिली
सखूला नदीवर अडवीली
सखूला मारीत हानीली
सखूला खोलीत घातिली
बांधली चंदन खांबाशी
लावल्या चाया काय कूकुपा
माध्यान्न गो रात्र झाली
फेरी विठ्ठलाची आली
देवांनी दरवाजा उंघडीला
सखूला दिली गो सोडून
देव राहला गो बांधून
सखू गेली पंढरीला
चंद्रभागेन आंग धवीली
रुकमीण बायचा दर्शन केला
देवलान देवला गो हिंडली
रावलान रावला गो हिंडली
वोटीमधी घेतल्या लाह्या
हातामधी घेतला तुरा
सखू घरापाशी आली
सखू सासूच पाया वोनवली
कपाला लावी बूका हातामधी देई लाह्या
"सखू आपला पानी कोन गो भरी"
"देव तो विठल सावला."

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(२) गौरीच्या पूजेचीं गाणीं

हातान काठी डोईवर पाटी डोकरी गो चाललीस का शेनीला
हानल्या शेनी टाकल्या दारा आलो घराला गो बाई
पडगो पावसा भर गो नई कशी नेशी अतां भावा बहिनुली
घेईन कडे घेईन खांदे उतरीन गो तेरड्याचे फुलावरी

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घाटी बैल शिंगी दोरे घाट गो चढतांना ग नांद कोनाचे आले
आरे आरे रामचंद्री संभू माहेर माजा चल गौरी नांद कायाला आलू

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ढवले नंदीवरी गवर बसूनी आली
आईनी पाहिली लेक ऊपाशी आली
नाय आय उपाशी मी जेवूनी आलू
देसावर सासर बाजरीचा खाना
कोकणी माहेर गाळुल्याचा लेना

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गवार बसली हारतालक्याला गनोबा बसले लिवाला
उठा गनोबा अंगोलीला उशीर झाला जावाला
दीड दिवसाची रजा रे बंधवा परतुन मजला यावाला
शित शेवया नीत जेवया आवड नित गो मला लाडवाची
लवतील आंब लवतील जांब लवतील मोगरी जाय हो
बाप म्हने लाडक लेकी बाहुटे लेवुनी जाय हो
आतां कधीं लेव गो शंकर वाट पाय गो
शंकर सोला राजा भोला नगर सोडून जाय हो
नगरला लावली निशाना शंकर वाट पाय गो

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गवर जातय सासुर्या
भाई काय काय आंदन देता हो
हिंडु बुरुडाच्या वलनाच्या वल्या
नाय मिल सोनाल जोगी पव
गवर जातय सासुर्या

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गौरीच्या नाचार्ची गाणीं

येकच पाय हालवतय
आपले घोला बोलवतय
आपले घो लाडका
ओटीन घेतल्या खारका
खारका लागल्या गोड
जिभला आले फोड
जिभच फोड फुट नाय
दारचा पावना उठ नाय
उठ गो कोंबडे दिवा लाव
दिवा गेला वाऱ्यानी
कोंबडी नेली चोरानी
एक खडी उडली
खिडकीन जाऊन दडली
खिडकी माझी माय गो
लाथ बुक्या खाय गो
लाथा बुक्या सोसत नाय
सवत माझ्याशी बोल नाय

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चल गो सालू पलुनी जाऊ आपन रान डोंगरीला राहूं
रान डोंगरीला राहूं आलूचा बंध आपन तोडूं
आलूचा बंध तोडू लहान सहान झोपडा बांधू
लहान सहान झोपडा बांधू दोघाजना राहूं
दोघाजना राहू कोवलि काकडी खावू

कवल्याची भाजी लागतय ताजी मेवनी माजी झालीया राजी
मेवनी माझी खरी काय खोटी पायानी धुरला लोटी
मेवनीच्या हाती खोबऱ्याची वाटी मेवना माजा जिवल्या चाटी
नेसना सुटलाय जालीला गुतलाय मेवन्यानी पायलाय
नको रे मेवन्या डोला करू डोला जाइल फुटूनी
नको रे मेवन्या डोला करू जीव माजा कावला
जीव माजा कावला पति माजा सावला

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पारु तुनी बांधिला का मीनी बांधिला
पारु बांधिला शंखर नाखवानी
जाई तुनी लाविली कां मीनी लाविली
जाई लावली शंखर नाखवानी
कल्या तुनी खुडील्या की मीनी खुडिल्या

कल्या खुडील्या गो धाकले गौरायनी
गजरा तुनी गुंफीला कां मीनी गुंफीला
गजरा गुंफीला शंखर गो नाखवानी
गजरा तुनी भरीला कां मीनी भरीला
गजरा भरीला धाकल्ये गौरायनी

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बाय माझा माहेर हमरापुरी
तिथशी ह्यानल भासक गहूं
ल्याच्या चपाल्या केल्या नऊं
माज बंधूला घातला जेऊ
ल्याला बसाया दीला घोडा

माझे बंधूचा रेशमी फेटा
हमारापूरीचा काय मला साजे
हमरापूरीची बांगडी साजे
येता जातांना खालखूल वाजे

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कौलां येचूं गो सये
कौल्याची पोरां हछन जाय
शेजारणी गो गवरु बाय
तुमच पती कुठ गेल
आमच पती नांगर वड्या

नांगर वडचे सकुबाबा देवा
सकुबा सकुबा हिरवा रंगू
या दोघांशी लागलाय धंद
छंद नये बा संवगड्या

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रायचा रुप्याचा दसघडा
रायची सोन्याची चुंबल
राय गेली व्हती पानियाला
तिथ आला मावचा देवू
चल बाय तू आमच्या बागेला

तिथ हाईत इशाल पेरु
तो बायला सासू पुंसू लागली
राय पान्याला येल कां झाला
चिचेच दुरुंड म्हनुनी पान्याला येल झाला

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खवणी पोरी खवणी
खवणीचा दाण्डा मोडला
सवतीनी शिनगार जोडला
का गो सवती बोलस नाय

लसनाची कांद्री चुन चुन करी
सवत माझी भुन भुन करी
लसनाची कांद्री सोलली
सवत माशी बोलली

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वाटेवर खेलतय चांगुना बाय
वाऱ्यान सुपली उडविली
तिकडून आला गवारी दादा
दे माझी सुपली सोधूनी

हो माझी शेज अस्तुरी
देईन सुपली सोधूनी
अस काय म्हनतस
गवारी दादा मी तुझ्या पाठीची बहिनुली

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आकाली बाकाली येक डोंगरी
धनी माझा चाकरी नोकरी
तुझे बा चाकरी काय मोलू
माझे बा चाकरी दोन रुप

रुपाया दे धन्या कन्याला
दोन आन दे धन्या बांगडीला
चार आन दे धन्या साडीला

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धनी माजा चाकरी नोकरी
चल धान्या बदामी भक्षी पूजा
तुज्या बागेला ढोप ढोप धुरुल
ढोप ढोप धूल धन्या चालू कशी

रुपाया दे धन्या चिंधीला
आठ आने दे धन्या बांगडीला
आठ आने दे धन्या चोलीला

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उठ गो कोंबडी दिवा लाव
दिवा गेला वाऱ्यांनी
कोंबडीला नेली चोरानी
चोराच्या हातून सूटली

कलंबा खाली गूसली
कलम माजा सासरा
पाय पोसानी ठोका ठोका

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घाल गो गौराय बाय इंछन वारा
झांजुबा भरतारा लागूं द्या डोला
अहो आहो गनपती देवा तुमचा घोडा काय नाय चाल
अहो अहो गौराय बाय तुमच्या गोंड्याला भूल
गौराइच्या नंदा बा सातपांचजनी
सातजनीना सात चोल्या गौराय पाठव घड्या

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झिम्मा खेलू झिम्मा
येवढे कां गो राती
दिव्याच्या जोती
याच्या साठीं मी भिंगरी खेली
त्या भिंगरीचा मोडला ताट
या मेल्यानी घेतला घात

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बाय मी आरली मुरली
बागांत चमेली फुलली

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आगरी जाऊं डोंगरी जाऊं वान्याच्या घरी कधी जाऊ
वान्याची येसू गवल्याचा जांदू ही दोघी जन्माला आली
गो सुंदरा पावस आला भारी ये माइया घोंगडी खाली
येसूची ऐस दारी उभी राही दोघांचा कौतुक पाही
हो माझी शेजारी अस्तुरी घेईन तुला घोंगडी खाली

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चलगो शालू रानडोंगरीला कावल्याचे भाजीला
रानडोंगरीला जाऊ चांगलीचा खोपटी बांधू
चांगलीच खोपटी बांधू दोघाजनाच राहूं
दोघाजना राहूं शालू आंब्याचा लोनचा घालूं
आंब्याचा लोनचा घालू दोघांजना खावूं

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वईच्या भेरेला राला केला सईबाईनी काय माजा केला
कावल्यानी नेला रालाचा बोंड सासूबाईच्या कानी गेला
नेवून टाकीला सईच्या दारी

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नयचा नयचा खुबा गो
पानी करीत डुबा ग
तारवाचे भारी भारी कोली येक तांडेल उभा
गौराय बायचा चुडा भरा

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अंब्या रे पांड्या नको मारु बैलाला
बैल जातय गाडीला गाडी जातय भाड्याला
वालकेश्वरी बंदराला

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पानबल्याच्या नईवर इश्वर थांबला
एवढ्या येल गौरी कां लावीला
घेतला व्हता आईचा गाठला देऊ मी लागलो
आईला भेट देता उशीर मला लागला

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माझे गो दारीचे तुलशे
तीन चार फांगुरे फोडिशी
गाठल्याच्या नांदान गवराय किती ग डुलशी

शिमग्याचीं गाणीं

आयला रे तेटु तेटुचा वासा
पैलारी या घर शोभितूं दिसे
नायकाच धुव गो हौलु बाई
तुला गो बाई ये मुलू येती
हिंडती आकोलीची वाड्या
हिंडती बदामीच्या वाड्या
नाहीं लाग थोड्या बहिणीचा थांगा
घोडिये बहिन गेली बोंडीचे राना
तिथ गो सर्पाची येटना
तिथ गो गाई हंबारती
त्यांची गो वासूर सादू देती
तिथ गो तेलिय घाणा घालिती
तिथ ग समया तेलू जाळिती

तिथ गो सोन्याच उमतार
तिथ ग फुलाच दरवाज
तिथ गो समया तेलू जाळिती
तिथ गो संध्या सारिता उडाला मासा
बालारे जाशील पराय देशा
पराये देशी काय नेशी काय हानिशी
हाणीन दवण्या मालाची पेटी
देईन हौलूबाईला मेटी
धावरे हौलू बाईचे वरा
थांबत येशीच दारा
येसुबाईनी लावल्या माल्या नीसणी
काढीली गाठूल्याची लेणी
हौलूबाईला माहेराला येणी

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साकर गोंडे रइवाले गो रइवाले सये रइवाले
माहेरा येती हौलु बाये गो हौलुबाये सये हौलुबाये
त्यांची शेता डोंगरी गो डोंगरी सये डोंगरी
डोंगर जलती धडधडा गो धडधडा सये धडधडा
हरणा लडती खलखला गो खलखला सये खलखला
हरणोलीचा दूधुला गो दूधुला सये दूधुला
त्या दूधुला बालाला गो बालाला सये बालाला
बाला पहाटिच्या नकछित्रा रे नकछित्रा हरि नकछित्रा
सूर्या तुझा बोलावणा रे बोलवणा हरि बोलवणा
चांदा तुजा खेलवणा रे खेलवणा हरि खेलवणा

Vide English rendering Song No. (page 356).

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डोंगरावरी घरा उघडी दारा
तिथायत मान्या संगातनी
येक सांगातीन हौलूबाई
तिजवर गो सत्री धरा
सतरी मोडा पालखी जोडा

भाची जातय मामीच्या घरा
मामा रे मंगल या भाची जातय सासुऱ्या
भाचिच बावट घडत घातल
निरोप सांगा जावया

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तांबुले मातीचा अंबा जो कोऊला
पारज बांधला खोबुऱ्याचा
तेथल्या पाराशी गंगाये उभी राहे
माहेरा येती हे हौलू बाई
हौलूबाये आई ये हौलूबाये बाई ये
तुमच भाइ ये देवराजू
देवराजू जागल देवराजू भागल
त्यांच पगड सोना खोचू
सोना घे सटी ये बालाचे टोपीये

चला गो सटीये जागरणा
जागरता जुगरता भरल बारा येलू
सीता तुमचे दीरु लक्षुमण
लक्षुमण दारीची कंचना
पावली सीतेची पाउला मावलेली
अगो ग मावली अशा घोऊ नये
गोंडा घालू नये हौलू बाये
हौलु बाईचे गोंड्याना लागला आलस
जपले चुरस ईश्वर देवू

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दूरी कुरण चल गो येचूं जाय
दूरी गेली हौलुबाई चल गो बोलव जा
आधि गेल धाकट भाऊ ते फिरुन गो आल
मंग गेले मोठ भाऊ ते घेऊन गो आल

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शिरालीचा शिर घोसाली वोढियला गो तोडीयला गो
ते गेल शेजमाज हौलुबाई चे गो सये
हौलुबायच भरतारु राघो गेला ग सये रुसू गेला ग
शेजारी घरी जावूनी बसले गो सये वसले गो
खांद्यावरि शेल घेवूनि समजेविल गो सये समजेविल गो

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गलबताच नालिवरी कोन गो हाईत उभ बाई
हाइत हाइत हौलुबाइच भरतारु
भरा हौलुबाई चुड हो
माज दाराची चिकण माती
बाजारीं चल जाऊ हेडबाले बये
हेडबाय बोल पायिच तोड हाताच पाटल्या सोनारा हो

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पहिला कोंबडा आरुला एकसर गेला व्होलिये
लाना थोराच्या हौलूबाय मोरी ये
त्यांच पागडे लावलन तूर हो
त्यांच पागडी शोभीतू दिसे हो

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आवलिच आवल कवले ग कवले ग सये कवले ग
परदेशा देव आल सांवले रे सावले रे हरि सावले रे
परदेशा दारा घातिल्या बाजा वर बस राजा देवजी रे
देवजी रे हरि देवजी रे
हौलु बाइच्या हाती वजिरा चूडा गोजिरा बाला चांदा रे हरि सूर्या रे

Vide English rendering Song No. 3 (page 356).

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करंदीचा फूल पांढरा
मने राई ग मने बाई ग ॥ ध्रु० ॥
ल्या कर्दुला कोन कोन खाई ग
मने राई ग मने बाई ग
खाते हौलुबाईचे भाई ग
मने राई ग मने बाई ग
पान घेतला ग पानाडे
मने राई ग मने बाई ग
चुना घेतला चुनाडे
मने राई ग मने बाई ग
सुपारी घेतली सुपारे ग
मने राई ग मने बाई ग
कात घेतला काताडे ग

मने राई ग मने बाई ग
तंबाखू घेतला तमखाडे ग
मने राई ग मने बाई ग
येलची घेतली येलदोडे ग
मने राई ग मने बाई ग
लवंग घेतली ग लवंगडे
मने राई ग मने बाई ग
विडा तल्हाताचे मोडीला
मने राई ग मने बाई ग
तो यिडा कोन कोन खाई ग
मने राई ग मने बाई ग
खात हौलुबाईचे भाई ग
मने राई ग मने बाई ग

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गेलू व्हतू वोंडिये राना
कोसुंबे घालू घाना
कोसुंबे तेल गले
रेवदण्डा शारा तेल जले

सुरकोली शहरा उजेड परे
हाटा जातीये देवराजू
ल्यांच्या उगवल्या रेशा

डेऱ्याचीं गाणीं

भेंडीचा मूल सय जाय जुईवाना
सोडिल्या सोनशेळा घातिल्या कासा
आइला बोल माझ पोटीच्या बाला

बहिन बोल माइया सदा मुलाच्या
भावजय बोल माज्या मानिया दीरा
अस्तुरी बोल माझ सरवे शिनगारा

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उंबरा खालीच्या डवरा पानी वाहत
पान्यावरच्या बायानूं ये गवल्याची सून कोणची
मांगाली नव बा पूढची मधली गवल्याची सून
हातांत गोंडस कांकना ही सून नंदन गवल्याची
हिच बाजूला कलस ही सून नंदन गवल्याची
पाठीवर मोल्याची येनी ही सून नंदन गवल्याची
गवल्याची सून जात माहेराला तिला माहेरी पाठवा
माहेरी जातांना काय वाट गेली राना
वाट गेली राना ग दूर झाला जाना

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भोपीयेली फूल येती
मंडपी येल गेला
मंडपी दिव लावा
लहाना थोराच
आसा मोराच

थोराच जावइ
आमी कशावरि वलखाव
खांद्यावरि रेशमी शाल
त्यावरि जावइ वलखाद

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कसूरा कोंबूडा वई उडाला
वई उडूनी न भाजी खूडूनी
भाजी ग रांधिली परकरा
उठा मालिय जेवला
जेवूनी खावूनी माली संतोषी झाले
हाती घेतल्या कुत्र्याच्या साकुल्या

मालि पारुधे निघाले
पारुधे जावूनी त्यानी काय हो न्यारीला
काय हो न्यारीला त्यांनी वाघू मारीला
वाघू मारुनी नेला सायबाचे सदरे
सायिबा मानविला दिल बमाया घोडा
सायिब मानविला दिला हातीचा चूड।

लग्नाचीं गाणीं

साखरपुडा

आकाशीं वरतला दुनियांत पडला
लेकीला मांगणा आला हो

सांगूनि धाडा हो तिचिये आज्याना
आज्याचे मनासू येई हो

Vide English rendering Song No 4 (page 357).

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बुरुमे खाणीचे खणियेले पेंडू बुरुमे खाणीचे
उघडा हो नागू म्हात्रा तुम्ही अठराही भंडारा
अठराही भंडारा तव नातीचे येऊगा
नात मंडपी न्हाई आजा कौतुका पाही

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राई हो दलीत रुक्मीण सङीत
ल्या वराला वाढु सांगावी हो
तो ग बाई आला तलियाचे पाली
ते खनाव्या बाई गाई हो
ओ वरु आला आई दारीचे अंगणी हो

नको जाऊ बाला रंगणी हो
ओ वरु आला दारीच्या चिचेशी
नको बाई जाऊ मोकले केशी हो
ओ वरु आला दारीच्या वेशी
नको बाई जाऊ मोकले केशी हो

Vide English rendering Song No. 5 (page 357).

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दऱ्यांची गलबत मिऱ्या डोंगरची शोभना
म्हादु म्हाऱ्यांनीं रात्रीच्या भट्या
रचियेल्या
ल्या भटीचा चुना माय गंगेचा ऊदेकू
धवलारणींच्या भिंती दिसे शोभिवन्तु
वर काढिल्या ग गनपती
लग्ना कोण्ये ग तिथी निर्धारिली
चौथे पंचमीची लग्न का घेतलीस ताथोडी
वाढूं दे नवरी पुतळी बालुबाई

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मांडव घातिला गजा ग डामाचा
वर काय शितडिला चंदनाचे चौपाले
वर काय हातरिल्या
सर्वे रंगांच्या पासोड्या
हरि म्हात्रे काय यजमानू पहूडले वरती

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तलिया पालीचा चौपाला चिरा हो
देवू गेले पर्वत डोंगरा हो
पर्वता डोंगरा देखिली चंदनी लाकरा
ल्याची घडवावी बर्मा ठेसना
ठेसनी बसत लक्षुमण माळवी यजमानू
ठेसन सोभीवंतु दिसे हो

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नईवाले नईवाले वांगियाचे हो मले
तिथ भरुनी तारु चाले

पहिले खनी सोनानाना
दुसरे खनी निंबवाना
तिसरे खनी हलदीच्या गोनी
चौथे खनी बाशींगाचे जोडू
हलदीचा लेना लेवा हो नवऱ्या धर्मूबाई
तुमचे सासऱ्यानी खर्चिले दामू व्हो

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सकालीचा पार झाला
दारी रामस्वामी आले हो
येऊनी वोटी बसले हो
आहो आहो तुमी रामस्वामी
तुमी कशा कारना आले हो
आमी आलो लेकी मांगणा हो
आमा घरी लेक हाई उपवारु कन्या
तिला नाय साई परपुरुसाचा वारा हो
तवा ल्या रामानी सरापू दिले हो
भक्षिला बेलाचा पाला हो
बेला बेलपाला हाती मोराच कुचा
वो बालू कोने नारीचा हो
तो भरतारु धर्मूबाईचा हो

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धोकोड्या शारामध्यें पारुला दिसे
कानू म्हात्रे यजमानू वर ग बसे पारावरी
बारीक वाण्याची जानकूबाय लुगडी नेसे

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अगो कोथिंबिरी तुझी पानां सप्तरंगी
हट्टा बाजारान म्हागू चवरंगी
ती कोथिंबिरी म्हादू पाटलान साटियेली
राणी जानकूबायन रांधियेली
रांधियेला ग जाई जुईचा हो पाला
परमल गेला येशीच्या दारा
आधि जेवल हो मोठ मोठे हो लोकू
मागून जेवला सारा गोतू

मांडवाचें गाणें

खांद्यावर कुराडी कुठं जाता वराडी
मांडवाला मेढी चंदनाची
उंच झाला मांडवू
कुड घाला जाईचा
चांद सूर्य देवाचा जानविसा
चांद सूर्य देवांनी आमां घरा यावा
चिंतिला कार्य सिद्धिस न्यावा
सिद्धि नेरे सिद्धि नेरे गनोबा
तुमावरी भरवसा आमचा हाय रे

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खांद्या घेतल्या रासणी कुराडी हो
घरा हो निघून चालले पर्वत डोंगरा हो
तिथे न्यारीले सायाचे मेढी पोफळीचे वासे हो
शिरी घेऊनि दारापाशी आले हो
मंडप घातले मोठिये डिमाचे हो
वरती पासोडे बहुत रंगाचे हो
ल्या बा मंडपी हातरिल्या शाली हो
वर बसल तेतीस कोटी देवू हो
वर बसती भट बिरामण हो
ल्या बा मंडपी शोभितू दिसे हो
मंडपी फिरती नारायण थल्याचे भाऊ हो
शोभा मंडुपी शोभूनी दिसे हो
वरती ढाकना कोथेरे गवताचा हो

हळदीचें गाणें

एक प्रार झाली हो
वनी पकशा पकशा बोलला हो
गांवीं पकशा पकशा बोलला हो
सूर्य रथू दणाणला हो
तो नाद पडला मालिनी बाईचे कानी हो

तव ती उठूनी जागी झाली हो
तव त्या मालिनीन दिवा बत्ती केली हो
तव त्या मालनीन गोठु गुरला केला हो
तव त्या मालिनीन ओटु घाटू केला हो
तव त्या मालिनीन चुलदाण्या पेटविला हो
चंदुनी लाकरा जालसा केला हो
तव त्या मालिनीन पाण्या तापविला हो
तव त्या मालिनीन पाण्या उपसिला हो
तव त्या मालिनीन आंगोल आष्टव केली हो
तव त्या मालिनीन तुलसी पूजा केली हो
तव त्या मालिनीन भोजेनार दिली हो
तव तो माली उठुनी जागा झाला हो
तव त्या माल्यानी आंगोल आष्टव केली हो
तव त्या मालिनीन भोजना वाढविली हो
तव तो माली भोजना जेवला हो
तव त्या माल्यान पान विडा खाल्ला हो
शिरी बांधुनी लालू मुंडासी हो
खांद्या घेतल्या काल्याशा घोंगडा हो
कंबरे बांधिल्या आकरे कोयत्या हो
पायान चढविली किरु मिरु जूता हो
निघून चालल पर्वत डोंगरा हो
तिथ न्यारिली सायाची इसारा हो
तिथ न्यारीली खैराची खुंटा हो
तिथ न्यारिली धायरीच्या शेवला हो
तिथ कारिल्या धामणाच्या वेली हो
शिरी घेतला भारा बांधून
शिरी वलविला भारा बांधून
चालता बोलता घरापासी आले हो
तव त्या माल्यानी गोठु गुरला केला हो
चाया लाविल्या हाऱ्याला हो
कारीले कारीले रोकरीचे दामू हो
तव तो माली गेला सुताराच वली हो
आमाला लागला नांगराचा कामू हो

तव त्या सुतारानी रोखिल्या इसारा हो
तव त्या सुतारानी तासील्या इमारा हो
तव त्या सुतारानी इसाडा नि खुंटा तासिल्या हो
तव त्या सुतारानी नांगर भरियेल हो
तव त्या माल्यानी नांगराच मोल चुकविल हो
तव तो माली गेला लोहाराचे वली हो
आमा लागला फालाचा कामू हो
आमा लागला वसूचा कामू हो
तव त्या लोहारानी भातासा फुकिला हो
तव त्या लोहारानी फाळ घडविला हो
तव त्या लोहारानी वसू घडविला हो
तव त्या माल्यानी मोल चुकविला हो
तव तो माली घरापासी आला हो
हाक मारिली धवल्या पवल्या बैलाला हो
तव तो माली मल्यापासी गेला हो
तव त्या माल्यानी नांगर जुंपिले हो
पहिला वरा घेतला उगवतू मावलतू हो
दुसरा वरा घेतला उरणा चौला हो
तव त्या माल्यानी नांगर सोडिले हो
तव त्या माल्यानी दंडुस घातले हो
तव त्या माल्यानी हालदी लाविल्या हो
तव त्या माल्यानी शिपणा लाविल्या हो
एक पानी हलदू दोन पानी झाली हो
दोन पानी हलदू तीन पानी झाली हो
तीन पानी हलदू चार पानी झाली हो
चार पानी हलदू पांच पानी झाली हो
तव ती हालदू इस्ताराला गेली हो
तव त्या माल्यानी मरवानासी दिल्या हो
तव त्या माल्यानी हालदी खणिल्या हो
तव त्या मालिनीन होडिल्या तोडिल्या हो
तव त्या माल्यानी हारस भरिले हो
बाहि बली शिरावरि घेतले हो
चालता बोलता घरापासी आले हो

हारे उतरील्या दारीच्या अंगणी हो
तव तो माली गेला भंडाऱ्याच्या वली हो
आमाला लागला उकडीचा कामू हो
तव तो माली घरापासी आला हो
उकडी उतरली दारिच्या अंगणी हो
तव त्या माल्यानी चुलदान खणिली हो
हाणील हाणील गंगेचे पाणी हो
तव त्या माल्यानी हानीला चुन्याचा बोटू हो
चंदनु लाकरा जालूसा केला हो
तव त्या माल्यानी हालदी ऊकरील्या हो
तव त्या माल्यानी हालदी पाटिल्या हो
सूर्याच्या किरणीं वालुत लाविल्या हो
तव त्या वाण्यानी गोणिया भरल्या हो
तव त्या गोणी बैलावर चरविल्या हो
पुढ चालती ढवल पवल बैल हो
माग चालती दातार शेटू हो
तव तो माली गेला पेण शाराला हो
तिथ मांडीला हालदीचा विकरा हो
तिथ हालद घ्या मणून सबूद केला हो
तिथ नाय व्हई हालदीचा विकरा हो
भरल्या गोणी बैलावर चरविल्या हो
पुढ चालती धवले पवले बैल हो
माग चालती दातार शेटू हो
चालत बोलत आले पोयनाडा शाराला व्हो
तिथ मांडीला हालदीचा विकरा हो
हालद घ्या म्हणून सबूद केला हो
तो नाद पडला नथू थल्याच कानी हो
तव त्या नथू थल्यानी हालद मोलविली हो
तव ती हालदू पालवे घेतली हो
तव त्या नारायण थल्या मोला चुकविली हो
चालत बोलत घरापासी आले हो
घरंशी निगा हो पार्वती बायी वरमायी हो
त्या हालदी ठाऊसा करावा हो

हाणुनी देवाऱ्या खाली ठेविली हो
ती होईल नवऱ्या भाऊ काही राजाला हो
हालद वाटिली पाठ्यावरि हो
ती हालदू वाटिया घेतली हो
कुंकु घेतला करंडी ये हो
चौघी करविल्या घेऊनि आल्या हो
चौघी सवासनी घेऊनि आल्या हो
हालदी गणविता चौगी जणी हो

गौरीचें गाणें

घाटावरशी आली धनगरा आली धनगरा त्यानची सातशे मेंढरा हो
त्या मेंढराच्या काढा लोकरी काढा लोकरी ना कांबळी गौरी बसायाला हो
गौरि गौरि तूं गौरि पाना फूलांच गौरी आगरी पानाफूला म्हांगू हो
म्हांगू संगू नवरेच्या आयेने साटीला लेका वंशा कारणा हो

वाणाचें गाणें

वान घ्या हो तुमी आयेयी नारी
वान घ्याया उभी राहली हरिचंद्राची तारामती
तिथ आल विठोबा देव
फिटली रे देवा विठोबा तुमची आठवरु वान

तेलवणाचें गाणें

आयततू झाडा चांद काय सूरयाला
त्यांना काय द्यावावा पानाचा विडा काय गंधाचा टिला हो
त्यांनी येवा आपुले मंडपी हो
आयतनू झाडा हो जेजूरीचे खंडोबा देवा हो
आयतनू झाडा हो पंढरीचे इठोबा देवा हो
आयतनू झाडा हो गाईचे कोलसरी देवी हो
तेला तेला मूर्तू केला जोशी बोलवा तेलवणा
आधीं तेल पडे चांद सूर्या माथया मग तेल पडे नवऱ्याला
काल्या तीलाचा तेलू सवर्णाचा दांडा कापशी सूतू नागेली पाना तेलवणा

या या मंडपी हो आली या गेली या
जमनुबाई देवूबाई आधी या त्यांचे बोलवा हो कंत
मंडप दिस शोभिवंत
या या मंडपी हो सारविला चुना
मंडपी येती राजसूना
या या मंडपी सारवीला सूत
मंडपी येती राजपुत्र
या या मंडपी हो सारवील्या रेती
मंडपी येती राजलेकी
या या मंडपी हो सारवीला सूत
मंडपी येती रघुनाथ

तुझ घरच्या मूर्त मेढी मुळ तुझवर भरु कशी आता
मजवरि भरु चवकटीच्या या घर दवण्यानी वोंबा

खांद्या कुदली हातां सवर्णा पाट्या देव गेले राना मातीला
हानली माती टाकलि दारीये एवढा धंदा दमायाला
चूल सोन्याची वैल मोत्याचा चुलीवर कांहीं शिज हो
चूलीवर शिजे सांडि काय डाली वैलावर शिजे झोल हो
आले गदिनकर सोयरे त्यांचे कोपरा आले वल हो
एक बोलतय आलणी एक बोलतय सुरणी
कोणी ग सुगरणी रांधियेला
गंगूबाय सुगरणीन रांधियेला
गंगूबाय बोल मानी काय केला जमुनाबाय आली तिन मीठ टाकला
जेवले खावले पडले करगोटे तुटले सुध नाहीं
त्यांच्या कमरेला काथ्याच्या दोऱ्या सरसर घागरी कटीच्या निसटल्या
तलिया तेलू डलमले खाली सोभनू जले
पहिला उलवा फेणियाचा हा काय चांद सूर्या देवाचा
दुसरा उलवा पापडाचा घरचे फुलस्वामी देवाचा
तेलवणा आली ये कव नारी गेली ये सदरे शेले वरणू हो
मंडपा दारी मंडल घुमती शेनायकिती तेलवणा

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नागोबा दारीचा फुलेला चाफा नागोबा दारीचा
देवू चाफ्याचा केला गवरु देवू

ते हो गौरावरि कोन देऊ न्हाई कोन देऊ न्हाई
नवरा चंदर देवू न्हाई त्यापाणी सारणी जाई नवरा चंदर न्हाई
सारण शिंपत गंगू बाय बाल नारलि आल्या आन्तर भार्यी
नारलीचा वडा करी हशा म्हात्रे यजमानू लेकाचे कारणा हो

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कनकोबाचे डोंगरावरि ही काय निघल्याती भोमा
तीथ ग लावियेली ही काय कुंभारा ही कामा
आरे आरे कुंभार दादा आमाला अहिरि पाहिजे
तुमचे ऐरीला ओ काय कशियाचा लेवा
आमचे ऐरीला ओ काय चुनियाचा लेवा

* * *

पाशेणी उखला खैरी मुसला घाव घाले संसारी काय चौघाजना
चांदूल सडितां मुसल वाजती बाशिंगा शोभती नवरे चंदर देवाना

* * *

बांध बांध गो वरमाये दहिभाताची शिदोरी मामा जाती दूरी काय काकणा मोळू
हिंडता फिरता आले काय चौला शाराला तिथ नाहीं काकणाचा उपदेसू
बांध बांध गो वरमाये दहिभाताची शिदोरी मामा जाती दूरी काय काकणा मोळू
हिंडता फिरता आले काय धोकोडे शाराला तिथ आहे काकणाचा उपदेसू
सोन्याच्या आंकड्या फोफलीचा फोफल मामांनी वोहियेला
तांबुल्या चीचेशी फोफलीच फोफल मामांनी वोहियेला
सोन्याचा उमतारा मामांनी तासीला हथ बसा भाचिया कांकण बांधू

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उघडा येशीचा मेढा जाऊं दे संभूचा घोडा
बारा वरसाचा संभू देव नवरा
सात वरसाची गिरजा बाई नवरी
हानुनी बाहुल्या उभी केली
तव त्या संभू देवू घोड्या खारु झाले
गिरजा बाईचे मंडपी आले हो
गिरजा बाईची माऊली आरती घेऊनी माघारी गेली हो
ही आरती कोना वोवालावी हो
आधी काय वोवालीली चांद काय सूरयाला
मग आरती गिरजाचे वरा हो

गिरजाची माऊली मनी कष्टी झाली
आरती घेऊनी आली हो
अग माझा गिरजा काय माझ्या गिरजा काय झाला गिरजा
बारा वरसा तप केला त्या काय वाया गेला
गिरजा वर तुझा संभू म्हातारा हो
आसूं दे म्हातारा आसूं दे कोतारा
हाय माझे जन्माचा जोडा हो
आर आर संभू देवा पालटू पिवली काया हो
वाघंबरी वटा मोकल्या हो जटा
तेवा ते संभू देवू घोड्या खारु झाले
गिरजा बाईचे मण्डपी आले हो

* * *

सगमा गो नदीवरी देव न्हाऊनी येती
सोन्याच्या पादुका देव चालुनि येती
पिवली अब्दागीर देव चालुनि येती
लग्नाच्या येलेला देव यजमानू होती

Vide English rendering Song No. 6 (page 357).

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मालनीच्या मल्या राम वेचीत व्होते कल्या
सिताबाई गुंफीत व्हत्या माला
अहो सिताबाई लवकर लवकर गुंफा हो माला
भरल्या लग्नाच्या हो येला
भरल्या म्हणूनी लग्नाच्या येला नवरी येऊं द्या मण्डपी दारा
नवरी बाहुल्याला उभी करा

* * *

सखे निजलीस काय जागूली
वालाच्या सऱ्या हो साखुल्या आली हो ताटी
सखे बालाच्या साखुल्या
बाय आमा नाहीं काजू
गोविंदाच्या काल्या घरसोल्या करा हो राजू

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गावाचे बाहेरी बापा काही वाजत
भल्याचा लेक धुव तुला परणाया येत हो
परणाया येत हाइ संग काही हानीत
गांठी गो बांगडी माझे जल्माचा जोडा

* * *

मालनीचे मल्या वादरा गजागती
नारलीवर गो नारला येती
ये गो वाटेनें नवरा गेला चंदर देवु
नारलीवर गा वाडा वोडीला

* * *

मालनीचे मल्यामधीं लावलाय साखरेचा आला हो
चंदर देव जाती लगनाला देवा चांद सूरयाचे बला हो

* * *

वड पिंपलाचा झाडाखाली
पिंगला कांहीं बोले
राजा दशरथाचा बाल
राजा भीमकाची कन्या
कन्या आहे उपवार

बारा वरसाचा राम
सात वरसाची सीता
रामानी सिताचा लग्न वरतला
कसी रे माल घातली रघुनाथा

* * *

जनकें बापानी मांडीला सीता सवारु
सीतेच्या सहीवारा येती खंडोखंडी राजे
येती राम लक्षुमण
येती भरत सतरुघ्न
येती तेतीस कोटी देवू
येती लंकेचे रावनू
आभाचा केला मंडपू
धरतरीचा केला थारा
धनुस गेडा ताटामधि उभा केला
रावन सभेंत उठला
हात धनुस्याला घातिला

धनुष्य आला उरावरी
रावण पडला धरणीवरि
धनुष्य आला उरावरी
राम राम सुंभरिला त्याचे मुखी
राम सभेतूनी उठला
ज्याने उचलावा धनुष्य
त्यानें सीता परणावी
तांवे अंगुस्थानी रामांनी धनुष्य उचलिला
हरि राम शिरी राम
बहुं उपकार केले आमा
एक बार तरी शीता मी नेईन लंकेला

* * *

आम्री केरं कसीयाचा
गुलछडी मोडून् येनी केली सीता माईला
आम्री केरं कसीयाचा

* * *

आम्री नाचती मोरु
मंडपी जावई आला थोरु
धावना करा तुमी नवरीच्या बापानूं

* * *

नवरा आला नवरी साठी
करवल्या आल्या शिले भाताच्या
घासा साठी

* * *

गुलाब मोडून तुरा केला राम देवाला
आम्री केरं कसीयाचा
जाई मोडून हार केला मोठ्या लोकांना

* * *

नवऱ्या करवल्या कायरे केल्यास
माझ्या करवल्या लेकुरवाल्या चाकरमाने
त्यांच्या मागून येतील गाड्या घोडे

* * *

जिकलीम गो येक डोले
आमचीचे गो दोन फुटले

* * *

नवरा आला आंबेदरडी
नवरीची आय कुल्ले खरडी

* * *

काले काले उडीदाचे पांढर पोले
घरी आले जेवायाला गंगूबाय मोडीत डोले

* * *

नवऱ्या नवऱ्या उपट डावल्या नवरीच्या
नवरी बोले मी तुमची तुमाला घाला घुमा करवल्याचा
करवल्या बोलती आमी उडती पाखरा परा धोतरा भटाची
भट बोले मी पोकल भट मारा फट वाजंत्र्याची
वाजंत्री बोलती आमी मौजे गडी धरा दाढी यजमानाची
यजमान बोले मी कशान काय धरा पाय गोताचे
गोत बोले आमी सुकाची हासली मोडा फासली वरमाईची

* * *

तिला तांदुलाच्या राशी
ही दोघा वोव्हारा उभी केली आंत्रकुशी

* * *

अगो सोईरे आपण जाऊ भंडारवले
ताजा सरगा गो भाजूनि खाऊं
सरगा खातांना गो काटा गो लागला
सोयरे मोठा जुलूम गो झाला

* * *

ये गो सोयरे माझ्या घरा पालणा टांगीन मंगले दारा
तुला पाजीन लिंबाचा सारा तुला गो घालीन विंझण वारा

* * *

दमडीच्या सुपारीला भ्यालीस ग सोयरे
घरां कां ना आलीस सोयरे काळ्यान कां राहलीस

वरातीचीं गाणीं

काटुंगले काटुंगले झाडाची रुंदली पाने
गोरिये तोंडाचे नवरे ग वोवू बाये
बालपणीं येऊग तुझा कोणी मांडीले
मांडीले मांडीले बाईचे देवा धर्मा आई
बाईचे देवू संभर तू देवा धर्मा आई
बाईला घेऊनि जातीगो तेलंगू देशा
तेलंगे देशीच्या नारी गो पायी निंगाल्या
मानवल्या मानवल्या बाईचे गांदुल्या जोडा

* * *

फुल फुल हो शेवंते तूं फूलेशी जाये गो
आपन येऊं तिसेवरु जाऊं मालुंगे देशा
त्यांची भरजा पार्वती बाई धरील त्यांच पाय हो
नको जाऊ देवा एकला आपुन जाऊं दोघां जना हो
कपालीचा हिंगुल टिला नवरे चंद्रबाईला देऊं हो
कानाचे चऊकडे नवरे चंदर देवांना देऊं हो

* * *

मोत्या पेरितां गेली देव्हाऱ्या
गेली देव्हाऱ्या सुनीये बाल्या हशा म्हात्रे
मोत्या पेरीतां गेली चौकें
सून देऊके यसोदा बाई

* * *

राम देवाची दातवणा ही काय अडुलशाची पाना
चंदर देवाची दांतवणा ह्या काय आंबियाच्या डाळ्या

* * *

हत्ती दंती फणी माथा उकली रुणी काय देऊकन्या

* * *

डोंगराकडणी चरती हारणा
तिथ लोपती सूरयाची किरणा
उगव उगव रे सूर्यावाणा
ही दोघा वोव्हारा
हात जोडुनि पाया पडती
काइ मागती देवा धर्माचा राजू
देव धर्माचा राजू हाये उदेंडू

देवलोकाची बार्शिगें मिरलोका जाती
ती बांधावी नलाय दमयते
ती बांधावी ईश्वर पार्वते
ती बांधावी दोघां सुगर्ता
दोघा सुगर्ता होत म्हातारी
काकणा बार्शिगा जाती शिवर्धनी
आईकरे चांद सूर्या
नवरीच्या घरच्या हिरव्या घाऱ्या

* * * * * *

पहिली भवरी गवता उभी पायी वाजती वाले
हरिश्चंद्रा संगे फिरसी तारामती नऊरे

* * *

ये हो हशा म्हात्र गेला ठाण्या माहिमा हो
तेथशी हानियेली पाटावरची घडी
ती हो वाहिली देऊबाय मोइरीचे खांद्या

* * *

हाडपण झडपण कौला न्हाना
बर्माच्या पुत्रा देव नारायणा
खांद्या कुदल्या हातीं सुवर्ण पाटी
ही जागा कुंभारा मातीला जातीं
तिथ होती कुसुंबी राव
त्यांनी दिला मातीला ठाव
खणिली मातीं भरिल्या पाट्या
शिरीं मस्तकीं वल्हविल्या
हासत खेलत घरासी आली
वुरुमे खाणे वरती येती
गंगेचे पान्या वल्हविली
वत्तीस न्हाणी गाळीयेली
डोये पायी सुंदीयेली

पाचा बोरी उंडावली
तोच उंडा चाखे घाला
चाख म्हणजे भोकर चाय
उतरीयेले चारी पडगे
उतरीयेली आणुंदेली
उतरीयेली चारी बोंडली
उतरीयेली चारी कारल्या
उतरीयेली नववा कारा
करावाला आणा माना
करा देला घोड्या बहिणी
घोड्या बहिणी काय किजो
बसायाला घोडा दिजो

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खेलत होती सुपली खेलत होती कुरकूला
खेलत होती हो बाहुल्याचा ख्यालू
खेलता खेलता हशा म्हाऱ्यान देखियेली
हशा म्हात्र पुसती मसण्या पाटल सजणार
तुम्हीं आम्हीं सोईरे होणार
सोईरे होऊं जोशा घरीं जाऊं
नावाच्या नावरशी गणूं हो
चंदनाच्या पाटू बसाया घालूं हो
सवर्णाच्या ताटीं आपण जेऊं हो
सप्तर सैंदर डवलिये ल्याली ग नवसर हारु हो ॥ धृ० ॥
दैवाची चंद्रुबाये ल्याली सरुखा सासरा हो
सासरा म्हणजे पराय बापू घालील सादू बाये हो ॥ धृ० ॥
दैवाची चंद्रुबाये ल्याली ग सख्खी सासू हो
सासू म्हणजे पराय आई घालील दुपारी जेऊं हो
दैवाची चंद्रुबाये ल्याली ग सख्खा दीरु हो
दीरु म्हणजे पराय भाऊ घालील सादू वहिनी हो ॥ धृ० ॥
दैवाची चंद्रुबाये ल्याली ग सख्खी जाऊ हो
जाऊ म्हणजे पराय बहिण करील कामाचा दावा हो ॥ धृ० ॥
दैवाची चंद्रुबाये ल्याली ग सख्खी ननंद
ननंद म्हणजे पराय बहिण लावील लटकी कल हो ॥ धृ० ॥
सांडि सांडि सुपली सांडि सांडि कुरकूला
सांडि सांडि बाहुल्याचा ख्यालू हो
धाकुट्या बहिणी घरा संभाला
आम्हीं जातो सासुर्या घरी हो ॥ ध्रु० ॥

Vide English rendering Song No 7 (page 357)

ये हो मसण्या पाटील गेला ठाण्या माहिमा हो
तेथशी हाणीयेली दवण्याची काडी
त्येनी हो भरियेली गंगूबाय येनीच्या खोपा हो

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रामानी अंबा लावियेला
लक्षुमणानी पारु बांधिला
शीतेती आंग शिपियेला
एक पानी अंबा दोन पानी झाला
दोन पानी अंबा तीन पानी झाला
तीन पानी अंबा चार पानी झाला

चार पानी अंबा पांच पानी झाला
पांच पानी अंबा मोहुरला
मोहुरल्या अंब्या आंबेस आले
बाजरे अंब्या देठोदेठीं घोसोघोसी रस गले
त्यांचा अर्धा रस जाइ जुईचा पाला आरश्या गेला मालुंगा
त्यांची पांच मालुंगा वोवुबाईच्या ओटी ये सासुर्या जाती वोवुबाये
तिच्या मामांनी घेतली लाडी लाविली वाडी बदामाची
त्यांची पांच बदामा वोवुबाईच्या वोटिये सासुर्या जाती वोवुबाये

TABLE NO. 2

Names of the Villages visited for collecting information outside Alibag Taluka.

Thana District		Kolaba District	
Purane	Ambarnath	Birwadi	Mhasale
Ayare	Dombivali	Dhondkhar	Murud
Devale	Vasai	Roth	Mandala
Kon	Bhamdar	Bhatsai	Padavali
Sabad	Chandansar	Chavare	Gonaghar
Muthavad	Panju	Roha	Laxmikhar
Lonad	Palghar	Parangkhar	Mithakhar
Sonal	Mumbra	Yeshwantkhar	Shighra
Haranwadi	Goregaon	Mahadeokhar	Banda
Itad	Bhiwandi	Talekhar	Josaran
Khambale		Kokban	Kharpada
Vandre		Chanera	Satambe
Pachchhapur		Pali	Mulekhand
Jambivali		Siddheshwar	Narpol
Paharay		Borlai	Nandgaon
Wade		Gadav	Kasu
Angaon		Pandapur	Vashi
Shirsat		Vadhav	Kharkarlai
Hamarapur		Shetpalas	Vadkhal
Kanchad		Amtem	Koleti
Asangaon		Palaspe	Apate
Shahapur		Turade	Dand
Kulagaon		Majgaon	

TABLE NO. 3

The Names of the Villages represented in the Socio-Economic Survey of the Agris of Alibag Taluka.

Sambri	Bahutichapada	Ghatawade
Chikhali	Has'ivara	Valavali
Kurdus	Saral	Bhovale
Vaghavira	Navakhar	Kune
Kumumbala	Milkatkhar	Sudkoli
Kachali	Kalagaon	Talawali
Pitakiry	Mandva	Kude
Medhekhar	Dhokovade	Jambhulpada
Shahapur (big)	Awas	Valavada
Shahapur (small)	Sasavane	Gothi
Shahabaj	Zirad	Kavir
Poynad	Vayashet	Vadhav
Pezari	Karla	Korlai
Chari	Khandala	Suryakhar
Kopar	Parhut	Bamangaon
Khidaki	Bahirole	Chinchoti
Lebhi	Zalakhanda	Mahan
Sutarpada	Nagaonkhar	Baple
Kambharle	Vagholi	Tadvagale
Narangi	Beloshi	Ranjanpada
Phoperi	Khanav	Mughar
Dehan	Mahajana	Jalapada
Dheran	Choul	Mapgaon
Mankola	Revdanda	

TABLE NO. 4

List of Villages in Alibag Taluka Showing Pure Agri Population, Mixed Population, Non-Agri and Deserted Villages.

Pure Agri Population	Mixed Population	Non-Agri Population	Deserted Villages
1	2	3	4
Kolgaon	Avas	Koproli	Kandvira
Tajpur	Kawade	Rewas	Kaloshi
Bhijlikhar	Dhokawade	Veertasaral	Koprikhar
Milkatkhar	Nevdar Kolgaon	Agarsure	Khopnekhar
Morkhol	Mandav Tarf Zirad	Ambeghar	Gavalikotakhar
Yelawne	Revdanda	Akshi	Gaonkhar
Andoshi	Saral	Kanakeshwar	Gopacharhi
Usar	Sasawne	Gan Tarf Shrigaon	Jalshi
Kachali	Shrigaon	Gan Tarf Parhur	Talbandkhar
Kalwadkhar	Agarkot	Gunjis	Talajikhar
Kusumbale	Ambepur	Goteghar	Tadacha Kotha
Kopar	Alibag	Ghaswadkhar	Durgadarya
Khatvirakhar		Charhikhar	Devatalai

Pure Agri Population	Mixed Population	Non-Agri Population	Deserted Villages
1	2	3	4
Khanav	Aveti	Chendhare	Dhuwadkhar
Khidkikhar	Umate	Choul	Navakhar Rayande
Talawli	Kamarle	Zirad	Nigade
Tudal	Karle	Dawale	Pazar
Divalangkhar	Kaveer	Talashet	Palande
Divi Parangi	Kihim	Tadwagle	Belkhar
Dehan Koni	Kune	Devghar	Misarai
Navkhar Tarf Shrigaon	Kude	Devatalai Tarf Zirad	Bhangardadaji
Navkhar Tarf Umate	Kurdus	Nevdar Navanga	Mandve Tarf Bamangaon
Nebuli	Kurul	Nagzari	Modvira
Pitkari	Korlai	Patele	Laxmiprasad
Pezarikhar	Khandale	Nande	Lonkotha
Phopherikhar	Gothi	Parhe	Varasgaon
Bapale	Ghotavade	Bamansure	Wagholi
Borghar	Chikhalikhar	Bamnoli	Waskhar
Bhakarwadkhar	Chinchoti	Bidwagale	Shivsand
Bhonang	Dhavar	Belkade	Simadevikhar
Mahajane	Talavade	Belvi	Surai
Mandavkhar	Talavali Tarf Khandale	Boris	Ramkothakhar
Man Tarf Zirad	Thal	Bhamala	Sonkothakhar
Mule	Dalavi Kharoshi	Malyan	Jurgavali
Medhekar	Navedarvali	Mapgaon	Jurbapuji
Moshende	Nagaon	Malod	
Rajankhar	Parhur	Munavali	
Ranjankar Davali	Poynad	Muzet	
Rayandekhar	Phansapur	Rajwadi	
Rawet	Bahirole	Rule	
Lebhikhar	Bamangaon	Wadavali	
Lonare	Beloshi	Waghodi	
Wadhav Budruk	Bhadane	Satirje	
Wagvirakhar	Bhal	Ghera Sagargad	
Waghrankhar	Bherse	Bopali	
Wadgaon	Ramraj	Bhond Kharoshi	
Wayhet	Warande	Mahan	
Walwadekhar	Warsoli	Ruishet Bhomavali	
Wave	Sagaon	Khanderi	
Belhavali	Sahan	Velat	
Shahapur	Kurkundi Koltembhi	Kolghar	
Shahabajkhar	Narangee	Vadav Khurd	
Satghar	Chinchvali	Sogaon	
Sambarikhar	Petambe		
Sukadkoli	Veshavi		
Surekhar			
Dherandkhar			
Mankule			
Nadivarekhar			
Walavali			
Kharpetambe			
Wanavali			
Vaijali			

Pure Agri Villages	63
Villages with Mixed Population	54
Villages with Non-Agri Population ...	53
Deserted Villages	35
Total ...	205

Table No. 5

A Summary of the Answers called from the Agris to Questionnaire issued to 228 persons.

1.	Pasture	37
2.	Drinking Water	32
3.	Stud Bulls	32
4.	Water Pipes	26
5.	Public Disponsary	23
6.	English Education	23
7.	Wells	22
8.	Technical Education	13
9.	Veterinary Aid ...	8
10.	Water for Agriculture	7
11.	Primary Schools	5
	Total	228

Table No. 6

Showing the number of Agri Teachers in the District Local Board Schools in Alibag Taluka (1949 July).

	All Teachers		Trained	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Agri	77	16	38	6
Others	120	44	74	16
Total ...	197	60	112	22

TABLE NO. 7

Spread of Education in Agris, Alibag Taluka in 1949

Village	High School	Matriculates		College		B A.		M A. L.L.B
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Shahabaj ...	32	13	2	8	1	3	2	
Poynad ...	4	1	2	1				
Pezari ...	5	1		1				
Chari ...	3							
Khidki, Lebhi, Kopar	4	1		2	1			
Shahapur ...	2			1				
Vaghran ...	6	6		3				
Ranjan Khar ...	2	1						
Hoshiware ..	6	1	1	2			1	1
Mandawe . .				1				
Bagadande ...				1				
Nagaon ...				1		1		
Choul ...	1							
Rewdanda ...	1							
Dhokawade ...	2							
Kusumbale ...	1							
Total	69	24	5	21	2	4	3	1

TABLE NO. 8

Number of Regular, Additional and Censers Talathis in Alibag Taluka in July 1949.

Agri	...	.	.	20
Brahmin	...	...	.	9
Mali	..	. .	.	7
Maratha	...	...	...	3
Bhandari	...	.	. .	2
Choukalashi	...	...	...	2
Sonar	...	...	..	2
All others	...	...	...	19
			Total	64

TABLE NO. 9

Details of Tagai Loans advanced to the Agriculturists in Alibag Taluka during the period 1946-49.

Year			Amount in Rs.
1946	...	...	40,000
1947	...	...	1,00,000
1948	...	...	2,00,000
1949	...	...	4,00,000 (ear marked)

TABLE NO. 10

Prices of commodities and other articles in Alibag Taluka in 1947-48.

Paddy per Khandi	From Rs 150 to Rs. 180
Other grains	Rs 2 per paylee
Jaggery	Rs. 16 to Rs. 22 per maund
Sweet oil or Copra oil .. .	Rs 16 to Rs 20 per maund
Agricultural impliments:—	
A Plough	Rs 5 to Rs 7
A wooden comb .. .	Rs 3 to Rs 4
A crowbar	Rs 2½ to Rs. 4
A shovel	Rs. 2
An axe	Rs. 2
A pick-axe .. .	Rs. 1½
A small sickle . .	Rs. ¾ to Rs 1½
A big sickle	Rs ½ to Rs 2½
A pensan	Rs. 1½ to Rs 2½
A bucket . .	Rs 2 to Rs. 4
Clothes:—	
A pair of dhotees	Rs 3 to Rs. 5
A Piece of lom-cloth	Rs. ¾ to Rs 1½
A shirt . .	Rs 2 to Rs. 2½
A coat . ..	Rs. 5 to Rs 7
A Kabja (Jacket) .. .	Rs. 1½ to Rs 2½
A cap	As. 6 to Re 1
A saree	Rs 9 to Rs 12
A piece of blouse	Re. 1 to Rs 1½
A piece of saree for young girl (Sarakha)	Rs. 2 to Rs. 4
A half pant	Rs. 2 to Rs. 3
A blanket	Rs. 6 to Rs. 9

QUESTIONNAIRE

For Social and Economic Survey of Agris of Alibag Taluka.

Family Economic Life:

I कुटुंबाचें नांव.
Name of the Family.

मुख्य पुरुषाचें नांव
Head of the Family.

II. ताब्यांत असलेली जमीन
Land Owned.

	Khariff खरीप		Warkas वरकस	
	A. ए.	G. गुं.	A. ए.	G. गुं.
स्वतःची Own				
सावकारी On hire				
एकंदर Total				

III. वरील जमिनीपासून मिळणारें उत्पन्न
Income from above land

	मक्ता Rent					
	Fixed ठरलेला		Actual प्रत्यक्ष		Difference बाकी	
	Kd. खंडी	Md. मण	Kd. खंडी	Md. मण	Kd. खंडी	Md मण
Land on hire सावकारी जमीन						

	Approximate Income अंदाजे उत्पन्न		Actual Income प्रत्यक्ष उत्पन्न	
	Kd. खंडी	Md. मण	Kd. खंडी	Md. मण
Own Land. स्वतःची जमीन				

IV. जोड धंदे Supplementary Occupations

Subsidiary crop जोड पिकें	Kind प्रकार	Months किती महिने	Wages मजुरी	Manure Rs. a. खत
A				
B				
C				

	Seeds Rs. a. बियाणें	Miscel. Rs. a. इतर	Income उत्पन्न	Remarks शेरा
A				
B				
C				

इतर व्यवसाय	प्रकार	भांडवल	किती महिने	खर्च	उत्पन्न
Other vocations	Kind	Capital	Months	Expenses Rs. a.	Income Rs. a.
D					
E					
F					

V. Balance and its details Rs. a.
शिलकी रकम व तिचा तपशील

Silver-pots, ornaments etc.
चांदीचो भांडो, दागिने इ०

Gold ornaments.
सोन्याचे दागिने

Savings in the post office.
पोस्टांत

Insurance
विमा

Shares
शेअर्स

Cash-certificates
कॅश सर्टिफिकेट्स

Cash in hand.
रोख

Others.
इतर

Total.
एकंदर

VI. Details of persons in the family. Total No.
कुटुंबांतील व्यक्तीविषयीं माहिती एकंदर संख्या

	Name नांव	Age वय	Relation नातें	Occupation उद्योग	Education शिक्षण	Remarks शेरा
1						
2						
3						

so on

VII. Indirect Income and its details
अदृश्य आयात व तिचें स्वरूप

Does any one of the family reside at other places ?
कुटुंबांतील कोणी इतर ठिकाणीं राहतो काय

Where ?
कोठें

Occupation
उद्योग

When does he come to reside at home ?
घरीं केव्हां येतो

For how many days ?
किती दिवस

How much and in what way does he help the family ?
मदत काय व कसली करितो

Any other remarks.
इतर

VIII. Information regarding the house
घराविषयीं माहिती

Owner of the house.
घर कोणाचें

Who owns the land beneath the house ?
घराखालील जमीन कोणाची

Rent of the land.
जमिनीचें भाडें किती

Period of rent.
मुदत किती

Average value.
सरासरी किंमत

Expenses on annual repairs.
वार्षिक दुरुस्तीचा खर्च

Details of repairs.
कोणत्या प्रकारची

IX. Loan.
कर्ज

How much ? (amount)
किती घेतलें

The reason for the loan
कां घेतलें

Rate of interest.
व्याजाचा दर

In other ways.
इतर स्वरूपांत

How much from the Money Lender ?
सावकारापासून किती

How much from the Pathan ?
पठाणापासून किती

How much from the Co-operative Society ?
कोऑपरेटिव्ह सोसायटीपासून किती

Kinds.
प्रकार

X. Annual Budget.
वार्षिक अंदाजपत्रक

Man	Woman	Children	Total
पुरुष	स्त्री	मुलें	एकंदर
Clothes		Spices	
कपडे		मीठ मसाला	
Religious ceremonies		Fish	
धार्मिक कारण		मासळी	
Refined Tastes		Meat	
करमणूक		मांस	
Court of Law		Tea-Coffee	
कोर्टासाठीं		चहा कॉफी	

Social सामाजिक	Oil तेल
Educational शिक्षण	Ghee तूप
Fuel जळण	Vegetables भाजी
Lighting दिवाबत्ती	Pulses डाळी
Rice तांदूळ	Miscellaneous इतर
Millets कडधान्यें	

XI. शेतकीचीं आयुधें Agricultural Tools and Implements.

Name नांव	Number संख्या	Total cost एकंदर किंमत	Name नांव	Number संख्या	Total cost एकंदर किंमत
1			5		
2			6		
3			7		
4			8		

हीं कोठून आणतां? Wherefrom are they acquired?

दुरुस्त कोठें करितां? Where are they repaired?

XII. जनावरांविषयीं माहिती Details about domestic animals.

	Bullocks बैल	Cows गाई	She Buffaloes म्हशी	He Buffaloes रोणगे	Calves वासरें
Number संख्या					
Price किंमत					
Use उपयोग					

	Calves of buffaloes रेडकें	Goats बकऱ्या	Sheep मेंढ्या	Fouls कोंबड्या	Horses घोडे
Number संख्या					
Price किंमत					
Use उपयोग					

१ कोठून आणतां ? Wherefrom acquired
२ रोग कोणते ? Diseases ?
३ उपाय कोणते ? Remedies ?
४ या बाबतींत एकंदर स्थिति समाधानकारक आहे काय ?
Is the state of affairs in this respect satisfactory ?
५ नसल्यास काय कारणें असावींत ?
If not state reasons.
६ उपाय काय करावेत ?
What should be the remedies ?
७ तुमच्या आणखी आवश्यक गरजा कोणत्या ?
What else do you need ?

XIII. कौटुंबिक माहिती Details of the family
कुटुंबाचें नांव Name of the Family
मुख्याचें नांव Head of the Family
Age वय
When married ? लग्न केव्हां झालें ?
दुसरें लग्न केलें काय ? केल्यास कारण
Have married more than once ? If so the reason.
पाट/लग्न Remarriage/marriage
लग्नाच्या वेळेला झाड कोणतें पुजतां ?
Trees worshipped at the time of marriage ?
1 2 3
कुलदैवतें कोणतीं ? Family Deities
1 2 3 and so on
त्यांना काय द्यावें लागतें ? What is offered to them ?
तीर्थाला कुठें गेलां ? Holy places visited ?
मुलांच्या विषयीं माहिती Details of children :

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
मुलगा/मुलगी Boys/Girls								
वय Age								
उद्योग Occupation								
शेरा Remarks								

GLOSSARY

Ashtagar	The western part of Alibag Taluka.
Asu	A circular net.
Ayo	A married woman.
Baherkantha	An outer bund that protects salt paddy fields from tidal flood.
Bandobast	Temporary excommunication imposed by caste council by way of punishment.
Bapaya	A grown-up youth.
Baragotha	Silver bangles (used in plural).
Bhagat	A mediator between a deity and a common man.
Bhajan	A party of musical singers.
Chuki	Fine imposed by a caste council.
Dej	Bridal price
Dharakya	One who distributes 'pan-supari' at a meeting, or serves at a feast (male).
Dhavala	A marriage song.
Diwat	Feast given to labourers during transplantation.
Ganthe	Ear-rings.
Gaothan	A spot in a village where houses are situated.
Gotambil	A feast given in a marriage.
Handa	Co-operative agricultural work.
Jamat	A meeting of caste members.
Jitada	Famous fish of Kharapat.
Jol	Co-operative work to repair an outer bund
Jot	Labour contract.
Kabaja	A sort of a jacket.
Kalavan	A liquid preparation of fish used as relish.
Kanda	An internal bund dividing one field from another.
Kana	Painting with ashes of paddy husk.
Kanaga	A cylinder of mat, wherein paddy is stored.
Kara	An auspicious representation of a pot holding a coconut and mango leaves.
Karavali	A maid of honour.
Kashi	A plantation of water melons.
Khar	Salt paddy land.
Kharaki	A specific term used for an Agri coming from Kharapat.
Kharapat	Region covering salt paddy land close to an estuary.
Khonda	A small blanket used by an Agri woman to cover her head that reaches to her knees from behind.
Langot	A loin-cloth.

Lani	Agricultural operation of cutting paddy stalks.
Manat	Barren or waste land.
Mandav	A plantation of 'tondalis'.
Moti	A nose-ring.
Nyaya	Decision of the caste council.
Oti	Front part of a house.
'Oti Bharane'	'To fill in lap.'
Pada	A division of a village.
Padakel	A labour substitute.
Panch	A headman.
Pat	A remarriage.
Penasan	A wooden agricultural implement used by the Agris to dig up sods.
Sukati	A low tide.
Soyara	One related through marriage.
Tapa	A social unit of Agri villages.
Talai	A small pond in salt paddy field where 'Jitada' is stored.
Thavala	A plate.
Tonapa	A musical retort.
Udhan	Tidal flood on New Moon or Full Moon days.

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अंबातीरस्थजनानां वृत्तान्तोऽयं प्रकाशितः।
समानं नाम बिभ्रत्यै सादरमर्पितो मया॥

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