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TRIBAL HYDERABAD

Four Reports

BY

CHRISTOPH VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF, PH.D.

With a Foreword

by

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FOREWORD.

THE conditions prevalent in the culturally backward areas of India, that is to say, generally speaking, amongst the tribal populations of India, have received much attention in recent years. This has been stimulated by the enactment of the provisions in the Govenment of India Act of 1935 relating to Partially Excluded Areas and the special responsibilities of Provincial Governors for those areas and for minorities, reinforced by certain directions in the Royal Instrument of Instructions to Governors. Clause IX of the Instrument directs Governors to secure that those classes of the people under their charge who by reason of their small numbers or primitive conditions or lack of education and material advantages "shall not suffer, or have reasonable cause to fear, neglect or oppression"; Clause X directs a Governor, if he thinks that this course would enable him better to discharge his duties to the inhabitants of Partially Excluded Areas, or *to primitive sections of the population elsewhere*, to "appoint an officer with the duty of bringing their needs to his notice and advising him regarding measures for their welfare."

The criticism is frequently expressed that these special provisions and the subsequent special steps taken under them were designed to "create a new minority", and failed to realize that many of the special measures recommended for aboriginal India were equally necessary in other parts of India for the untouchables or even for the ordinary peasantry. There is for course no question of the *creation* of a new minority, but equally there is a strong intention not to overlook the fact that in most parts of India there *is already in existence* as a minority a substratum of what, for want of a more precise term, are generally referred to as aboriginal tribes, socially organised still on an ancient tribal basis, retaining languages otherwise submerged by the Aryan or modern Dravidian speech of the advanced populations that have displaced them in the open country, and still clinging to an ancient way of life radically

different in many respects from the life of the ordinary Indian village and town. Driven as they have been by man or by circumstances into the hills and the backwoods and the malaria belt, these backward peoples are a real minority, and present a real problem to the Indian administrator, educationist and politician. For, with the increasing pressure of population on the better lands, there is a growing demand for the opening up of the aboriginal lands to modern methods of cultivation, while the fact that those lands contain not only many of the best forests in India but also some of her richest mineral deposits every year increases the economic and other contacts of the backwoods man with the modern world. Without any education to fit him to stand up to this culture-contact or invasion, everywhere the tribesman is in grave danger of being suddenly cast adrift from all his cultural and social anchorages upon the waters of the social, economic and industrial revolution in progress elsewhere in India. The results are wellknown and have been summarised for the general reader in a number of recent pamphlets, for the more serious political and social worker in various provincial reports, and for the sociologist and anthropologist in a succession of scientific monographs on individual tribes.

In particular nearly every Province of India which has Partially Excluded Areas has in recent years conducted official investigations into the conditions prevalent in those areas. Mention need here be made only of the Symington Report on the Aboriginal and Hill Tribe of the Partially Excluded Areas in the Province of Bombay (Bombay 1940), the Report of the Partially Excluded Areas Committee, Orissa, 1940, and my own Report *The Aboriginal Problem in the Central Provinces and Berar* (Nagpur 1944). In the last chapter of my Report I attempted in paragraphs 468–473 to summarise the recent steps taken in India outside the Central Provinces and Berar to improve the conditions of the aboriginal, and in paragraph 476–8 to point out the real value to India of partial exclusion of backward areas from the full operation of modern constitutions.

It is of course a fact that many of the measures that are recommended for the backward areas are equally necessary in

areas not so backward, and that often the conditions of the peasantry in distressed areas or of the landless labourer and the untouchables almost everywhere call for great improvement. Yet no one who sees the modern Mahar townsman of a city like Nagpur and compares him with a Gond in the Ramtek forest tract of the Nagpur district can ever be in any real doubt but that the Mahar is far more able than the Gond to hold his own in modern India. Moreover the Untouchables under the name of Scheduled Castes have achieved for themselves effective political recognition as a major minority throughout British India, and it is reasonable to believe that the days of Untouchability are gradually becoming numbered. That is unfortunately not the case with the disabilities of the aboriginal, who still everywhere is fighting a losing battle against loss of land and relegation to hopeless helotry. (I have seen places where aboriginals are badly exploited by members of the Scheduled Castes).

The literature of our Hyderabad tribal populations has in recent years been enriched by Baron Christoph von Fürer Haimendorf's fine scientific studies *The Chenchus*, and *The Reddis of the Bison Hills*, while he has under preparation a third study, which may be his most important anthropological work, on the Gonds of Adilabad. The forthcoming Hyderabad Census Report for 1941 contains an admirable essay by him *The Tribal Populations of Hyderabad Yesterday and To-day* (available as a separate publication from the Government Central Press at Hyderabad). I have also myself attempted in my foreword to *The Chenchus* a general survey of Hyderabad's tribal populations. But so far no official or other publication has concentrated on the present material conditions and administrative problems of the tribal areas of this State. When the War stranded the Haimendorfs in India, the Government of Hyderabad were fortunate to be able to secure the services of so distinguished an ethnologist to tour the backward areas of this State and to write not only scientific monographs on individual tribes but also a series of administrative reports on the conditions actually prevalent in those areas.

The first of such reports was the basis for the administrative steps taken to protect the Chenchus of Mahbubnagar and Nalgonda Districts summarised in Appendix VIII of *The Chenchus*. As the substance of that report is included in Chapters XXX–XXXIII of *The Chenchus* it has not been reproduced in the present volume. But the volume reproduces four other important administrative reports compiled by Dr. Haimendorf, his 1940 notes on the Hill Reddis in the Samasthan of Paloncha, his 1943 note on the conditions of aborignals in the Samasthan of Paloncha and the taluqs of Paloncha and Yellandu in Warangal District, his 1943 note on the aboriginals of the Asifabad, Rajura and Utnur taluqs of Adilabad District, and his later tour notes of the same year on the aboriginals of the Both, Kinwat and Adilabad taluqs of that district.

These notes, particularly the notes on Adilabad District, contain a great deal of unpleasant reading about an unpleasant state of affairs, which is not a credit to Hyderabad. It was therefore for consideration whether they should be published only as a confidential official publication designed to focus the attention of officials in all Departments on one of the most difficult and vital administrative problems of the State. But it was thought that this would be carrying official reticence too far. The problems of the Hyderabad aboriginal areas are in kind exactly similar to the problems of aboriginal areas elsewhere in India. The Symington Report, my Central Provinces Report and the writings of Verrier Elwin and others have familiarised the world with the deplorable conditions under which the aboriginals suffer elsewhere in India. Moreover this Government have embarked upon a policy of bettering the conditions in their tribal areas, and already some of the steps taken in pursuance of that policy, e. g., to restore to the aboriginals the use of their traditional lands and to grant them *patta* rights and other protection, have led to misplaced criticism in the Press and elsewhere; a misunderstanding is being created, largely by wrong information deliberately supplied by those agencies which have for so long profited by the exploitation of the aboriginal helot. Conditions in fact in the tribal areas of Hyderabad differ only from those in the Central Provinces

in that in the Hyderabad areas till recently no determined effort had been made by district officials to keep their subordinates in check and prevent the extortion by them from the aboriginals of *mamul*, *begar*, *rasad* and bribes or to fight the exploitation (with their connivance) of the aboriginals by cleverer immigrants, such as the Banjara, the Maratha, the Brahman the Muslim, the *sahukar* and the *vakil*, the less scrupulous among whom have long found in the tribal areas a happy hunting ground. The reports must therefore speak for themselves to as wide a circle in Hyderabad as possible. I have supplemented them by a detailed index, and those who doubt the justice of my words need only start looking up some of the references against such subjects as aboriginals (loss of land, absentee landlords, allotment of land, exploitation of aboriginals, expropriation of aboriginals), extortion, forced labour, dancing, forests (especially the sub-heads boundaries, contractors, minor produce, rates and subordinates), lawyers, migrations, *patels*, *patwaris*, police, rack-renting, *rasad* and *watandari* officers and system.

The publication of these reports thus has its primary object the stimulation of official and public opinion towards the support of the measures already taken and the further measures contemplated for improving conditions in the tribal areas. Their lessons should also be felt in non-tribal areas elsewhere in the State where villagers suffer from the unchecked oppression of that bad minority of the *deshmukhs*, *watandars* and *sahukars*, who thereby bring discredit on their order as a whole. The Press and political bodies have in recent months drawn attention to such tyrannies in various part of Telingana. But the tribal areas, where the local bully has the freest scope, are less in the public eye and have less news-value, and the offender there is perhaps more often a subordinate official than a *watandar* or a *sahukar*. What the public has to appreciate moreover is that all those on whose malpractices light is shed by these reports are themselves members of the public; in the ultimate analysis their malpractices can only be stopped by the growth of a strong and healthy public opinion condemning their injustices and insisting upon as good a treatment for the man of the backwoods

as for the man of the city ; it is a problem similar to that of checking bribery and corruption in food and supply work. But in the tribal areas the cancer is far older and more deeply rooted, and its eradication involves more specialised operations.

Accordingly proposals are now being made by the Revenue Department for the introduction, in areas to be notified as Tribal Areas, of a simplified system of administration based upon the Agency System so long in vogue in parts of the Ganjam and Korapat Districts of Orissa and the Vizagapatam and East Godavari Districts of Madras. Our uniform application to the whole State of such things as the system of *watandari* village officers and the separation of the judicial and the executive may have been sound in the State as a whole but in some respects harmful in the tribal areas. Thus the reader of these reports will see how the non-aboriginal *watandar* has time and time again been responsible for gradual expropriation of aboriginals from their land. In another way the *watandari* system has failed in tribal areas. Often non-aboriginals have secured the *watans*, not of single villages but of a score or more villages, occasionally even of whole *taluqs*. Then they have not themselves worked as *patels* or *patwaris* but have had the work done by underpaid and untrained *gumashtas* working for six or seven villages and residing in none of them. These absentee *gumashtas* have supplemented their earnings by extorting money or land from the ryots. Their village returns have often been compiled without spot inspections, and they have failed to inform either their *watandar* masters or the district authorities about village conditions. In the monsoon months of 1939, for example, when after a long break in the rains famine suddenly confronted the Gonds of the interior, no warning came to the authorities from the *gumashtas* and the first sign of distress was the sudden descent from the hills to the towns of hordes of hungry Gonds and Kolams. In backward forest tracts, where men are poor and ignorant and distances great, justice delayed or justice that is not cheap is justice denied. What are needed are touring officers combining executive and judicial powers, able to punish the tyrant or the exploiter on the spot. The

transfer of revenue officers' judicial powers to distant, non-touring judicial courts has meant that the touring officers are largely impotent to give immediate relief against oppression, while aboriginal victims of the oppressor cannot face the heavy expenditure, the waste of time and the psychological disturbance involved by recourse to the distant, dreaded, uncongenial courts.

A beginning has meanwhile been made with other ameliorative steps. The Chenchu policy outlined in Appendix VIII of The Chenchus has been further developed into a scheme for the rural betterment of all the peoples, tribal and non-tribal, of the whole Amrabad plateau under a scheme financed by the Rural Welfare Trust. The second of the two reports on conditions amongst the Hill Reddis and the Koyas indicates the considerable degree of success already attained there in controlling forest contractors and otherwise amending forest and administrative policy. In the Adilabad District there has been partial overhaul of the administrative personnel; a Special Officer for the aboriginal areas with headquarters at Marlavai in Utnur Taluq has been appointed, and a decision come to in regard to areas to be retained as forest or leased for distribution among the aboriginal cultivators in *patta* right; already *pattas* have been granted for many thousands of acres. (It is this distribution especially that seems to have upset certain apple-carts and produced allegations in the Press and elsewhere of the type already referred to). Above all, the Haimendorfs' work in establishing a training centre for aboriginal teachers at Marlavai and basing upon it a network of aboriginal schools is expanding rapidly. Marlavai has even turned out roughly trained Gonds able to work as *gumashta patwaris*, and with the appointment also by the Inspector-General of Forests of some aboriginals as forest watchers and guards the aboriginal has begun to think that the Government may be his Government after all; there is at least a new spirit of hope in the district.

Let us hope therefore that these reports will be widely read and will help not only to build up public opinion but also to show our district officers the type of evil that it is their duty to eradicate,

and possible lines along which they may guide the aboriginal to become a sturdy, self-reliant and valuable subject of His Exalted Highness. The reports can be read with considerable advantage by revenue, police and forest officers in the non-tribal districts also; for there too in the tracts remote from the bus and the train the local bully lords it over the ignorant and must be brought to heel if all alike are to secure the benefits of justice and good administration.

Let us lastly remember gratefully the unremitting labour (at the expense of fatigue, fever and hardship, and to the detriment often of scientific research) that have gone to the making of these reports, labour shared alike by Baron Haimendorf and his wife. Not content with the writing of his books and reports, they have steadily gone ahead with educational experiment, relief work, and suggestions for administrative reform. Since the Baron's temporary appointment in the service of the Crown elsewhere in India, instead of spending their recess in well-earned rest, they returned to Adilabad in the bad monsoon months of 1944 to watch the progress of the work. Not the least of their services to the aboriginals of the Deccan is their setting of this high standard of personal effort in the cause of the lowly.

We have no time to lose in putting our aboriginals on their feet and enabling them to face the modern world as sturdy, self-reliant citizens. Post-war plans involve the foundation of a great industrial city on the banks of the Godavari where Adilabad and Karimnagar Districts now meet, and further exploitation of the forests, the coal-fields and the other minerals of Adilabad. This fine aboriginal human material must not be regarded as mere grist for the mills of industry. The imminence of these new developments makes it imperative without delay to arrest the present "loss of nerve" among the aboriginals and to do all possible to restore and strengthen their self-respect.

W. V. GRIGSON,

May 2nd 1945.

Notes on the
Hill Reddis in the Samasthan of Paloncha,
WARANGAL DISTRICT.

DURING November and December, 1940, I toured the hilly country in the easternmost corner of the Warangal District, and the following notes deal mainly with the Konda or Hill Reddis, an aboriginal tribe inhabiting the ridges and valleys of the Eastern Ghats to both sides of the Godavari River. Most of the Reddis within the boundaries of H. E. H. the Nizam's Dominions live in the Samasthan of Paloncha, which is at present administered by the Court of Wards. In several of the villages on the Godavari bank Koyas are also to be found, and although elsewhere they are more advanced, in this area their economic and social position is very similar to that of the Reddis.

Hill Reddis form in the following villages the predominant population: Parantapalli (10 houses), Kutturvada (2 houses), Kakishnur (32 houses), Pantapalli (2 houses), Modela (5 houses), Palamamedi Zelugu (2 houses), Tekupalli (38 houses), Koinda (30 houses), Kasavaram (4 houses), Talagandi (4 houses), Gulanka (1 house), Tekur (2 houses), Katkur (28 houses), Boreddigudem (19 houses), Dibbagudem (4 houses), Siddharam (3 houses), Kunkulgoyapaka (2 houses), Errametta (4 houses), Chintamreddi-padu (8 houses), Dornalpushe (6 houses), Gogulapudi (4 houses) and Jornmamulu (2 houses). Small groups of Reddis live moreover in Anantavaram and in several villages between Anantavaram and Ankampallam.

In physical type the Reddis are decidedly more primitive than the Koyas and it appears that the basic racial element is of Veddid affinities. The darkskinned and curly-haired type dominant among the Chenchus, in which there is probably a Malid straint, is also represented, but besides these primitive types, there are numerous

individuals with more progressive features and it seems indeed that the Reddis are by no means a racially homogeneous population. The Reddis now speak a corrupt form of Telugu, and although this is obviously not their original tongue no trace of an older language can be discerned. Most Reddis do not understand the Gondi dialect of their Koya neighbours.

Until recently the Reddis subsisted solely by shifting cultivation, the collection of wild fruits and roots, and hunting with bow and arrow; and those few families that still live in the interior of the hills and a great number of Reddis on the Madras side still continue this mode of life. The Reddis themselves say that they all used to live in the hills and have only come down to live on the river in recent times, where they are at present occupied in bamboo and timber felling and, in addition to their *podu* fields, cultivate with ploughs the flat alluvial pockets of land in the Godavari valley. The *podu* fields on the hill slopes are usually cultivated two or three years in succession and then allowed to revert to jungle for a period of ten or twelve years. The crops grown on these fields are *jawari* (*sorghum vulgare*), *ragi* (*eleusine corocana*), and the small millets *sama* (*panicum miliare*) and *korra* (*panicum italicum*) as well as several kinds of pulse and large beans. The Reddis have no hoes, like more advanced tribes practising shifting cultivation, but use bamboo sticks or iron-tipped digging-sticks for dibbling *jawari*. In this as in many other respects they are distinctly more primitive than most Gonds. A very important item of their diet is the pith of *caryota urens* (a sago-like palm), pounded to a flour and eaten in the form of a liquid porridge. The same tree provides them with palm wine, which is drunk in large quantities during several months of the year and is very nourishing. In most villages on the river bank there are also some palmyra palms, and both Reddis and Koyas tap them for toddy. Originally the Reddis had no cattle, but only pigs and chickens; now they use buffaloes and bullocks for ploughing and for dragging bamboos from the forest to the river bank, but they do not eat beef nor do they seem partial to milk. While the Koyas sacrifice bulls and buffaloes at various ceremonies, the Reddis use only pigs, goats and chickens as sacrificial animals. There can be no

doubt that the Reddis represent not only racially, but also culturally a more primitive ethnological stratum than the Koyas.

Within the last forty or fifty years the economic system of all those Reddis, who live near the Godavari, that is, of the majority of the Reddis within the Samasthan of Paloncha, has undergone a considerable change. Whereas in the old days the Reddis were primarily cultivators, they are now fast becoming forest labourers and in the villages on the river bank, where until a generation or two ago only aboriginals dwelt, there now live at least one and sometimes two merchant families, who are engaged in supervising the cutting and despatch of bamboo and timber to Rajahmundry. It is the felling and transport of bamboo and timber which constitutes today the main occupation of most Reddis, and the influence of the merchants, who are vitally interested in exploiting the valuable Reddi labour to the utmost, tends to exclude work on the land to an ever increasing extent. A comparison between the standard of life of those Reddis who depend only on cultivation and those who are in the employ of merchants proves that their transformation from cultivators to forest labourers has not been entirely beneficial.

Up to the present no definite policy in regard to Reddis has been adopted by the State or Samasthan authorities, but should a stabilization of their economic and social position be envisaged the following problems will have to be considered.

Shifting Cultivation.

The traditional form of cultivation among the Reddis is *podu*, i.e., they burn the jungle on hill-slopes and then cultivate the land for two or three years, after which period they allow it to revert to jungle; indeed all the hilly parts of their country are unsuitable for any other kind of agriculture. Though for centuries the Reddis have practised shifting cultivation in their present habitat, there are remarkably few signs of permanent deforestation. The rainfall in the Eastern Ghats, where I experienced heavy rain even early in December, is so ample that the forest regenerates quickly; since the Reddis leave pollarded tree stumps in their *podu* fields and these

sprout even during the period of cultivation, there is little danger of erosion as long as the slopes are permitted sufficient time in which to recuperate.

But when the boundaries of the reserved forest were drawn some three years ago, only small areas round each village remained available for *podu* cultivation, and the Reddis complain that they may no longer cultivate the best slopes. I noticed that in some places they are therefore forced to cultivate on extremely stony ground where the yield is very meagre. To continue the policy of allotting only such a limited area for cultivation would appear rather short-sighted, for it compels the Reddis to shorten the cycle of rotation and consequently the forest can no longer fully regenerate between periods of cultivation. Ultimately the slopes round the villages will become deforested and unsuitable for any further cultivation, and the Forest Department will *nolens volens* have to allot a wider belt round the villages for *podu* cultivation, not however without first having done permanent harm to the hill slopes close to the villages. It may therefore be advisable to imitate the policy followed on the British side of the Godavari. There, as may be seen from the map, the boundaries of the reserved forest are drawn at a fair distance from the villages, and the Reddis are left ample land for cultivation. Going down the Godavari by launch one notices that on the British side the *podu* fields are well spread out over the hill slopes, reaching in parts to considerable heights, while on the Hyderabad side only the lowest slopes are cultivated.

Besides the restrictions imposed by the Forest Department there are in the Samasthan of Paloncha various other factors which discourage the Reddis from *podu* cultivation, and in some villages the cutting of *podu* fields has been practically stopped. It is significant that it is these villages from which most Reddis have emigrated to the British side.

One great obstacle in the way of *podu* cultivation is the regulation which compels every Reddi or Koya who wants to cut a new *podu* field to make two applications, one to relinquish his old field and one to cut a new plot of land. In theory this rule should cause

no undue inconvenience, for the application can be made through the *patel* or *patwari* to the Tahsil Office. However, it is the general custom of *patwaris* to demand Re. 1/-, 1 chicken and 1 seer of rice for accepting any such application. Thus a man who every two or three years wants to change his *podu* fields has to pay Rs. 2/- for the petitions to give up the old and cut a new field. Since the revenue for *podu* fields is only Re. 1/- per *biga* and few fields have more than two *bigas*, this expenditure means practically a doubling of the revenue. Moreover the *patwaris* usually demand an additional fee of Re. 1/- for measuring *podu* fields, and in many cases the forest-guards demand also a fee for agreeing to the cutting of a new field, even though it lies outside the reserved forest. Many Reddis have therefore given up *podu* cultivation in recent years and subsist only on their income from forest labour, and the pith of *caryota urens* and other jungle produce.

Another factor which tends to reduce the amount of cultivation among Reddis is the influence of timber-merchants who prefer the Reddis to devote all their time to bamboo cutting; last year they actually succeeded in preventing Reddis of Parantapalli and Kakishnur from making applications for new *podu* fields.

Collection of Revenue.

Closely linked with the problem of cultivation is that of the present system of revenue-collection. The *patwaris*, in whose hands the collection of revenue rests usually do not collect the land-revenue direct from the Reddis, but from their employers most of whom live on or come from the British side of the Godavari. A great number of Reddis are quite unable to say how much revenue they pay; they only know that the timbermerchants for whom they work debit their accounts with the revenue. As a rule they themselves are not given receipts and those few receipts I found in the possession of Reddis did not give any details as to the size of the fields. This state of affairs is exploited by the merchants, who make the Reddis work for them the whole year for negligible payment in the form of millet, under the pretext of debts incurred by the payment of Reddi land-revenue.

The land-revenue collected by the Samasthan authorities seems fairly moderate; in the Reddi country it is Re. 1/- per *biga* of *podu* fields as well as for permanent dry fields. (For the last three years the revenue for *podu* fields was only As. 8 per *biga*, but it has now been raised to Re. 1/-). I have convinced myself, however, through intensive enquiries, that the *patwaris* collect the revenue at their own discretion, even if they do measure the fields, for which they ask a special extra gratification of Re 1/-. For a man using only axe and digging-stick it is physically impossible to cultivate a very large area of *podu*, and so when in Tekpalli Murle Pedda Kanaya complained that a few days previously the *patwari* had collected from him Rs. 8-13-2 for his *podu* field, for which he even produced a receipt, I asked the *patel* to measure the field before me. It had 13⅜ *bigas* and was on a steep stony slope; the yield of millet, which was still standing, cannot have exceeded 2 bags (then worth about Rs. 5/- each). Another man, Narpu Tamreddi, had paid Rs. 4-3-10 and his field measured only ½ *biga*. These are by no means isolated cases, nor is excessive assessment confined to *podu* fields. At Dibbagudem (Chintalapadu) I measured the *jawari* field of Kechel Venkatareddi, for which he had paid B. G. Rs. 15/- and found that instead of 15 *bigas* it measured only just under 3 *bigas*. During my stay in Parantapalli, the *patwari's* clerk visited the village just after he had collected the revenue from the employer of the Parantapalli Reddis. Since the Reddis themselves did not know how much had been paid for them, I asked the *patwari's* clerk the particulars; his records contained the names of three men who had never lived in the village and of one who had not cultivated this year. The clerk had no idea of the sizes of the fields and naively remarked, that "since the land was measured four years ago by the Settlement officers there was no need to measure the fields again," not realizing that in the meantime all the *podu* fields had been shifted. The merchants, who pay the revenue do not seem to care very much in whose names the payments are made, but debit the accounts of the villagers at random.

One may well ask, what interest the *patwaris* can have in collecting revenue often several times the legitimate amount. I think the explanation may be found in the practice of collecting revenue in

British Indian currency which is payable to the Tahsil office in Hyderabad currency; the profit to the collector is therefore as. 2 per rupee. In all the Reddi and Koya villages from Parantapalli up to Rudramkot the taxes are collected in B. G., but I do not know what is the practice in the villages near Ashwaraopet. This practice has been confirmed by the respective revenue *patels*. Consequently O. S. rupees are hardly accepted by Reddis and Koyas, and I had to get B. G. coins to pay coolie wages, provisions etc.

Patwaris also indulge in other methods of profiting on the collection of land-revenue; one of these is to give receipts for smaller sums than they actually collect. Where the revenue is paid by the merchants, who usually keep the receipts, no control is possible, but some Koyas have acquired receipt books into which the *patwari* ought to enter the particulars of their fields and the amount collected. I saw some of these books and found that none of the columns referring to the size and character of fields are filled in, but only the amount of the total revenue. There is usually a considerable discrepancy between the sums paid and those acknowledged. The Koya headman of Borratogu, a sub-village of Tatkur, for instance, paid B. G. Rs. 93/- last year, but only O. S. Rs. 74/- are entered in his book.

It appears that the present Revenue Inspector hardly ever visits the remoter Reddi and Koya villages, and since taking over office one year and a half ago has never checked the measurement of fields and assessment of revenue in that area. Thus the *patwaris* are practically uncontrolled. All Reddis and Koyas complain that the revenue they have to pay now is much higher than it was at the time the country was under the direct administration of the Raja of Paloncha.

Palmyra Trees.

In most Reddi and Koya villages there are a number of palmyra-palms and the Excise Department has recently issued orders that each Koya or Reddi, in villages of purely aboriginal population, should be allowed the use of two toddy-trees free of charge. This

very commendable rule was, however, not fully enforced, for the *patwaris*, using it as yet another method of making profits for themselves, listed only the names of those Reddis and Koyas who were prepared to pay them a gratification of Re. 1/- for the grant of free toddy trees. Moreover several villages were entirely ignored in the granting of this concession, some of them no doubt on the ground that they were not purely aboriginal but contained also a few Mala or Telugu households. It seems hard that the concession of free toddy-trees should be withheld from those villages, which have already to suffer from the presence of recent intruders. The drawing of toddy, which is sometimes boiled to diminish its alcoholic content and thus rendered a beverage with considerable nutritive value, is in any case preferable to the purchase of distilled liquor. A revision of the grants made hitherto would be necessary in order to make the concession available to all Reddis and Koyas.

Koyas and Reddis are not such expert toddy drawers as the Gaonvarlu of the Telugu country proper, and the toddy season is therefore comparatively short.

Alienation of land and the effects of the *watandari* system.[1]

In those Reddi villages, where there is no or little flat land, nothing attracts new-comers and the Reddis are still undisturbed in the possession of the land. But in such villages as Koinda or Katkur, where there is a considerable area of flat cultivable land including fields suitable for the cultivation of rain-fed rice, the position is different. Until about one generation ago here too all the land was in the hands of Reddis and Koyas, but much land has recently changed hands and is now in the hands of the family of the *patwari* and of merchants who cultivate it by employing Reddis and Koyas as daily labourers, or hire it out against 50% of the crop. If a Reddi dies without a son and has any land that is desirable, the *patwari* often succeeds in acquiring it himself or in allotting it to a merchant, who pays him a certain gratification. A favourite method by which *patwaris* come into possession of fertile lands is to demand an exorbitant revenue from the owner; if he is unable to pay, the

1. The system of hereditory *patwaris* who cannot be transferred or dismissed.

patwari offers to pay it himself, and after a few years takes over the land. In this and other ways many Reddis and Koyas have lost their best fields, but it appears that the Koyas have suffered more since they owned the better lands; in general the Reddis seem to have been more conservative and kept largely to *podu* cultivation.

"Thus the alienation of land from the original owners appears to be one of the effects of the imposition of the *watandari* system on tribal areas." Another grave disadvantage of this system is the almost unrestricted power in the hands of persons who have received no special training and are secure in the knowledge that they cannot be dismissed; even in cases of serious abuse the post of *patwari* is only transferred to another member of the same family, or to a substitute (*gumashta*) nominated by the *watandar*.

The *patwaripan* of all the villages from Rudramkot to Parantapalli has within the last forty or fifty years been acquired by a Brahmin family of Tatkur. The head of the family appoints to the various groups of villages his own clerks as acting *patwaris* (*gumashtas*). These are directly responsible to him and not to the Samasthan authorities. He and his clerks refuse to co-operate with the revenue *patels*, who are men chosen by a former Revenue Inspector, and collect all the revenue independently in the manner indicated above. They even disregard the rule that all papers regarding revenue-returns should be countersigned by the *patels*.

I have not yet seen a sufficiently large area to form a judgement on the *watandari* system in general, but I am convinced that it is entirely unsuitable for aboriginal tracts. As *patwaris* cannot be transferred or dismissed, few aboriginals dare to complain against them to higher officials, for they know that they and their families have to live all their lives under the rule of the same *patwari* family. Another disadvantage is the long-standing connection between *patwaris* and merchants, who work to their mutual benefit at the expense of the aboriginals. All measures for the improvement of the situation of the aboriginals must remain abortive until the power of the *watandari patwaris* is abolished or at least drastically curtailed.

I do not think that this would imply the violation of an old institution, for the extention of the *patwari* system to tribal areas is certainly only of comparatively recent date. In ordinary Telugu villages the *patwaris* are to a certain extent spokesmen and representatives of the village-community, and their authority is restricted to their own village. But in the area in question the villages under their control are often at a distance of up to 30 miles from their residence; they are regarded by the aboriginals as outsiders and act as such in so far that they are entirely unconcerned with the well-being of the aboriginals under their authority.

Relations between the Reddis and the Forest Authorities.

I have suggested already that the present boundaries of the reserved forest appear to have been drawn without a full appreciation of the need of the Reddis and of their method of cultivation. But there are also other aspects of their daily life, which seem to suffer unduly from the vigilance of the forest authorities. The Reddis are not allowed to take wood for house-building and the making of dug-outs from the reserved forest, while in many cases there is no timber of the right kind available for these purposes in the narrow strip of open forest. According to the regulations Reddis have to apply to the Ranger for timber for house-building and pay for it on valuation, but in practice most forest guards demand a "gratification" of Rs. 2/- to Rs. 10/- for granting the permission to cut wood for the building of a new house, and a similar payment if Reddis or Koyas construct the customary booth in front of their houses for the wedding ceremonies. The latter custom has therefore been largely abandoned. In Dibbagudem I found the Reddis living in miserable huts; their houses were burnt down last year and they said that they could not pay the Rs. 5/- which the forest guard demanded from each household for the permission to rebuild their houses. The Reddis have also continual difficulties over the fencing of their fields, since the forest guards demand special payments to allow them to bring the necessary bamboos from the forest. The Forest Department collects moreover a fee of Rs. 3/- for each plough in commutation for wood used for implements and minor domestic

purposes, as well as grazing fees of as. 8 per baffalo and as. 4 per cow. In some places the forest guards demand in addition a gratification of 10 to 20 seers of grain per plough. In many villages of Katkur I was told that the forest guards collect Rs. 3/- to Rs. 5/- for every newly cut *podu* field, a fee which is quite separate from the revenue and fees collected by the *patwari*.

When I discussed these illegal extortions with the Forester during a visit to Rudramkot, his head-quarters, he pointed out the difficulty of checking the forest-guard's long established practice of collecting *mamul*. He declared that he collected the forest-dues not from the Reddis, but from their merchants, to whom he gave the receipts, and admitted that it was quite possible that the merchants debited the accounts of the Reddis with higher amounts. Further he told me with disarming frankness that he as a small official could not afford to draw upon his head the anger of the merchants by adopting any other procedure, since their influence in the Samasthan was very far-reaching, and he might thereby easily lose his job.

The main trouble appears to be that there is very little control by higher officials. The Forester seems to visit the Reddi country only at considerable intervals, and the Ranger at the best once or twice a year; many Reddis told me that the Ranger had never been to their villages since he assumed office. This lack of authority over the forest guards has also the result that they spend a large part of their time in their home-villages and visit their stations only at times when they can hope to collect gratifications.

Every year the forest-lines are cleared and at that time all the men of a village work for about one to two weeks, but they are not paid any wages. They still complain that when some years ago they worked for two months in succession cutting the line of the reserved forest they were given neither wages nor provisions.

I often heard the complaint: "We work free for the forest, but we are not allowed even to take a leaf from the forest without paying for it." They complain particularly that they are not allowed to hunt, but of course a good deal of secret hunting is going on.

Comparison with conditions on the British side.

In the Reddi villages of the East Godavari District a system of revenue assessment and forest control is in practice, which seems well adapted to the needs of an aboriginal population. In some villages a fixed revenue is assessed for all the flat fields surrounding the village and it is left to the villagers themselves to share out the land and the revenue. Thus Tumileru, a village of 30 houses opposite Kakishnur, pays Rs. 200/- for the flat land which is fairly large. A line including the near slopes is drawn round every village and *podu* fields lying within this line are free of revenue. Between this line and the boundary of the reserved forest lies a broad belt, in which the Reddis may cultivate *podu* fields at an annual rate of as. 8 per acre. The Reddis are allowed to take any timber for their own use from within this belt. Hunting without and within the reserved forest is free as long as only bows and arrows are used; a yearly license for a muzzle-loader gun costs as. 4.

It may be of interest to contrast the approximate revenue and fees in the two areas, and I have therefore set out below the respective expenditure. For the Samasthan I have entered the revenue and fees as they are actually paid by the Reddis, not those prescribed by rules:

Revenue and fees:	*Paloncha Samasthan.*	*East Godavari District.*
Revenue for *podu*	Re. 1/- per *biga* (actually up to six times that amount is collected)	Free within village line. As. 8 per acre outside village line.
Fee to *patwari* for application to cut new *podu* ...	Re. 1/-	nil.
Fee for application to give up old *podu* field ...	Re. 1/-	nil.

Revenue and fees: (*continued*).	*Paloncha Samasthan.*	*East Godavari District.*
Fee to *patwari* for measuring of *podu* ...	Re. 1/-	nil.
Fee to forest guard	In many villages Re. 1/- to Rs. 4/-	nil.
Revenue for permanently cultivated land ...	Re. 1/- for dry land, Rs. 3/- for wet land per *biga*. (Up to five times these taxes are often collected by *patwaris*, many Reddis pay between Rs. 12/- and Rs. 20/-	Assessment per village resulting in an average of Rs. 6/- to Rs. 7/- per household or per acre on valuation.
Plough fee ...	Rs. 3/- per plough and often 10 to 20 seers of grain to Forest Guard.	nil.
Grazing fees ...	As. 8 per baffalo (usually Re. 1/- is collected) As. 4 per cow.	nil.
House-tax for Reddis without cultivaiton ...	Re. 1/-	nil.
Gratification to forest guards for house-building ...	Rs. 2/- to Rs. 10/-	nil.

Public services:	*Paloncha Samasthan.*	*East Godavari District.*
Schools ...	nil.	Elementary schools in some Reddi villages, scholarships for Higher Elementary school and High School (up to Rs. 13/- per boy)
Medical Service ...	Dispensary in Borgampad (No Reddi has ever been there)	Dispensary in Kunavaram in easy reach of most villages.
	No touring medical officers.	Touring medical officers.
	No touring veterinary surgeon	Touring veterinary surgeon.
Protection against exploitation by merchants ...	No control of the activities of merchants	Regulations of activities of merchants. (Coupe system, exclusion of undesirable merchants by expulsion from Agency tracts, demand of security, out of which the D. F. O. can pay any wages in arrear).

Health Conditions.

The most widespread disease among the Reddis and Koyas is yaws, and its prevention and cure are a problem of great urgency. I think it is safe to say that in every four or five Reddi houses there is one adult suffering from yaws, and the number of children in early stages of the disease is considerable. During the last rains a Medical Officer came to Parantapalli and effected several cures by injections, but the Godavari floods and limited time at his disposal did not allow him to visit other villages. Since there is a daily launch service on the Godavari a doctor could easily visit all the villages on the river-bank twice or even three times within a period of four weeks, and thus give all Reddis and Koyas suffering from yaws the full course of injections. I was moreover struck by the great frequency of eye-troubles, and here too a great deal could be done by touring doctors. Malaria on the other hand seems to affect the Reddis and Koyas less than outsiders. The dispensary in Borgampad, which is going to be transferred to Paloncha, is too far from the Reddi area, and a travelling dispensary is therefore an important requirement.

Relations between Reddis and merchants.

I come now to the problem created by the activities of bamboo and timber merchants and to their relations with the Reddis. Originally the Reddis were cultivators and were perfectly able to subsist on the produce of the soil, and it is only during the last two or three generations that they have begun to work in the forest, cutting bamboo and timber for contractors. Now all Reddis in the vicinity of the Godavari work for merchants throughout the year, while the importance of cultivation is declining. The amount of work executed by Reddis is, as I will show presently, very considerable, for, unlike the Chenchus and other jungle tribes in the hunting and collecting stage, they are used to consecutive work. The bamboos and timber which they fell, are of great value, and they should therefore have improved their standard of life by taking to this kind of work; actually they seem to be no better off than those Reddis who subsist only on cultivation.

Nominally the Reddis are paid Rs. 10/- for felling 1,000 bamboos and Rs. 10/- for their transport to the river-bank, and Rs. 25/- for the cutting and transport of 100 logs of timber. These rates are the same as on the British side, and if they were actually paid the Reddis would earn quite a good income. For a man brings an average of 20 to 25 bamboos from the forest daily, and can thus easily cut about 3,000 bamboos a year, allowing for the rains, when cutting is hard, and the time when there is most work on the fields. A few figures will show however, that the merchants pay only a fraction of these rates.

Last year Bora Krishnamurti, a merchant from Vaddigudem on the British side, and the most influential man in the whole Reddi area, exported from the two villages of Parantapalli and Kakishnur:

55,000 bamboos (*chilakara* quality).
23,000 bamboos (*bongu* ,,).
4,250 timber (*vasam* ,,).

Consequently he should have paid the Reddis wages totalling Rs. 2,622/-. Since he never pays in cash, but only in the form of provisions and cloth, and brings all these goods from the British side, it can easily be seen from the customs records how much he actually distributed among the Reddis. The amounts for the year in question were:

Jawari	64 bags	@	Rs. 5/-	Rs. 320/-
Rice	10 bags	@	,, 8/-	,, 80/-
Salt	7 bags	@	,, 4/-	,, 28/-
Ragi	6 bags	@	,, 5/-	,, 30/-
Tobacco	10 mounds	@	,, 3/12	,, 37/8
Chillies	5 mounds	@	,, 3/-	,, 10/-
Fish	3 mounds	@	,, 1/-	,, 3/-
Jagri	7½ monnds	@	,, 2/-	,, 15/-
				Rs. 523/8

In addition he gave every man one *dhoti* at Re. 1/4 and one *sari* at Rs. 2/-, and since in Parantapalli 12 men work for him and in Kakishnur 30 men, this amounts to Rs. 136/8.

Thus 42 Reddis received as a year's wages instead of Rs. 2622/- only Rs. 660/-, to which we may perhaps add Rs. 100/- as exceptional payments at weddings etc.

It is true that Bora Krishnamurti pays the land revenue for the men who work for him, but for this he appropriates part of their crop. As a rule this item does not come into the bamboo account, although in certain cases he may have to pay slightly more than he realizes on the grain. Yet in the case of these two villages cultivation is now so limited, that even were he to pay the whole of the land-revenue it would only amount to about Rs. 200/-. There are villages where the Reddis are allowed to keep their whole crop, but consequently they are paid even less millet.

These calculations coincide roughly with my experience, that a man receives an average of a pound of grain a day, and I should like to substantiate this by another figure. When I arrived in Parantapalli at the end of October each of the twelve men working for Bora Krishnamurti had received, since the beginning of the rains, Rs. 4/- worth of *jawari* and in the same period,—the most unfavourable for bamboo cutting,—they had supplied 10,000 bamboos. Yet the twelve men of Parantapalli owe Bora Krishnamurti according to his accounts a total sum of Rs. 1,100/-.

Bora Krishnamurti himself lives in Vaddigudem, but he employs his relatives and agents in all the villages from Tatkur down to Parantapalli, and is by far the most powerful merchant in these parts. Beside him there are various petty merchants who live in the villages and have only a few Reddis or Koyas, who work for them. All of these have come from the British side, and their dealings with the Reddis differ only in inconsequential details from those described.

A particularly crass example for the exploitation of Reddis and Koyas is offered by the village of Koinda. Here the inhabitants have excellent flat fields and should be prosperous enough if they

relied only on cultivation. Yet they work throughout the year in the forest and have therefore to neglect their fields to such an extent that there is much land lying fallow. For nine months of the year all the 20 or 25 bamboos which a man brings home with his pair of bullocks are counted against the land-revenue paid by his employer, and for these he receives no other payment. But if in addition he brings 5 or 6 bamboos on his head, he is given 1 seer of grain. It is only during the three months of the rains, that the Reddis and Koyas of Koinda receive millet for the full amount of bamboos delivered.

To all intents and purposes the Reddis are regarded by the merchants as their personal property and an article of trade, and this may be demonstrated by the following happenings. Until a few years ago half of the Reddis of Tekpalli worked for Bora Krishnamurti and the other half for Ramseti Suba Rao, a small merchant living in Kionda. Recently Bora Krishnamurti wanted to acquire Ramseti Suba Rao's group of Reddis and an agreement was reached with the assistance of Kotapalli Narsaya of Rudramkot, according to which Bora Krishnamurti should pay to Ramseti Suba Rao Rs. 4,000/- for his Reddis, thus taking over the whole of Tekpalli. When I was in Koinda Ramseti Suba Rao complained bitterly, that Bora Krishnamurti had not yet paid him the agreed Rs. 4,000/ although he had paid a fee of Rs. 1,000/- to Kotapalli Narsaya.

These conditions evidently need to be remedied; and that even under the present system a certain control of the activities of the merchants would be possible, is shown by the example of the East Godavari District, where every contract contains the following paragraph:

> "12. The contractors shall not be allowed to transport the produce from the revus to Rajahmundry until he satisfies the Range Officer that he has fully paid up all moneys for felling and transport to revus due to each and every coolie engaged on the work of felling and transporting bamboos. In the event of any claims for payment of charges for felling and cutting bamboos being preferred

against the contractor the D. F. Officer shall be at liberty to pay any such charges as found to be actually outstanding and to deduct the amount of such payment or payments from the amount of the security deposited by the contractor."

It is significant that none of the merchants occupied in the exploitation of the Samasthan forests do any business on the British side although most of them are domiciled in the East Godavari District. Owing to the strict Government control their profits would have to be much smaller there, and they have therefore based their business entirely on contracts with the Samasthan.

Lawlessness resulting from the influence of merchants.

The economic aspect of this situation is, however, not the only one that calls for consideration. In these parts the merchants are the paramount power and practically rule the country. The Reddis and Koyas are convinced, that nothing can break the power of their masters and that even Government and Samasthan officials can be bent to the wishes of the merchants. They feel that no good can come of an attempt to resist, and have accepted their fate with resignation. In some villages they do not even dare to complain against their merchants, and it was only when I talked privately to individual men that they to told me of the conditions under which they live. In public, when they thought that their words might come to the ears of their merchant, they either gave quite a different story or refused to discuss the question.

As long as the Reddis had little contact with outsiders they were practically autonomous and settled all their disputes by themselves according to tribal law. Every village had a religious head, who acted in certain respects also as leader of the community. Besides these village-headmen there were, and to a certain extent still are, hereditary headmen (*kulam peddu*) whose authority is recognized by a large number of villages and who settle all serious inter-village disputes. Thus Madi Zogreddi of Katkur, an intelligent man, who even knows how to read and write, is the hereditary

headman of all Reddis between Katkur and Parantapalli. The present administration makes no use of these headmen and village-leaders, and in many villages the *patwaris* have arbitrarily appointed Reddi '*patels*,' who wield very little influence. The real power in the villages are those Reddis, who are specially favoured by the merchants, receiving benefits and extra payments to act as agents and secret informers against their own people. These agents are greatly feared by their co-villagers and consequently have a great deal of authority.

The primary concern of the merchants is to keep the Reddis and Koyas so subdued as to comply without question with their will. Their system of control is largely based on terrorisation and they have various ways making opposition to their rule extremely dangerous to a Reddi or Koya. They withhold grain during the rains, when it is most needed, refuse to pay the land revenue, or even resort to physical violence.

In Tekpalli, where now all Reddis work for Bora Krishnamurti, I was told that when he announces his arrival in the village and calls the men together, he fines any man who may be absent Re. 1/4. Innumerable are the stories of Reddis, who were beaten by their merchants or made to stand in the sun with logs on their shoulders, because they refused to work for them. In these as in other matters I do not rely solely on the information gathered from Reddis, but have had their statements confirmed by the police *patels* and other non aboriginals. It seems, however, that with the reorganization of the police in recent years the cases of serious physical violence are becoming less frequent, and that the efforts of the present Samasthan Superintendent of Police have done much to surppress such practices.

The Reddis know that they cannot expect any help from the minor officials of other departments. They believe that the merchants are all-powerful, that they can do what they like, and that even a Reddi who acts on the orders or at least with the knowledge and connivance of the merchants risks nothing, however fearful his deeds. This conviction, which is firmly rooted in the Reddis, has resulted not only in frequent breaches of tribal law and the law of the State, but also in a state of affairs which borders on lawlessness.

In the course of my enquiries I have heard of many cases of homicide, which are also of considerable ethnological interest, and although the stories are rather long, they may be quoted here with advantage as illustrative of the Reddis' present attitude. I have assured all my informants that their statements would not lead to any official action in regard to past events, and the following versions are based on the evidence of the Reddis and not on police records. Most of the police officials involved in the investigation of these murder-cases have since been dismissed or transferred, and these notes should not be taken as criticism of the present police authorities.

The most recent of the murder cases that came to my notice occurred in Kakishnur about 1½ years ago. The victim was Kechal Rajaya, whose wife and children still live in the village. He and Ventla Kanaya alone of all the Kakishnur men worked not for Bora Krishnamurti, but for Sundri Bai, a petty merchant woman living in the village. Bora Krishnamurti tried to persuade them to work for him instead, but they refused. Soon afterwards Kechel Rajaya and Ventla Kanaya went with three of Bora Krishnamurti's men, Suntre Ramaya, Suntre Kanaya and Suntre Lachmaya, to cut bamboos, and when they came to a place called Uparatu Gedulu on way to Pantapalli, the three Suntre brothers suddenly fell upon Kechel Rajaya, hitting him with a bamboo on the back of the head and throwing him to the ground. Ventla Kanaya tried to intervene, but they threatened to kill him too and he ran away. The three Suntre men then made incisions in the corpse with their knives, mixed the blood with some rice, which they had offered the day before to a *konda devata*, a hill-deity, and then threw the rice and blood on a heap of bamboos which they had cut, and on their own fields. A few days afterwards they boasted of this deed in front of all the villagers. Certain *konda devata* are worshipped annually at the beginning of the bamboo cutting season, and this use of the blood of a murdered man is a well-known part of the complex of human sacrifice and head-hunting; if the story was untrue my informants could hardly have invented circumstances which fit ethnologically so well into the picture of Reddi culture.

Ventla Kanaya, who had witnessed the murder, told me that at first he was too terrified to relate his experience. But after two days he told Sundri Bai, who confirmed his story when I asked her, and she went with the customs clerk stationed at Katkur and some other men to the place where the murder had happened and found the corpse. Immediately she sent word to the police *patel*, Gu ivelli Ramanujam; when he arrived in Kakishnur and saw the corpse he wanted to send it to the Medical Officer at Borgampad. But in the meantime the murderers had gone to Bora Krishnamurti and received from him Rs. 40/- to give to the police *jamadar*. On his arrival the *jamadar* took Sundri Bai's statement, but it is said that when the murderers gave him the Rs. 40/-, he refused to allow the police *patel* (who told me that he had offered to pay for the transport) to send the corpse to Borgampad. Ventla Kanaya gave the *Jamadar* a full statement, and even the murderers admitted their deed in front of the villagers, but the *jamadar* tookno action and left the place. (He has since been transferred).

In the meantime Bora Krishnamurti arrived and ordered the Reddis to say that Kechel Rajaya died of exhaustion on his way to Pantapalli, and threatened them that anybody who told the truth would not live even one month in Kakishnur.

The police *patel* met the Sub-inspector of Police in Tekur, told him of the case and took him at once to Kakishnur. But as soon as they arrived Bora Krishnamurti talked to the Sub-inspector and the Reddis believe that he bribed him with Rs. 60/-; although Sundri Bai gave the Sub-inspector a full statement, he did not question any other witnesses, but compelled her with threats to sign a statement according to which she knew nothing of the death of Rajaya. (The Sub inspector was consequently dismissed by the D. S. P.)

As soon as the Sub-inspector had left Kakishnur Bora Krishnamurti told Sundri Bai and the Reddis again that they should realize by now, that nobody could do anything against him. When the D. S. P. visited Kakishnur all concerned were already too intimidated to make any statements. They had seen how the two

policemen who had come to Kakishnur had taken no action, and, unable to understand the difference between the D. S. P. and his subordinates, they thought it safer to comply with Bora Krishnamurti's orders. Bora Krishnamurti then suggested that the three murderers should leave Kakishnur for some time and settle on the British side of the Godavari; there they live now in Kondamadulu. When I talked to Rajaya's wife and attempted to get her version of the story, she said quite plainly that she was not prepared to tell anything, for it would be of no use; "nobody could fight against Bora Krishnamurti, and if he heard that she had told me anything, she or one of her two small children might also be killed".

This murder was, however, not the first which the three Suntre brothers had committed in Kakishnur. It is common knowledge that some years back they killed the Reddi *patel* of the village. This *patel*, Buzar Zogreddi, belonged to the family in which the priesthood is hereditary and had great influence in the village, but continuously quarrelled with Bora Krishnamurti. For he encouraged the villagers to work in the forest only every second day and to work the alternative days on their fields, while Krishnamurti wanted them to go daily to the forest. One day Zogreddi returning with his young son from the Godavari was ambushed by the three Suntre brothers and Sintal Rajaya; they pelted him with heavy stones and he fell to the ground. His son escaped, however, and ran home to his mother, who rushed at once to the place and found that the murderers had dragged her husband's corpse to the river bank and were collecting wood to burn it. She told me that the skull was fractured and the brain protruding. Then all the villagers assembled and guarded the corpse until the arrival of the police.

In the meantime Bora Krishnamurti came to the village and intimidated the widow by threatening that she and her children would be driven from Kakishnur and would starve, if she betrayed how her husband died. He gave her Rs. 25/- as compensation and promised that in future he would give her as much millet as the men who worked for him; so far he has actually kept this promise and Zogreddi's eldest son works now for Bora Krishnamurti.

When the policemen arrived Bora Krishnamurti feasted them in his agent's house on the river-bank, supplied two sheep and a large quantity of arrack, and told them that Zogreddi died by accident when he was drunk. The policemen ordered the corpse to be buried and did not question any witnesses. No action was taken against the murderers, who continued to live in Kakishnur and to work for Bora Krishnamurti until the murder of Kechal Rajaya. But even now all the men of Kakishnur say quite freely and in public that the Suntre brothers killed Zogreddi.

Ethnologically it is of interest that the murderers are reported to have drenched a cloth in Zogreddi's blood and buried it in the ground; but when the policemen arrived they disinterred and threw it into the Godavari. Here too the underlying idea seems to have been that the blood of human victims fertilizes the soil.

The same belief is brought out by a murdercase that happened in Katkur four years ago. There a Reddi, Sokal Komreddi, who had refused to work for Bora Vas Devudu, the first cousin and agent of Krishnamurti, was killed by Matla Motaya. The story goes that Matla Motaya was given money by Bora Vas Devudu and went with Sokal Komreddi to Jiduguppa, on the left river-bank, where they got drunk. When he came back he killed Sokal Komreddi and it issaid that he cut off and buried the head and the fingers of the victim- a typical element in the human sacrifice complex—and threw the body into the Godavari; but I found no eye-witness of this circumstance.

When the Sub-inspector of Police came from Dammapeta he arrested Matla Motaya. But it is believed that Bora Vas Devudu gave the Sub-inspector Rs. 150/- and it is a fact that the next night the prisoner made a miraculous escape although h ehad been guarded in the rest-house by two policemen and several village watchmen. No further action was taken by the police, and he lives now in Kondamadulu on the British side.

In Parantapalli and Kakishnur alone there have been at least three other murders in recent years, none of which came before a

court. Indeed no case of murder in these parts has ever been brought before responsible authorities. It is therefore understandable that the Reddis are deadly afraid of drawing upon them the wrath of the merchants and of their own tribesmen in the pay of the merchants.

The power of the merchants and their apparent immunity from any determined action on the part of the authorities would hardly explain, however, either the circumstances of the recent murders nor the very real fear that many Reddis entertain of suffering a similar fate. I have already mentioned that certain elements in these murder-cases belong ethnologically to the complex of human sacrifice, and it is a well-established fact that human sacrifice was practised by several tribes of the Eastern Ghats, such as the Khonds, until its suppression in the second half of the last century.

All the evidence which I have been able to gather points to the fact that human sacrifice was also practised by Reddis, and considering the seclusion of this particular corner of the Samasthan and the little attention it has hitherto received, this is not particularly surprising. The Reddis on the British side of the Godavari freely admit that their forefathers sacrificed human victims at certain festivals, but that the frequent visits of officials have rendered impracticable the continuance of this custom. They hint that "somewhere in the hills on the other side" it may still exist, but will not give any details. The reaction of the Hyderabad Reddis is markedly different; most of them pretend that they have never heard of such a custom, while others simply say, that "as long as we have not seen a thing with our own eyes, we cannot talk about it." Yet their very reluctance to talk of certain festivals—during which the sacrifice of a pig is now substituted by the Reddis of the British side—betrays the fact that they know more than they are prepared to say. Rumours will have it that a certain place near Papi Konda Hill, where a great festival in honour of the rain-god and a female deity is performed, was the scene of human sacrifice, but when I climbed the hill my guide took me to various sacred places, but not to the one where this rite had taken place. He later admitted that he was afraid of the retaliation

of the old men of priestly clan, if he gave the secret away. Two old men of Chintamreddipalli, who had often attended the Papi Konda festival in their youth, went so far as to say that the blood which was mixed with rice and thrown into the jungle, "may have been human blood", but that the killing of the victim was done in a secret cave by the men of a priestly clan, and that therefore they themselves did not see whether it was a human being or an animal.

When Ventla Kanaya told me the story of the murder of Kechel Rajaya, the remark slipped out that if he and Rajaya had known of the *puja* the Suntre brothers had performed for *konda devata* the day before, they would never have gone to the jungle in their company.

The belief seems to prevail that the sacrifice of human beings is necessary not only for the prosperity of the crops, but also for the successful cutting of bamboos, which is controlled by the mountain-deities, the *konda devata*. But recently the custom seems to have been utilized by the merchants, who use the willingness of certain Reddis to kill even their own tribesmen if a magical or sacrificial purpose can be served by the murder, and this is shown by the use of the blood of the murdered Kechel Rajaya.

There is at certain times, and particularly when the crops are ripening, a widespread fear of *patudu donga* (kidnappers), and it is said, that at this time robbers are at large, who capture human beings and particularly children for sacrifice. As yet I have been unable to clarify this matter, but whatever may be the exact position of human sacrifice among the Reddis, they themselves believe that they risk their lives by opposing such merchants as encourage the addicts of human sacrifice to do away with anybody who stands in their way. Moreover numerous examples have taught them that the merchants and the men acting under their orders are immune from punishment, and the Reddis conclude therefrom that they are indeed more powerful than the Samasthan authoriries.

From many Reddis and Koyas I heard the remark: "How shall we believe that anything will be done for us? So many

officers came and at first told us that we need not obey the *sahukars*,—but then our *sahukars* made friends with them and gave them presents, and nothing was done. We know that until our death we have to work for the *sahukars*. They alone are powerful in our country. If we refuse to work for them they will beat us and tell the forest *chaukidar* to come to our village and fine us for taking wood from the forest; then he will sit in our village and eat our chickens till at last we have to run to the merchant and beg him to pay the fine to the *chaukidar*. So we can never get away from the merchants."

Emigration to the East Godavari District.

It appears that the various restrictions imposed on the Reddis by the forest authorities, and particularly that on shifting cultivation, the comparatively high revenue and the increasing exploitation through merchants have led during recent years to a considerable emigration to British territory. This is understandable if one considers that most Reddis have relatives on the other side of the Godavari or on the Papi Konda Range, and are well acquainted with the conditions in the East Godavari District.

Thus the village of Jidugumma was completely abandoned some years ago, when the inhabitants moved to the other side of the Godavari. Some families of Parantapalli followed them, and there are at present in Parantapalli several old people, whose sons live now on the British side. Kutturvadda consisted formerly of about eight houses, but most families moved across the border and now only two are left. The villagers of Daramadugu, which was also near the boundary, moved across in a body. From both Kakishnur and Tekpalli several people have left quite recently, and last year nine households out of ten of Gulilanka, a village near Koinda, went to the other side. Borreddigummi near Katkur contained 30 houses two years ago, now only nineteen are left; the remaining families told me that they too contemplated leaving because of the restrictions on *podu* cultivation and of the oppression by *patwaris*, forest-guards and merchants.

This is not an exhaustive list, but in the big villages the disappearance of a few houses is less noticeable.

All Reddis whom I questioned about the emigration of their relatives or their own intentions to leave, explained that in the times of the late Raja of Paloncha they lived quite comfortably, revenue was low, they were allowed to cut *podu* fields where they liked, and there were no forest guards to interfere with their house-building and fencing. If the *patwaris* gave them trouble, they went to Ashwaraor pet and had their grievances heard and often remedied; many an old man told me long stories about their experiences with the late Raja Sahib at Ashwaraopet and with his secretary who managed the estate. "But now", they complained, "there is nobody to hear us, —Paloncha and Borgampad are too far, and if we go there, we are not allowed to talk to anybody."

It is, of course, difficult to say whether in those days the Reddi's ot was really as good as they say, but there can be no doubt that the tightening of the administration under the Court of Wards has brought many hardships to the Reddis and their emigration to the British side will continue unless these hardships are eliminated.

Conclusions.

The present position of the Reddis in the Samasthan of Paloncha is so infavourable that stringent measures will be required to afford them at least a minimum of protection from exploitation and to allow them to regain their economic freedom.

The most pressing problem apears to be the exclusion of the influence of the merchants and patticularly that of Bora Krishnamurti. This could easily be effected by the refusal to grant any further cutting permissions. In the Reddi country there is no coupe system, but the taking of a permit is enough to allow of indiscriminate falling of bamboo and timber. The cutting charge for 1000 bamboos is Rs. 9/- for *chilakara* quality, Rs. 12/8 for *bongu*, and for 100 logs of timber it is Rs. 10/- for *vasam*, i.e., below 24 inches circumfercnce, and Rs. 12/8 for *basu*, i.e., more than 24 inches circumference. Thus the profit of the Forest Department in this

field is comparatively small, and if the forest were to be exploited by Government and the Reddis paid daily wages, both Government and Reddis would profit. Still more desirable would be the establishment of a Co-operative Society such as exists among the Chenchus of Madras, and for which the Reddis with their strong community feeling and their habit of consecutive work would be infinitely more suited than Chenchus.

The excellent chances of such a Co operative Society for the exploitation of bamboo and timber through Reddis (and possibly Koyas) may be seen by the following figures:

The price realised for bamboos in Rajahmundry is according to quality and season Rs. 50/- to Rs. 120/- per 1000, and the price for timber varies between Rs. 100/- and Rs. 200/- per 100.

Against these must be reckoned the Forest and Customs charges, the wages for felling, and the transport to Rajahmundry. The amounts for the different qualities are as follows:

	Bamboos (*chilakara & cherkutota vasam*) per 1000	Bamboos (*bongu*) per 1000	Timber (*vasam*) per 100	Timber (*basu*) per 100
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Forest charges	9/-	12/-	10/-	12/8
Customs charges	3/12/8	4/1/4	5/-	5/-
Wages for cutting & transport to riverbank	20/-	20/-	25/-	25/-
Transport to Rajahmundry	4/-	4/-	4/-	4/-
	36/12/8	40/1/4	44/-	46/8

Were we to assume such a conservative average for the price of bamboo as Rs. 70/- per 1000, the profits per 1000 would be more than Rs. 30/-; the profits on timber would not be less than Rs. 100/- per 100 in view of the average price of Rs. 150/-.

If we now return to our example of Parantapalli and Kakishnur we see that a branch of the Co-operative Society embracing Parantapalli and 30 households of Kakishnur, i.e., 42 working men, could make an annual profit of Rs. 2,340/- only on bamboo and Rs. 4,200/- on timber, and the Reddis would get their proper wages of Rs. 20/- per 1,000 bamboos. A contribution could be allotted out of these profits to the salaries of the secretary of the Society and his clerks, the Reddis could pay for their own schools and a travelling dispensary, and would be in a position to pay their land revenue in cash. They would no longer have to work during the period of cultivation, and yet the fall in output would not seriously endanger the success of the scheme. The society wuld at first be restricted to the villages between Katkur and Parantapalli, i.e. the major part of the Reddi area, including a considerable number of Koyas, and if successful could later be extended to other Koya areas. Even in this small area close on 700,000 bamboos and 10,000 logs of timber were exported last year, though in that partlcular year many Reddis were employed for three months in cutting the boundary line between the Samasthan and Madras Province. The profits would ther fore amount to several ten thousands of rupees, and the financing of schools and health campaigns would be easy. All that is required is an efficient Secretary and an initial advance by Government, such as given by the Madras Government to the Chenchu Co-operative Society, which could be refunded out of the first year's profits. The Forester at Rudramkot told me that last year about 2,000,000 bamboos and 20,000 logs of timber were cut in the whole of his area; this seems to open an even wider field for a future extension of the Society to the pure Koya areas.

The formation of a Co-operative Society would greatly facilitate the opening of schools for both Reddis and Koyas, Since both these tribes are no longer out of touch with the outside world, they should definitely be given elementary educaion. In the East Godavari District there have been schools for Reddis and Koyas for the last 30 years. Some of the teachers are Reddis, and in most villages adults are to be found who can read and write. With similar developments in the Samasthan most of the grievances of the

Reddis in regard to the illegal collection of revenue and forest dues would die a natural death. Five years ago the Dummagudem Mission opened a chool in Katkur, but after two years it had to be closed owing to the oppsition of the merchants, who forbade their men to let their children go to school, threatening to withhold grain from those who disregarded this order.

The beneficial effects resulting from schools for Reddis and Koyas can only develop gradually; until then it would be advisable afiord the Reddis immediate relief by a simplification of the administration. The charact r of *putwaris*, forest guards, etc., cannot be changed by decree, and it seems therefore as well to restrict their opportunities for abuse of power.

I think that aboriginals respond usually well to personal rule, and a system like that in the Naga Hills and other aboriginal areas in Assam, where all power lies in the hands of the Deputy Commissioner, who administrates the country through responsible tribal representatives and combines the offices of Taluqdar, Tahsil, dar, Superintendent of Police and Divisional Forest Officer is certainly the most suitable. The co-ordination of various departments in the pursuance of a consecutive policy towards aboriginals is a difficult task, and while the aboriginal can comprehend the authority vested in one person of personal influence and prestige as well as sympathy for his needs, he does his best to evade the demands of the numerous subordinates who appear to him to be natural enemies. The appointment of an officer who could stand between the aboriginals and the three main departments, i. e., Revenue, Forest, and Police, and control the activities of such subordinates as Revenue Inspectors, Foresters and Forest Guards would certainly do a great deal of good, and guarantee the enforcement of any rules laid down for the benefit of the aboriginals.

Even without such an appointment the position of the Reddis and Koyas could be improved by the introduction of a few simplifications of the present system. I would suggest :—

1. The area limited by the State boundary in the north, east and south and a line roughly from Narlaram on the Godavari

Ordnance Survey (Map No 65 G/SW D 1) through Tellapalli, the Jhanda Gutta, Gandhagudem and Anantavaram, in the west, should be considered an aboriginal area, in which the following measures should be given a trial (this area would include practically all Reddis of Hyderabad State as a number of Koyas) ;

2. The post of *patwari* should be abolished in this area. The present revenue *patels* should be made directly responsible to the Revenue Inspector, and only they should be allowed to collect revenue. Reddis and Koyas agree that the *patels* give them comparatively little trouble while they are badly oppressed by the *patwaris*. The *patel* should receive orders to measure all *podu* fields annually, for the area actually cultivated often varies from year to year, and the permanently cultivated land should be re-assessed as soon as possible.

3. No permits should be necessary for cutting a new or for relinquishing an old *podu* field. A sufficient area for *podu* cultivation should be allotted to each village; This area would have to be big enough to allow of the customary cycle of rotation, i. e. about 10 to 12 years between each period of cultivation; otherwise the allotted area will gradually become deforested through over-cultivation.

4. The Reddis should be allowed to take timber and bamboo for their own requirements free of charge from the forest. No permits of the Forester or Forest Ranger should be required for housebuilding and fencing, since the necessity of such permits leads to the illegal collection of fees. The Reddi popu'ation is so sparse compared with the size of the forest-area that no appreciable damage to the forest can be done, if the Reddis take timber and bamboos for their own use at their own discretion. The quantities required by them are in any case negligible compared with the merchants, annual exports of bamboos and timber.

5. The Reddis and Koyas should be given the right of free chase with bows and arrows. They are much too busy with cultivation and bamboo cutting to deplete the stock of game to any

dangerous extent. The present situation, in which they do hunt, but secretly and in defiance of the law, and if caught have to pay a fine to the forest guard, is undesirable from the point of view of general morality. A three days' tribal hunt is moreover an essential part of the cermonies of the *Bhumi Devata Panduga*, the feast in honour of the Earth-Mother that precedes the first sowing, and their firm belief that the crops cannot prosper without that hunt and the offering of part of the killed animals to the mountain deities should be respected.

6. The Samasthan authorities might consider whether the plough and grazing-fees in this area could not be reduced to the amounts collected in the *khalsa* villages. Provision should at least be made that the forest guards and Foresters should not collect higher taxes than those prescribed by Government. A possible method would be for forest guards only to count the cattle, and for the villege-headmen to bring the fees to the Range Office or the Ranger's camp in a central village at an appointed time.

7. Should it be impossible at this juncture to establish a co-operative society the exploitation of bamboo and wood should at least be taken over by the Administration and no more felling permits issued to individual merchants. It should not be difficult for the Samasthan authorites to conclude a contract for the whole annual area of bamboo and timber to be cut by a big firm in Rajahmundry. Then the individual villages could be given contracts for the supply of a fixed amount of bamboos and timber, and the cutting wages at the present rate of Rs. 20/- per 1000 bamboos and Rs. 25/- per 100 timber paid in cash. In the first year it could arranged to pay ¼ of the wages in advance, ¼ after the first 4 months, ¼ after 8 months, and the remaining ¼ at the end of the year, provided the village supplied the agreed amount. Since all the larger villages are accessible by launch throughout the year payment could easily be made to the village headmen by a responsible officer. The Reddis and Koyas could be trusted to divide the money honestly among themselves.

Part of the very considerable profit, which would accrue from this procedure, could be reckoned against the plough and grazing fees of the Reddis and used for such institutions for the Reddis' benefit as schools and a travelling dispensary. Since their wages would be paid in cash the Reddis would be able to pay their own land revenue, and thus the influence of the merchants would be eliminated.

As a natural consequence of the Reddis' possession of cash, weekly markets would develop; such as exist already in the purely agricultural villages round Rudramkot. Moreover the establishment of official grain stores might be considered.

8. The existing village-headmen of the Reddis, and in particular the tribal headman at Katkur, should be recognized and reconstituted as the leaders of their villages. As soon as the Reddis can earn wages in cash, these headmen should be made responsible for the collection of the land revenue within their community, and given a small fixed commission as a sign of their recognition by the authorities. Care will have to be taken that the office should always be given to a member of the family in which the headmanship is hereditary, and not to recent nominees of *patwaris* or merchants.

Once the system of responsible village self-government is in action, it may be advisable to substitute for the individual assessment of land revenue a bulk assessment on the whole village wherever the Reddis have no *patta* rights. A permanently fixed land revenue payable by the village-community as a whole would undoubtedly appeal to the Reddis and facilitate the work of the Revenue Authorities.

9. It may be possible to recruit a few educated Reddis from East Godavari District to act as teachers and forest-guards in the Reddis' area, until Hyderabad Reddis are avilable for such posts.

10. Two toddy-palms should be allowed free of tax to every Reddi and Koya within the indicated area, irrespective of the existence of people of other caste in the village.

11. All transfer of land from Reddis and Koyas to outsiders during the last twenty years should be reconsidered and wherever possible the land restored to the aboriginals by compensating the non-aboriginal owners elsewhere.

12. Residence within the aboriginal area of non-aboriginals should be made subject to license. The few families of Malas, Madigas, Dhobis etc. already residing in Katkur, Koind and a few other villages may be given such licenses, but licenses should be refused to merchants and their agents from the Madras Presidency.

This is only the general outline for a reorientation of policy *vis-a-vis* the aboriginals of the Samasthan of Paloncha. If the Court of Wards adopts these proposals in principle a more detailed scheme will have to be prepared.

Paloncha,
30th December, 1940.

CHRISTOPH VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF.

Note (1943) on the Conditions of Aboriginals in the Samasthan of Paloncha and the Taluqs of Paloncha and Yellandu, Warangal District.

IN the time from October 15th to November 17th, 1943, I visited Kothagudem, Paloncha and several Koya villages in the Paloncha and Yellandu Taluqs and toured the easternmost part of the Samasthan of Paloncha, which is almost exclusively inhabited by aboriginals.

In Kothagudem I enquired for purposes of my article for the Census Report into the conditions of aboriginals working in the collieries and talked to colliery officials as well as to a number of Koyas employed in the mines. In this connection I also discussed, of course, the labour shortage, which is at present the most vital problem of the Singareni Collieries.

Conditions of Aboriginal Colliery Labour.

Soon after the establishment of the Singareni Collieries at Yellandu local Koyas began to work occasionally in the mines, and in the course of the last forty years a stock of Koyas familiar with colliery work has grown up round Yellandu. Some of these Koyas settled in labour lines, but the majority lived in the villages round Yellandu and came daily in for work whenever they were free from agricultural activities. In the months of March, April, May, the first half of June, and to a lesser degree during November and December, the collieries could count on these Koyas, who constituted at times more than 25% of the total labour force. Since the shifting of the collieries to Kothagudem the number of Koyas who come in for colliery work has considerably fallen off, for those living in villages near Yellandu can no longer walk daily to the mines and they do not like to stay away from their villages for weeks at a time. Various efforts of colliery officials to persuade these old and

experienced labourers to return to the mines have had very little result. In the vicinity of the present mines there are, on the other hand, few large Koya villages and the people of this area are not yet used to colliery labour.

In the beginning of November 1943 there were only 497 Koyas among a total labour force of 8000. About 70% of these were men and 30% women. 384 Koyas, both men and women, worked underground and 113 on the surface, mainly in workshops. 454 out of the 497 were living on Company ground, and from this it would seem that the coming in of Koyas living in villages has almost completely stopped and that the Collieries were short of about 1500 Koya labourers. Of the 497 Koyas now working in the Collieries, only 88 were permanently employed by the Company, while 409 were furnished by contractors.

Other 'tribals' are of comparatively little importance; only 103 Lambaras are at present working in the Collieries.

Colliery officials say that Koyas are very good for gang-work on the surface, such as moving heavy machinery. They have a knack for mechanical operations which need concerted effort and under their own gang-leaders they beat in this respect any other labour. Although some of the gang-leaders are as good as skilled labourers they prefer gang-work to better paid employment as fitters and the like.

Lambaras, on the other hand, work better individually than in gangs.

Unskilled labourers employed in workshops get as. 7/6 for an 8 hours' shift, and women as. 4, plus a dearness allowance of 1/8 of their wages. Gang-leaders receive as. 12 per shift. Work in the pits is mainly done by piece-work and thereby men can earn up to Re. 1 and women up to as. 12 per day; but this is a maximum not generally attained.

Most of the Koyas to whom I talked have been working in the collieries for many years, and one gang-leader as long as 30 years.

They said that life there "is all right for landless people like us," but it was evident that most of them would prefer the life of independent cultivators. Though many have brought their wives and children to Kothagudem, they still retain the connection with their villages; but others leave their wives at home. These are in the majority men who used to walk to work as long as the mines were at Yellandu.

Even of those Koyas who live on Company ground most do not work daily, and this is indeed one of the main complaints of the officers. A Koya of Manikyaram near Yellandu who lives now permanently at Kothagudem told me that both he and his wife worked underground and earned together about Re. 1/4 a day; but they work only about 15 days in a month though they have no cultivation and no other work.

In an attempt to stabilize their labour force the Company has offered labourers ½ acre plots with a hut, and this year the ground was even ploughed up and sown with *jawari* in the hope of inducing labourers to occupy the plots. This scheme has been an almost complete failure and most plots remained unoccupied, possibly because it was not put to the workers in the psychologically right way; they may have feared that by occupying the land they would incur some obligation.

The colliery officers attribute the fall in Koya labour mainly to two causes:

1. The shifting of the collieries from Yellandu to Kothagudem has separated them from their old Koya labourers who live in villages round Yellandu.

2. The high prices of agricultural produce and the high wages paid for agricultural labour in conjunction with the food drive and the allotment of new land for cultivation have drawn the Koyas away from

The contention of the colliery officers is that a raising of wages for colliery labour would not improve the labour strength; for whereas a few more labourers might be attracted from the villages, those residing at Kothagudem would work on even fewer days being content to meet their immediate needs for food and clothing. Most labourers are heavily indebted and it may be that they feel that by working more they profit only their *sahukar*[1] who leaves them in any case only the minimum required for their day-to-day needs. The system according to which most labourers are employed, not direct by the Company, but through a contractor, possibly aggravates this position; for a labourer's *sahukar* and contractor are no doubt often one and the same.

The problem of how to get the Koyas back to work in the mines is not easy, and I cannot think of any short term policy which is certain to yield the desired results. But it seems that by creating a labour potential round Kothagudem similar to that which had grown up naturally at Yellandu, the labour situation might gradually be improved. Most Koyas do not like to live in labour-lines, whether these consist of individual thatched huts or of cement-buildings, but prefer the atmosphere of their own villages to which they can return after work. In Yellandu there were many villages at walking distance from the mines, and it should be possible to establish round Kothagudem a similar belt of Koya villages within radius of five miles. I have little doubt that by allotting to the Koyas formerly employed in the mines land on special *laoni*, it would be possible to induce many of them to settle in new villages in the vicinity of Kothagudem and to establish thereby the same reservoir of labour which existed round Yellandu. Though this cannot solve the entire labour problem, it would at least lead back a good number of experienced workers; for Koyas who are not prepared to walk or go by bus thirty miles to Kothagudem for a few days between their agricultural activities will no doubt go to work on many days during the slack season if their village is near the mines.

1. Money-lender.

The settling of Koyas in villages of their own may also help to remedy the complaint that labourers work only so many days a month as to earn enough wages to buy food and clothes. A labourer living in the narrow atmosphere of a labour-line with no other interest than food and drink may indeed not need more than Rs. 15 a month, the idea of saving cash having not yet taken root. But a Koya who lives on his own property in a village has many possibilities of spending money and improving his standard of living, such as for instance the purchase of live-stock. To raise the Koya's standard of living and to increase his wants is evidently desirable even if only in order to induce him to work on more days, and I believe that any "uplift"scheme with this aim would have better chances of success if one had to deal with compact Koya villages. Adult education and schools might be useful elements, as they increase the people's interests and ambition and with them their wants.

Much of the land near Kothagudem belongs to the Samasthan of Paloncha, but since there it is intended to allot several ten thousand of acres of new land for cultivation, an agreement for the establishment of Koya villages and perhaps also Lambara villages should not meet with unsurmountable difficulties. Another measure which might improve the labour-situation is to replace the contractor-system by direct employment of workers, or at least aboriginal workers, by the Company. I have had no opportunity of studying the relations between contractors and Koya labourers, but it would be remarkable if in this one instance the aboriginals should get a square deal from contractors; and I believe that by taking direct charge of aboriginal labour through officers of the Company many a Koya may be led back to work in the mines. Aboriginals are notably susceptible to personal influence and interest, and careful handling by such an officer may help to attach them to the collieries.

The antidote for the attraction of well-paid agricultural labour—and I was told that women get nowadays for ground-nut picking up to as. 8 a day (compared to as. 4 in Kothagudem workshops and from 8 to 12 as. underground)—is not only better wages in the mines, but also housing congenial to aboriginals and protection from oppressive

sahukars. If the coal-situation is as grave as it appears, it would certainly justify drastic steps, such as compulsory debt reconciliation and subsequent banishment of money-lenders from an area within 20 miles of the collieries.

Position of Koyas in Yellandu Division.

Fifty years ago Koyas were the main population in the country between Kothagudem and Yellandu, but with the opening up of communications settlers of other stock came in and a great deal of the land formerly held by Koyas passed into other hands. While in some villages Koyas possess still a considerable acreage, in others they are almost without exception tenants and daily labourers.

Two of the villages I visited may be considered representative:

In Sudimalla some 5 miles east of Yellandu there are 2,000 Koyas out of a total population of about 2,500; the rest consist mainly of Dankars. The cultivated area is 5,994 acres, and of these 1,750 are held by Koyas on *patta*, the number of Koya *pattadars* being 150; about 4,000 acres are owned by Brahmins, Marwaris, Komtis and Muslims of Yellandu, and some by local Dankars. Two generations ago all the land belonged to Koyas, but some 30 years ago outsiders began to acquire land, mainly *sahukars* to whom the Koyas had become indebted. Those Koyas who cultivate as tenants pay to the *pattadar* one half of the total produce of wet land and one third of the produce of dry land. Many Koyas of Sudimalla used to go and work in the collieries as long as the mines were at Yellandu.

In Koyagudem, a hamlet of Singabhupalam, eight miles from Kothagudem, the position of the Koyas is far less favourable and their houses are as small and as miserable as those of any Depressed Caste. Here too the Koyas held originally most of the land, but lost it within the last twenty years. Among about 100 householders only three own land, altogether 17 acres; 60 cultivate on hire and 20 as daily labourers. Those who hire land have to pay for one acre of dry land (of Rs. 1/8 revenue) one bag of *jawari*. They say that this amounts to about half the produce. The total number of

bullocks and buffaloes owned by the 100 Koya families of that village is 20 pairs; the hire for a pair of bullocks is two bags of *jawari*. None of these villagers work as yet in the Collieries.

The Koyas of this village used to live on a site 3 furlongs away; when this came under the anicut of the Singabhupalam tank the village was forcibly shifted to higher ground. The former village site was auctioned and acquired by an employee of the Singareni Collieries.

The local Koyas are not enthusiastic about the tank. They say that before the project was started they owned a great deal of dry land, but that all this has now been acquired by *sahukars*. None of the land served by the tank belongs to Koyas, but about 100 acres are still available and could be allotted under the special *laoni* rules.

It seems that on the whole the Koyas of Yellandu Taluq have lost a good deal of their land to non-aboriginals, but that in most of the villages where Koyas form the majority of the population part of the land is still in their hands. The following figures from the twelve most important Koya villages show that on an average the Koyas hold less than one acre of *patta* land per head:

Name of village.	Total area under cultivation in acres.	Koya population.	Koya *pattadars*.	Area held on *patta* by Koyas in acres.
Railkayalpalli ...	1121	324	8	85
Ragleyanguda ...	1616	254	5	24
Belampalli ...	14405	1403	120	1240
Chela Samandram	3329	525	30	605
Bol ...	1907	775	46	780
Kuperai ...	1552	749	60	661
Kamram ...	1728	1300	44	1203
Setipalli ...	1792	700	40	780
Rapkol ...	8548	550	40	600
Singabhupalam ...	2424	400	30	150
Sudimala ...	5994	2000	150	1750
Rumped ...	3145	1200	60	1223

From these figures it appears that even in predominantly aboriginal villages the majority of Koyas have no land of their own, and in view of this it should not be difficult to find Koyas prepared to settle in new villages near Kothagudem if there they were given land under the special *laoni* rules. It seems that recently some 6,000 acres of open forest have been allotted in Yellandu Taluq on *siwa-i-jamabandi* tenure, but none of it to Koyas; it is mainly big land-owners who profited from this measure under the 'Grow More Food' campaign.

A difficulty in preventing the alienation of Koya land was mentioned to me by Mr. Azharul Haq, then Second Taluqdar of Yellandu. According to him Koyas are in Warangal District not listed among the aboriginals who benefit from the provisions of the Land Alienation Act of 1349, and in various disputes which have recently come before the Revenue Authorities and the Courts the opposite party maintained that the Act is not applicable to Koyas. Gonds are among the tribes listed, but the trouble is that most Koyas when asked whether they are Gonds, declare that they are "Dorlasatam" and form a separate community. It seems that this technical slip in the drafting of rules is now being exploited by *Vakils* and other non-aboriginals interested in the acquisition of Koya land. Similarly Konda Reddis are not specifically mentioned and it has—absurdly enough—been claimed that they cannot be regarded as "Reddis" for the purposes of the Act.

The Koyas of Yellandu Taluq speak Telugu as their mother-tongue and do not understand Gondi. They say that they entertain no relations whatsoever with the Gondi-speaking Koyas of Paloncha. In the villages near Yellandu one meets fairly progressive Koyas who know Urdu and are literate in Telugu; some of them function as police *patels* and *mali patels*.

In this connection I might mention a phenomenon which struck me while I was touring near Ashwaraopet two years ago and which I discussed this time with the Second Taluqdar. There is a steady influx of cultivators from Madras Presidency into the Paloncha, Khammamet and Madira Taluqs as well as into the Samasthan of

Paloncha; and these immigrants have largely displaced the local peasantry. The value of land is still much higher in the adjoining districts of Madras and a man may well sell there 10 acres and buy 50 acres in Warangal District with the proceeds. The Second Taluqdar mentioned that the people now holding the lands served by the Wyra project in Madira and the Paler project in Khammamet are 80% immigrants. In the village Bodelbanda under the Paler anicut, for instance, the entire population of about 4,000, with the exception of the *patel* and the *patwari*, consists of immigrants from Madras. It goes without saying that the aboriginals are the first to be displaced. The experience with the Singabhupalam project is the same; while the local Koyas did not benefit at all, a great deal of the land was acquired by employees of the Singareni Collieries, who are, of course, neither local people nor cultivators.

Conditions of the Aboriginals in the Samasthan of Paloncha.

In my note on the aboriginal problem in the Samasthan of Paloncha of December 30th, 1941, I dealt mainly with the hill-tract in the eastern part of the Samasthan, and during October and November of this year I toured in the same area and visited the villages Parantapalli, Kakishnur, Koinda, Kasaram, Tekur, Borreddigudem and Katkur; Reddis and Koyas from many other villages came moreover to see me in my camps.

The general character of the aboriginal tract constituting the greater part of the Tatkur *patti* has been outlined in my previous note, and I will here confine myself to a discussion of the develop ments during the last 2½ years, following the issue of the Circular Orders of the Court of Wards of 16-9-1350 F., which established certain rights of the aboriginals on forest produce, made provision for the control of the contractors in their dealing with Reddi and Koya labourers, legalized *podu* cultivation and initiated various minor reforms.

Forest Exploitation and Contractors: The most important individual factor in the improvement of the aboriginals' economic position has been the change in the system of forest exploitation·

Before 1350 cutting licences for timber and bamboo were given indiscriminately to any timber-merchant applying, and the contractors, most of whom were residents of the East Godavari District, badly exploited the aboriginals engaged in the cutting of timber and bamboo. The exclusion from contracts in the Samasthan of the principal timber merchant, Bora Krishnamurty, for whom most of the Reddis and local Koyas had worked nominally on a piece-work basis, but virtually as *bhagelas* or bond-servants, cleared the atmosphere, and when in 1351 the coupe-system was introduced the new contractors, who had no old claims on the aboriginals, paid, as far as I could ascertain, fair cash wages. Whether the introduction of the coupe-system, coupled with a certain control over the contractors' dealings by the Forest Officers, alone would have permanently served to protect the aboriginals is open to question, but in 1352 a new element was introduced into the situation when the Parantapalli-Kakishnur bamboo coupe was taken in auction in the name of the Reddi *patel* Kopal Kanaya of Parantapalli.

The Reddis, a very primitive and backward tribe, could of course not have taken the coupe on their own; the funds were provided and the arrangements made by the Sri Rama Krishna Ashram at Parantapalli, where a *Sadhu*, commenly known as the Parantapalli *Swami*, has lived for many years. The exploitation of the coupe was also managed by the Ashram very much in the style of a Co-operative Society. The wages for the Reddis engaged in the cutting and transport of the bamboos were advanced by the Ashram and their sale was effected by an agent of the Ashram in Rajahmundry. Since up to now all the members of the Ashram have been doing the work on an honorary basis, the entire net profit went to the Reddis engaged in the work, the Reddi *patel* in whose name the contract was taken receiving no greater share than the other Reddis.

In my 1941 note I pointed out that the wages received by the Reddis for forest labour were mainly in kind and amounted actually seldom to more than an anna a day, though nominally the contractors paid the Reddis at a rate of Rs. 20 for the felling and transport to the river bank of 1000 bamboos.

In the year 1353 (1942–3) the Reddis working in the Parantapalli coupe received not only Rs. 35 per 1000 bamboos, but also various provisions of a value far exceeding the cash wages.

The figures for the expenditure and income of this co-operative enterprise given to me by the *Swami* are interesting, and if compared with the figures concerning the same villages (Parantapalli and Kakishnur) in my earlier report show strikingly the change in conditions:

The total amount derived from the sale of 113,250 bamboos was Rs. 15,596.

Against this stood the following expenditure:	Rs.
Price of bamboo coupe paid to Forest Department ...	2,200
Cash wages paid to Reddis	3,500
Cost of 296 bags of *jawari* for distribution among the Reddis	3,675
Cost of 21 pairs of buffaloes handed over to Reddis ...	650
Customs duty	700
Transport of bamboos to Rajahmundry	600
Cost of salt, oil, clothes, jaggery, expense of Reddi marriages, etc.	3,058
Contingencies	300
	Rs. 14,683

Thus there remained a balance of Rs. 916, and judging from the number of houses in the villages whose inhabitants were employed in the coupe each household received in that year about Rs. 200 in cash and kind.

The results of this co-operative experiment seems to prove that my estimate of the possible results of the co-operative exploitation of timber and bamboos by Reddis was not unduly optimistic. Its effect on the general atmosphere in the villages concerned has been

far-reaching. The Reddis, who two years ago wore little else than a few tattered rags, now all possess *dhotis* and shirts, and their women proper *saris*, though they do not wear this fuller dress when at work in forest and fields. They are evidently better fed, and *jawari* has entirely replaced the pith of the *caryota urens* palm. In Parantapalli itself there are no more acute cases of yaws, for during the last years the *Ashram* arranged for a doctor to visit the village and give the full course of injections to sufferers. More important than this material progress is, however, the psychological change in the Reddis. The freedom from oppression and debt has made them more self-possessed and cheerful, and they work now with the consciousness of reaping the full fruits of their labour. One may argue that it is unnecessary or in bad taste to make aboriginals wear caps and sashes on which are imprinted the letters "*OM*" such as the *Swami* gives to the Reddis working for him, but this is a small matter compared with the concrete benefits the Reddis have derived from the *Ashram's* activities. Among the Reddis of the river-bank, who to all intents and purposes were serfs of the forest contractors, there was in any case little left of a flourishing aboriginal culture which might now be in danger of adulteration. No doubt a certain amount of religious propaganda is done by the *Swami* and the members of the *Ashram* who adhere to the Vedanta doctrine, but socially their propaganda is progressive in that they emphasize the equality of all men and women of all castes and creeds, and condemn untouchability. At present they do not interefere with tribal recreations like singing and dancing, but they are making an attempt to discourage the Reddis' traditional form of marriage by capture, and it is in pursuance of this ideal that the *Swami* allocates money for wedding feasts from the public purse. A point in the *Ashram's* propaganda with which I am personally in disagreement is the insistence by the *Swami* on the replacement of animal sacrifices at tribal ceremonies by offerings of cereals and coconuts. But there is as yet no attempt to dissuade the Reddis from eating meat or from keeping any particular domestic animal; indeed it seemed to me that there are nowadays more pigs in Parantapalli than there were before. The aboriginals who mainly fall within the influence

of the *Ashram* are at present mainly Reddis, but if the scheme is extended many Koyas will also be included; they are a tribe with a much closer knit social organisation, a more highly developed tribal sense, and they are addicted to beef-eating and cow sacrifice; they may therefore be less inclined to comply with the *Swami's* ideas.

The *Ashram* discourages, moreover, the drinking of *caryota* palm-wine, ostensibly because during the palm-wine season the Reddis spend a large part of their time near the *caryota* palms and neglect bamboo work.

The idea of the *Swami* is to extend co-operation from the working of the coupes to the entire village life. Thus he provided those Reddis not in possession of cattle for dragging bamboos with buffaloes without debiting their individual accounts. After three years the buffaloes will be their personal property. Similarly he pays from the common purse for marriage-expenses in order to prevent the Reddis from incurring debts, and last year he persuaded the Reddis of Parantapalli to cultivate one *podu* field collectively, sharing the work and the produce.

Another innovation of the *Swami* is the planting of large groves of fruit trees in the vicinity of Parantapalli. Some months ago he ordered nearly 200 fruit-trees, mangoes, oranges, limes etc., and made the Reddis plant them in suitable places. The young trees, well protected against goats and game, are thriving well and there is a great probability of success for fruit groves; for the climate of this part of the Eastern Ghats is very favourable for fruit trees, particularly those of the citrus family, and the orange gardens of the Reddis in the Rampa country are famous. With cheap water transport to Rajahmundry the Reddis of Paloncha could develop fruit-growing to great advantage.

The best proof of the appeal which the new order makes to the Reddis is the fact that a whole village-community, which emigrated some years ago to British India, has now returned and settled at Repalli, close to the Ashram and Parantapalli.

Encouraged by the first year's result the *Swami* decided to take for 1353 not only the Parantapalli-Kakishnur bamboo coupe, but also the Tekpalli-Katkur coupe, thereby extending the co-operative scheme to most of the Reddis engaged in forest labour.

The coupes which came up for auction for 1353 were those numbered I in the series of rotation and were last allotted in 1351 for Rs. 300 (Parantapalli) and Rs. 1,600 (Tekpalli).

This year the only bidders in the auction for these two coupes were the Reddi *patel* Kopal Kanaya and Md. Kazim, a Contractor, whose main business is connected with the Singareni Collieries. The bidding went very high and the Parantapalli coupe was at last acquired by the Reddi *patel* for Rs. 11,000 and the Tekpalli coupe for Rs. 18,000.

I have calculated the chances of working those two coupes with a profit; but it seems that most probably there will a loss of several thousand rupees. The reasons for the bad prospects are the high prices of the coupes and the quality of the Tekpalli coupe, which is very poor in bamboos. The Forest Ranger told me that according to his estimate there are not more that 200,000 bamboos in this coupe, mainly of inferior quaiity, thus representing a total value of not more than Rs. 16,000—20,000. He suggested that this must have been the reason why none of the local contractors competed in the auction for this coupe, which was valued at Rs. 4,000.

It seems that in the East Godavari Agency, in consequence of the high timber and bamboo prices in Rajahmundry, some coupes also went exceptionally high and that in order to prevent the soaring of bamboo price a ruling was make according to which the maximum amount chargeable by the Forest Department for any coupe is to be five times the average of the sums for which it was auctioned during the last 10 years; any amount above this sum was refunded to the contractors who had acquired the coupes in auction. Thus the price of one coupe in the Kunavaram Range which was auctioned for Rs. 30,000 was subsequently reduced to Rs. 15,000.

The Swami believes that he will be able to carry on the co-operative scheme in spite of this year's impending loss, but it would certainly be a pity if it collapsed owing to the high price of the coupes, and I wonder whether in the future it may not be possible to make the co-operative exploitation of the coupes by Reddis independent of the uncertainty of auctions, and allot to them the two coupes in question at an equitable rate. It seems bad luck on the Reddis that they should have to pay exorbitant charges for the exploitation of an area from which in past years the Samasthan gained but insignificant revenue. Considering that elsewhere Governments shoulder considerable expenditure in launching such co-operative schemes for aboriginals—I recall only the annual expenditure of Rs. 30,000 for the Chenchus by the Madras Government—such a concession would seem well justifiable. The Samasthan would in the long run suffer no appreciable financial loss; for while a contractor may one year be prepared to acquire a coupe for a sum higher than its intrinsic value in order to gain a footing in an area or cut out a rival, he is not likely to continue paying more than a coupe is worth.

Labour for the Forest Department: In view of the better payment received now by the aboriginals for bamboo and timber felling, I foresee difficulties in getting labour for the Forest Department unless the latter raises also the scale of wages. At present the Department seems to be so short of funds for conservancy purposes that it can pay only a daily wage of about as. 1½. It is obvious that labour cannot be got at this rate without compulsion. The Forest Ranger told me of his difficulties in building the new Forest Rest-houses, mentioned below, and the Reddis of Kakishnur complained that last year they received only Rs. 5 for clearing the forest line; 30 men were engaged on this work for four days and even at a rate of as. 4, which is less than what they can earn by bamboo cutting, they ought to have received Rs. 30. I understand that teak-plantations are planned, but without a substantial raise in wages this will have to be worked entirely by forced labour.

Markets: In the times when the aboriginals were mainly paid in kind there was no scope for markets; but now they receive cash wages and there is a need for local shopping facilities particularly since the present emergency regulations of the Madras Presidency prevent purchases of certain food stuffs from the East Godavari District. Consequently a weekly bazaar in a place like Katkur would be of great advantage, but I believe that the initiative would have to come from the Samasthan authorities.

Liquor Shops: The fact that the Reddis and Koyas have locally little possibility of spending the cash earned by bamboo cutting, makes them frequent the liquor shops existing in some villages to a dangerous extent. While I camped in Koinda and Katkur many of the villagers were almost continuously drunk; they had just received wages for bamboo work, and spent a good deal of the money on drink. Since in the scattered villages it is, without a large staff, impossible to pay labourers daily, contractors as well as the agents of the *Ashram* pay Reddis and Koyas per 1000 bamboos delivered. So there are times when the aboriginals have considerable sums of cash in their hands. As the Reddis and Koyas have the concession to draw toddy from palmyra palms, I think it should be seriously considered whether it would not be better to close the liquor shops in Koinda and Katkur, at least until the aboriginals have some other opportunities for spending their money.

The other aspects of the situation in the Reddi area and other aboriginal areas of the Samasthan can best be discussed in the light of the points in the Circular Orders of the Court of Wards of the 16th Amardad 1350 Fasli.

1—2 Reshuffling of Villages and Appointment of Patwaris: At the time of issue of the Circular Orders a great many aboriginal villages in the Samasthan had only the status of hamlets (*mazra*) of some big village, usually with predominantly non-aboriginal population. The result was that the village officers, i.e., police *patels* and revenue *patels*, were almost without exception non-aboriginals, and the Reddis and Koyas had no one to represent their interests.

Paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Circular Orders provided that certain hamlets should be given the status of independent villages and that in the purely aboriginal tracts the village officers should be aboriginals; thus the number of independent villages was subsequently raised from 70 to 116.

In the Reddi country most of the widely scattered villages are still hamlets of Katkur, a mixed village, and Tatkurgummu, a purely non-aboriginal village. The village officers are non-aboriginals, and even the police *patel* and revenue *patel* of Katkur do not reside there, but in distant Rudramkot. I understand from the Divisional Officer of Paloncha that the establishment of independent Reddi villages is planned, and it is to be hoped that Reddis will then be appointed at least as police *patels*. It is of course impossible and indeed inadvisable to establish small settlements of 8 or 10 houses as villages, but a grouping of Reddi settlements into three or four units is easily feasible. The *kulam pedda* or tribal headman of all the Hyderabad Reddis, Madi Zogreddi, should certainly be re-instated as police *patel* of Katkur; both his father and grandfather served in this capacity.

In other *pattis* of the Samasthan several Koya villages have been established as independent villages; while two years ago there was only one Koya *patel* in the Samasthan, there are now twelve Koyas acting as *patels* of their villages. Some have the full rights and status of police *patels*, and others function as "assistants" of the *patel* under whose jurisdiction the village lay before its independent establishment.

Mr. Samiullah, the Divisional Officer, mentioned that there are difficulties in appointing Koya *patels* in the new villages, because the old *watandar patels* claim that their rights continue whether the villages are *mazra* or independent villages, and the legal position is doubtful until the Director-General of Revenue has made a decision in regard to the *watan* rights in the Samasthan.

The same difficulty arises over the problem of *patwaris*. I have emphasized in my previous note that there is no remedy for

the exploitation and oppression of the aboriginals by *patwaris* as long as the old *watan* rights remain in force. On this tour I found that the one point in which no improvement is noticeable is the conduct of the *patwaris*; they still charge the Reddis exorbitant sums for their *podu* fields and extort money in all sorts of ways. Mr. Samiullah confirmed this and told me that the *patwaris*, secure in their *watan* rights, are completely unruly and an obstacle to any reforms. I believe that he has submitted a proposal for the partial abolition and partial restriction of *watan* rights, and the settlement of this question is from the point of view of the aboriginals certainly of the greatest importance. In areas as distant as the Reddi country, which cannot be effectively toured by the Divisional Officer and Tahsildar, the powers of the *patwari* are still very great, and if he is a *watandar* who cannot be dismissed, or a *watandar's gumashta* who is more eager to please his employer than to comply with the Tahsildar's orders, it is very difficult to stop oppressive practices.

3. Touring: This paragraph of the Circular Orders deals with the supervision of the village officers by the Divisional Officer and the Tahsildar and has thus also a bearing on the problems of *patels* and *patwaris*. In so far as the aboriginal tract on the lower Godavari is concerned, touring is certainly still insufficient to provide protection for the aboriginals against oppression and encroachment by non-aboriginal *patels* and *patwaris* and to secure the aboriginals' rights in the land. In the short time of my stay among the Reddis I noted several cases of *patwaris* collecting obviously illegal "fines" from aboriginals. Some of the villages where I camped had not been visited by either the Divisional Officer or the Tahsildar since I left the area in 1941, but this is not surprising considering the size of the Samasthan and the state of its communications. The launches run most irregularly and it took me thirty-six hours to go down the river from Borgampad to Parantapalli and forty-eight to come up. Close supervision of subordinates, so essential in an aboriginal area, can hardly be achieved as long as there is only one Tahsildar for the whole Samasthan.

4. Podu Cultivation: In my previous note I dealt at length with the question of *podu* cultivation and pointed out that by the

recent reservation of forests the area open for the *podu* cultivation of the Reddis and Koyas of the hilly tract flanking the Godavari gorge was too small to allow of the normal cycle of rotation. The proximity of the forest lines to the villages has the effect that the same slopes are cultivated at too short intervals, whereby permanent harm is done to the soil structure.

The Circular Orders and the proposals of the Settlement Commissioner provided that 8 times the area then under *podu* should be reserved for *podu* by rotation. But the only change of forest lines as yet carried out is a shifting of the enclosure lines round Parantapalli, and the demarcation of enclosure lines round Kutturvada, Parantapalli and Kunkulgoyapaka. All the other lines have remained as they were in 1941, and the situation is thus materially unchanged. Though in some villages there may perhaps be just enough land inside the enclosures to allow of a normal circle of rotation, in others I heard the same complaints as before, and there are villages where the Reddis and Koyas, far from having 8 times the area then under *podu* at their disposal, have only room for two or three alternative sets of plots.

The most serious individual case of hardship occurred in the area of Gogulapudi, a hill village where I spent several months in 1941. There the Reddis depended entirely on *podu* cultivation, having no flat land and living too far into the hills to work for forest contractors. The three villages of Gogulapudi, Dornalpushe and Jorumamulu lay then in the Reserved Forest, but *podu* cultivation was tolerated. In the cold weather after my departure, however, the forest guard forbade the Reddis to clear any new land, and when they went to the Ranger's Office, they were told—as it would seem in the absence of the Ranger—that in the Reserved Forest no *podu* could be allowed. That year they cultivated their old fields, but had very bad crops. When the following year they again could not cut new *podu*, all the inhabitants of Dornalpushe and Jorumamulu and some families of Gogulapudi abandoned their villages, and most of them crossed over into British India, where *podu* is allowed. Only three households have remained in Gogulapudi, and they subsist now mainly by basket-making and gathering jungle produce.

In several of the river-bank villages there seems to be this year less *podu* than two years ago, and in Kasaram the Koyas told me that this year had no *podu*, because when they started felling the forest guard stopped them by saying that a special new due would be levied on *podu* fields.

Another reason given by Reddis and Koyas for the decrease in *podu* fields is the high assessment. According to the rules only as. 8 per acre should be levied on *podu*, but the *patwari* collected up to Rs. 4 and 6 for one *podu* field, though even the biggest *podu* does not amount to three acres, It seems that the *patwaris* are as uncontrolled as ever in their assessment of revenue on *podu* fields, and they continue to demand Re. 1 for measuring the new *podu*. There is moreover a fee of as. 8 per acre collected by the Forest Department for the permission to clear a new *podu*, and all this together has the effect of discouraging *podu* cutting.

While *podu* is thus very much restricted for those largely dependent on this form of cultivation, an erroneous interpretation of the Circular Orders led to the introduction of *podu* in many of the more advanced parts of the Samasthan. The orders did not state that *podu* should only be allowed to aboriginals and only in areas where they cultivate without ploughs on hill-slopes, and many cultivators and landowners of the plains took advantage of the regulations; they applied for level forest-land to be cultivated as "*podu*" at the preferential revenue of as. 8 per acre; the officers of the Samasthan, believing that this was in accordance with the Circular Orders of 1350, granted the permission. Mr. Samiullah told me that close to Paloncha Brahmin *patwaris* turned into *podu* cultivators and worked up to 40 acres of such *podu* land with many ploughs and hired labour, the crops on the new land being of course excellent and the assessment purely nominal.

Thus in 1352 more than 14,000 acres were cultivated by *podu* compared to 2,937 acres in 1950.

Fortunately the damage done is not yet very great, for allotment of up to 50,000 acres new land for cultivation has been planned

and the newly cleared *podu* land could now be given on *patta* to landless Koyas and cultivators of other castes.

Paragraph 4 of the Circular Orders provides for the granting of *pattas* to aboriginals on payment of a nominal sum. To my knowledge no such granting of *pattas* has yet taken place.

5. *Land Alienation:* My tour was too short for a detailed study of the complex problems of Land Alienation, but my impression is that at least in the Tatkur *patti* outsiders can still acquire possession of the land of aboriginals. In Kasaram, for example, I heard of a recent case of a *sahukar* forcibly occupying the land of a Koya who failed to repay an inherited debt.

6. *Grazing:* According to the Circular Orders the Hill Reddis of the Tatkur *patti* are allowed free grazing, and the Forest Authorities have wisely granted the same concessions to the Koyas living there side by side with Reddis under similar conditions.

7. *Collection of Cesses:* The abolition of cesses (*jatii*) has proved of great advantage to the aboriginals, particularly since the collection of these cesses was used as an opportunity for the levying of all sorts of illegal *mamul* and fees.

8. *Extraction of Wood from Forest for Agricultural Purposes and the Use of Minor Forest Produce:* The grant of free timber and bamboos from open forest for domestic purposes has also been an enormous boon to the Reddis and Koyas. Two years ago they were unable to fence their fields, and the cost of rebuilding their houses was so high that many lived in badly delapidated huts. Now all the fields near the villages and the gardens are well fenced, and the houses are in good repair. This seems to apply, however, only to the Reddi country; Koyas of Gollagudem in the Tatkur *patti* told me that they still cannot get free bamboos for fencing their fields and have to pay for building materials.

9. *Forest Contractors:* This question has been discussed above. Even in the areas which last year were not yet covered by

the co-operative scheme, there seems to have been no difficulty over the payment of wages, which were all paid in cash at reasonable rates.

10. Forest Rest-houses: Unfurnished Forest Rest houses have recently been built in Katkur, Koinda, Kakishnur and Parantapalli. They make touring far more pleasant and are situated on beautiful spots overlooking the Godavari.

11. Hospitals: Though a modern hospital has been built at Paloncha, the medical service available to the population of the Samasthan is still very inadequate. In compliance with the Circular Orders a Touring Dispensary was established at Rudramkot, but has recently been shifted to Borgampad as being a more central head-quarters for a doctor who has to tour the entire Samasthan. The area to be covered by him is so vast that the practical effect of his work must remain slight. Yaws is still rampant in most Reddi and Koya villages, and an intensive yaws campaign is urgently required. Apart from that there should be at least two touring dispensaries; one in the south with head-quarters in the Tatkur or Shankargiri *patti*, and the other in the north with headquarters in the Gundal *patti*.

12. A Police outpost has been established in Kakishnur and has probably a settling effect in an area where cross-currents of violently conflicting economic interest led in the past to various crimes. The constables complain badly about malaria and the absence of any medical help.

13. Education has not been mentioned in the Circular Orders but is nevertheless of importance for the aboriginals as well as other communities. On a whole education is in Paloncha in a very backward state; among a population of 66,910 there are only 2,306 literates or 3.45%. The total expenditure on education is Rs. 5,000 and there were in 1352 only 12 primary schools and 11 aided schools. Among the pupils there were in 1351 49 Koyas, and in 1352 about 75 Koyas; some two-thirds of these were in the school at Ankampallam, a pure Koya village. No free books and school materials

are provided in these schools. Mr. Samiullah told me that he distributed free clothes to the pupils of Ankampallam, and that he intended to open a school for Reddis in one of the villages on the Godavari bank and to give the pupils at first some free books and materials. With the funds available, I do not think that anything substantial in the way of aboriginal education can be attempted, but the success of the Koya school at Ankampallam is indeed remarkable, and shows that the Koyas are not unresponsive to education. When I visited that school in 1941 the teacher received a monthly salary of only Rs. 7 and the villagers used to contribute to his sustenance and to buy all school materials. Now he receives Rs. 15 and the number of pupils seems to indicate that he has made a success of the school.

Summing up the development in the aboriginal area with which my first report dealt, it must be said that considerable progress has been achieved. The enslavement and exploitation of the Reddis by timber contractors has come to an end, and the first year's result of the co-operative scheme initiated by the Parantapalli *Ashram* are excellent. Various grievances of Reddis and Koyas, such as the high charges on forest produce for domestic use, have been remedied, and it seems that the Forest Subordinates are better controlled and, at least in this area, no longer harass the aboriginals by the collection of illegal fees. The same can, I believe, be said of the police subordinates; during all my tour I heard no complaint against police constables. Less noticeable is the improvement in regard to revenue matters; the *patwaris* being *watandar*, they and their employees can apparently not be effectively controlled, the assessment on *siwa-i-jamabandi* land, particularly *podu*, is still arbitrary, and the aboriginals get little protection against encroachment of outsiders. An alternative system is here probably the only remedy.

Although there has been a change for the better in a situation that was disastrous two years ago, much remains still to be done and the three following points seem the most important and urgent.

A. A re-adjustment of forest lines as foreseen in the Circular Orders, so as to provide sufficient land for *podu* on hill-slopes for

those Reddis and Koyas dependent on this form of cultivation. The only area in which *podu* is a necessity is the Tatkur *patti*.

B. Abolition of the *watandar* system in purely aboriginal area.

C. Stabilization of the co-operative working of forest-coupes by Reddis and Koyas by certain concessions and safeguards.

The third point seems important, since in the co-operative scheme initiated by the social workers of the Parantapalli Ashram we have already an agency working for the welfare of the aboriginals, which—if created by Government or Samasthan authorities—would necessitate a large expenditure. As things are, nothing else is required but to grant the Reddis terms somewhat more favourable than those of the ordinary forest contractor. We should deceive ourselves if we believed that the timber merchants, who for decades used to derive large profits from the exploitation of forests by poorly paid Reddi labour and on paper have still many claims against their former debtors, have admitted defeat: they are obviously waiting for an opportunity when they can appear again on the scene. Any financial difficulty of the co-operative scheme owing to the price of coupes being out of proportion to their value would afford such an opportunity. The idea of special concessions for the aboriginals of this area is not new, and I may quote in this context from Mr. Crofton's note of 8-4-1350 F.: "...the interests of the aboriginals must always be opposed to that of the Samasthan, as the latter is only concerned with getting the greatest possible revenue from the area and the aboriginal is naturally inefficient. It is a national responsibility to protect the aboriginals of this area and, as in Madras, the expenditure should be met by Government." I believe recent developments have shown that there is not necessarily a clash of interest, for in the last year (1352 F.) the Reddis paid for the Parantapalli coupe Rs. 2,200, compared to Rs. 300 in 1351 and the sum of approximately Rs. 1,100 paid in the same area for cutting permissions in 1349, when the coupe system was not yet introduced and the felling was not restricted to a demarcated coupe. This year they took in auction for Rs. 11,000 coupe I, which went

for Rs. 300 in 1351, but it is mainly the neighbouring Tekpalli coupe (I), which went for Rs. 1,600 in 1351 but for which the Reddis had to bid Rs. 18,000 in 1352, where there will probably be a loss because of the scarcity of good quality bamboos. Such rates are not likely to be realized in all years even from contractors, and leasing the coupes to the aboriginals at an equitable price without auction need in the long run be no great sacrifice on the side of the Samasthan, while it would secure for the future the Reddis' present favourable economic position.

In what way the co-operative scheme, worked at present under direct guidance of the *Ashram*, could be transformed into a regular Co-operative Society for Reddis and Koyas is a minor question, but I understand from the *Swami* that in principle he would have no objection against such a technical separation of *Ashram* and Co-operative Forest Exploitation by aboriginals. He is, however, insistent that as long as he provides the capital, the management of the Society should be left in his hands. For he believes that the ill-effects of years of oppression can only be remedied by very careful and liberal treatment and by meeting all the Reddis' essential needs irrespective of the efficiency of the individual labourer. He wants therefore to leave the building-up of a financial reserve to later years, and is even prepared to pay considerable funds into the scheme without hope of recovery. It is, in his words, "necessary to allow the Reddis to enjoy life for some short while in order to give them self-respect and new courage; once this is done one may start with their education in efficiency and thrift." I think there is something in this principle; the psychological state of the Reddis in the Godavari villages was certainly not healthy, and the *Swami's* scheme is as much a mental as an economic cure. But whether he will be able to realize his idealistic aim without pampering the Reddis remains to be seen. At present the scheme rests no doubt entirely on his own compelling personality, which has gained him a considerable reputation and influence throughout the lower Godavari valley and enables him, for instance, to secure the free services of doctors from British India. He commands the spiritual allegiance of a growing number of local inhabitants on both sides of the river and

in many a village one sees the shirts marked with the words "Poverty Relief" (in English!) which he distributes to his supporters and co-workers, both aboriginal and non-aboriginal.

One aspect of the recent developments in the Reddi country seems to be of general instructiveness: while the change of policy expressed in the Circular Orders of 1350 opened the door for an improvement of the Reddis' condition, it was by a local agency that the new potentialities were exploited and the Reddis were helped to profit from the more favourable situation. Without this it is very doubtful whether the introduction of the coupe-system and the regulations regarding the payment of wages would have had a permanent effect, for the most generously framed laws can have concrete results only if the interests of the aboriginals are guarded by officers or non-official social workers on the spot. The success of the new system of forest exploitation and the comparative ineffectiveness of the rules regarding *podu* are good examples. While the co-operative scheme launched by the *Ashram* and made possible by the previous exclusion of the old contractors through the Circular Orders has revolutionized the position in regard to forest labour and remedied all the aboriginal grievances in that respect, the rules concerning *podu*, though aimed at furnishing the Reddis and Koyas with ample *podu* land, have not been fully implemented in the area for which they were designed, though they are being successfully abused by the more progressive populations of other parts. Minor tragedies, such as the stopping of *podu* in just the few hill villages where the Reddis had no other means of subsistence, were certainly not intended by the either the Court of Wards or the Samasthan Authorities, but were merely due to the absence of anyone with local knowledge who was familiar with needs of the aboriginals.

Marlavai,
Utnur Taluq,
13th December, 1943.

CHRISTOPH VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF.

Note (1943) on the Position of Aboriginals in the Asifabad, Rajura and Utnur Taluqs of the Adilabad District.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Adilabad district contains some of the largest compact blocks of aboriginal populations within H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions. The principal tribes in the District are Gonds, Kolams and Naikpods, and attached to the Gonds as their hereditary bards are Pardhans and Totis, who, though of different racial stock, belong culturally and economically to the aboriginal sphere. The Gonds are divided into two endogamous groups, Raj Gonds and Dhurwe Gonds, but within the three taluqs under review the latter form an insignificant minority. All the Gonds speak a dialect of Gondi which shows close affinities to the language of the Chanda district, but seems to be considerably different from the dialect spoken in Betul; a great many men and the vast majority of women are not familiar with any other tongue. The Gonds are without exception plough-cultivators with a complex and well-developed peasant culture of their own and they were for a long time the ruling race in the District. The Kolams, on the other hand, are a tribe of primitive shifting cultivators who possessed until recently neither ploughs nor cattle; even to-day many of them subsist by hoe-cultivation on hill-slopes. Though for centuries they have lived in the vicinity of Gonds and have adopted many Gondi customs they still speak, with the exception of the so-called Telugu Kolams in the vicinity of Asifabad, their own Kolami language which is not understood by the Gonds; all Kolams, however, also speak Gondi. The Naikpods practise shifting cultivation on hill slopes with hoes like the Kolams and stand on an equally low level of cultural development; but they speak Telugu[1] and seem to be the most northern section of a tribe more numerous in the Karimnagar and Warangal Districts. The Totis speak Gondi

1. For a group of Naikpods speaking their own language, which is akin to Kolami, found in the west of Both Taluq, see p. 159.

as their mother-tongue; the Pardhans, however, are bilingual; among themselves they speak Marathi, but they are equally fluent in Gondi and the songs and epics which they recite on the occasion of many Gond feasts and ceremonies are all in Gondi. Both Totis and Pardhans are professional bards and musicians, but some of them have now come to possess land and in the plains some work as agricultural labourers.

In the three taluqs, and particularly in the interior of the hilly tracts, aboriginal culture has as yet preserved a considerable vitality, but Marathi-speaking populations, exerting pressure from the east and north, and Telugu populations and Telugu culture, infiltrating from the south, are steadily narrowing the area of purely aboriginal population.

Historical Background.

Until less than a hundred years ago the greater part of the Adilabad District was a country rich in forest, poor in communications, and of little economic and political importance. Historical data are consequently scarce, but there can be no doubt that the larger part of the District was inhabited almost exclusively by aboriginals, and there is reason to believe that among them the Kolams are the oldest population. Long before the rise of Maratha power, Gond Rajas were established in the area, and the present Gond Raja of Utnur claims that approximately fifteen generations ago his ancestors, who are believed to have come from Berar, built the fort of Wodur Wakri on the Nirmal-Adilabad Road. About that time a member of the same family built the Fort at Chanda and it is probable that the construction of the Manikgarh Fort, ascribed to the Gond Raja Geram Manikrao, dates from the same period. Though the family traditions of the present Raja families do not go back further than about fifteen generations, it is fairly certain that Gonds have inhabited the District of for a far longer time. The ancestors of the Rajas of Utnur and Chanda, who are both of Atram clan (which belongs to a six-god phratry) may have come from the Central Provinces, but descendants of other Gond Rajas (of different clans and phratries) can still be traced, and we can therefore assume

that the Gonds of Adilabad lived under petty chieftains who each dominated only a few groups of villages before more affluent and ambitious rajas built the forts whose ruins are still standing at various points of the country.

These Gond forts, and particularly the magnificently built Manikgarh Fort, suggest that the Gonds of those times did not live like so many aboriginal tribes in virtual seclution, but entertained manifold relations with other populations. For the forts with their carved reliefs and stucco ceilings are evidently built by expert craftsmen who must have sought employment with the Gond Rajas. Similarly blacksmiths and brass-founders of non-aboriginal stock, who are still found in Gond villages and who have adopted the Gonds' social organisation and are like Pardhans conversant with Gondi, have probably been for many generations a permanent feature of the local culture-pattern; and it is more than probable that traders from the lowlands regularly visited the court of the Gond chieftains. As long as the Gonds remained the ruling race, their standard of living and their material culture seems to have been by no means low, and there can be little doubt that, relative to the general standards of yesterday, it was higher than it is to-day.

Even as late as seventy or eighty years ago some of the Gond Rajas seem to have still been able to maintain a style commensurate with their position within the tribe. At that time a member of the family of the present Utnur Raja held a *maqta* for the *parganas* Haveli (i.e. Utnur) (map square 69), Sirpur (71) and Indraveli (40), paying an annual revenue of Rs. 600. His jurisdiction in tribal matter extended over an area which comprises now Utnur Taluq and part of the Adilabad and Lakshetipet Taluqs, whereas the Rajura and Asifabad Taluqs stood under the tribal jurisdiction of the Chanda Raja. Each Raja directly administered the area nearest his residence, but the rest of his territory was divided among hereditary *mokashis* and *deshmukhs* who held estates of from ten to forty villages. A few of the *mokashis* still hold their estates as *maqta* (and the Bambara *mokashi* has succeeded in retaining his *jagir*), but most have lost their right in the land and to-day they act only as

tribal headmen. The Utnur Raja, unlike his prosperous relatives the Chanda Raja and the Ahiri Zamindar, has also lost his estate, for the *maqta* of the Utnur, Sirpur and Indraveli *parganas* last held by Raja Isru Jangu was confiscated by Government in 1272 Fasli. Some years later the father of the present Raja, Lingai Hanumant Rao, was granted the five villages, Lakkaram (69) Gangapet (69), Koinur (85), Pamalawada (85) and Janaram (114) as *maqta* for a period of 30 years. But his son Jagpat Rao holds only the village of Lakkaram as *maqta* and has *watan* rights in Janaram. Yet he still enjoys great prestige among the Gonds and many important *panchayats* are conducted by him. The Gonds of Rajura and parts of Asifabad Taluqs, on the other hand, recognise in tribal matters the authority of the Gond Raja of Chanda who visits the area occasionally. But since he resides in British India his contact with the Gonds of Adilabad is not so close, and he has delegated most of his judical powers to the *mokashis* within his jurisdiction.

It thus seems that until comparatively recently a feudal system prevailed among the Gonds of Adilabad District, who, while recognising the sovereignty of H. E. H. the Nizam, lived to all practical purposes under the jurisdiction of their tribal heads. At that time they were not only the ruling race, but the principal holders and cultivators of the land and such men of different stock as lived amongst them were craftsmen and perhaps a small number of traders. Although the military power of the Gond Rajas seems to have been broken a considerable time ago, the administration established by the Nizam's Government did not at first affect conditions among the bulk of the aboriginal population. Such colonies of traders and craftsmen as already existed in market places like Asifabad (then known as Jangaon) swelled gradually, and in their immediate vicinity cultivators of non-aboriginal stock may have occupied some of the lands; but a major change in the aboriginals' position seems to have occurred only with the improvement of communications between Mancherial and Rajura on the one side and Nirmal and Adilabad on the other. Along these two lines progressive populations flooded into the District both from the south and the north, and occupied such lands as then became easy of access. The protection and

later the completion of the Nirmal and Mancherial road encouraged Telugu cultivators from Karimnagar to settle in the riverain tract and occupy land on the left bank of the Godavari, and the pressure on the land in the Central Provinces and Berar sent many Maratha peasants, mainly of Kunbi caste, across the Penganga from Yeotmal to occupy large parts of the northern plains. Most of the Kunbis in these parts state that either their fathers or grandfathers came from the Central Provinces or Berar, and the immigration of Telugu cultivators of Kapu and Velma caste over the southern border seems to be little more than thirty years old.

The Problem of Land Alienation

Before considering the effect of this immigration on the aboriginals, let us consider the principles of Gond cultivation as it prevailed until a change of administrative methods and the introduction of Forest Conservancy forced them to abandon their traditional economy. In the absence of historical records we must rely on the memory alive in this generation, and in some parts of the hills the old order persisted so long that old men and women still tell of those days from personal experience. All agree that then the Gonds of the hills cultivated mainly the light soils on the plateaux and slightly inclined slopes, but not the heavy black cotton soils in the depressions. They shifted their fields every two to three years, abandoning each plot before the soil showed signs of exhaustion; it was mainly *kharif* crops, *sama*,[1] *kora*,[2] *jawari*[3] and oil-seeds which they sowed in rotation in these light soils, where ploughing was easy, and in the autumn and the cold weather they only cultivated small patches in the vicinity of the villages.

Yet despite this one season system of cultivation the yield of crops grown during the rains on ever refertilized soil equalled or exceeded the combined harvests of to-day's *rabi* and *kharif* crops. Old Gonds say that in those times they were far more prosperous, and it is a fact that individual Gonds, still well remembered by the present generation, owned up to a thousand head of cattle, whereas nowadays a man with about fifty cows and bullocks is considered

1. *Panicum miliare*, 2. *Panicum italicum*, 3. *Sorghum vulgare*.

rich. Moreover the cash expenditure of the average cultivator was then comparatively small, for revenue, both in the *maqta* estates of rajas and *mokashis* and in Government villages, was as a rule low, and the aboriginals were not as yet burdened by forest dues nor the various levies of subordinate Government officials.

Whereas in the hills the transition to modern conditions occurred so late, that eye-witnesses of the old economy still live to tell the tale, less certain information is available for the plains tracts. But it is more than probable that there too the Gonds practised shifting cultivation, preferring the light soils to the heavy *regar* and relying mainly on the crops grown during the rains.

Here a word may be said as to the form of settlements. Each village community seems to have occupied a tract of land comprising more than one village-site, but the composition of the village-community was fairly fluid. The actual village was shifted from one site to the other to suit the convenience of the cultivators and quite often the community split into several hamlets, situated perhaps as much as a mile from each other, all within the limits of the village land. Though not continuously inhabitated most village-sites have clear traditional associations, cult places, and usually some large banyan and tamarind trees.

When agricultural populations from neighbouring areas first infiltrated into Adilabad District, the aboriginals in the hills remained long undisturbed and it was only those of the plains and the lower valleys whose position soon underwent far reaching changes. Pursuing a policy of opening up the district and raising its revenue, Government encouraged the influx of new settlers and granted them *pattas* free of charge for as much land as they could make arable. It seems that about this time many of the old *maqta* and *jagir* estates of Gond rajas and *mokashis* were resumed by Government and the Gonds, who until then had lived and cultivated on the land of their feudal lords, were suddenly forced to fend for themselves and to secure land of their own. At first no doubt the Gonds too had the possibility of obtaining individual *pattas* and many Gonds actually were granted *patta* rights; but on the whole the tribesmen were slow

to realize the necessity of *pattas* and later, when pressure on land became acute and they *did* realize the value of documents, they were not well enough versed in dealing with revenue officers and their subordinates to compete successfully with the new-comers from more progressive areas; consequently they often failed to obtain recognition of their claims on the land which they and their forefathers had cultivated.

Gond prosperity and Gond culture now began to decline. Yet at first even the tribesmen themselves can hardly have realized the significance of the new position. If new-comers ousted them from a choice tract of land or occupied a village site within the boundaries of their village land, they shifted their houses elsewhere and in traditional manner cultivated there for a period of years. But with the introduction of Forest Conservancy the retention of land became a problem for the Gonds and they began to feel the lack of *patta* rights. With a smaller area open for cultivation there was keener competition for the more desirable tracts and the Gonds were no longer suər of finding sufficient land for cultivation under *siwa-i-jamabandi* tenure. And even of those Gonds who had been granted *patta* rights, many lost their land in later years to non-aboriginals through dealings with money-lenders. Moreover plainsmen of wealth and influence often succeeded in contesting the validity of Gond *pattas* and bringing about changes in the revenue records; there are numerous Gonds who relate how they were under the impression that they had *patta* rights on the lands they cultivated and then suddenly discovered that without their knowlege the land had been transferred to a non-aboriginal.

With the gradual improvement of communications and the influx of settled cultivators such as Kunbis, Kapus and Marars, the country became valuable and attractive to non-cultivators and Muslims, Brahmins and Komatis of Rajura, Adilabad, Asifabad, and Nirmal began acquiring villages to be managed on a commercial basis. As the Gonds had few *patta* rights this was comparatively easy and a great number of villages in the open country were acquired by absentee landlords. The latter had and have naturally an interest to settle good cultivators in their villages; they encouraged the

immigration of non-aboriginals and gradually replaced their Gond tenants, whose agricultural methods are comparatively backward, by more experienced cultivators, capable of paying higher rents. This process is still continuing and every year Gonds are ousted from villages where their families have lived for generations. A glance at the attached map shows that in the areas near the centres of administration and trade, as well as in the most fertile valleys, aboriginals have already been largely replaced by other castes.

In *Asifabad Taluq* most of the villages near Asifabad have now an entirely non-aboriginal population, and so have many of the villages along the new motor roads. In other villages there are still a few aboriginals, but the landlords are mainly *vakils* and merchants. Thus of the 20 villages within approximately 3 miles of Asifabad, 12 no longer contain aboriginals, 5 have still a partly aboriginal population but are owned by big *pattadars*, aud there are only 2 villages in which Gonds and one in which Kolams cultivate Government land, but in these too other land is held by non-aboriginals.

The Gonds, reaction to their gradual ejection from these villages is reflected in a statement of Katele Poti, the Gond *patel* of Jandagura (75), one of the villages to-day owned by an Asifabad *vakil:*

> "My forefathers all lived in Jandagura and my father had also a *patta.* But one day the present *pattadar's* father declared that Government had given him the whole village land. We went to the Tahsil office but the Tahsil did not help us: he said that the old records got burnt, and now the land was registered in the name of the present *pattadar's* father. This did not happen only in my village; the Gonds of Kautaguda (74), Anksapur (75), Bapur (75), Darpapur (75), Kommuguda (74) and Yellaram (75) lost their land in the same way. Many have gone elsewhere, but we are still paying rent to the *pattadar*; until now he asked Rs. 13 per plough, but this year he demands Rs. 20 and says that those who wont pay must leave his village. So I too am going; I have applied for some *kharijkhata* land in Utnur Taluk and I hope I can settle in Jainur (70)".

If we follow either of the three valleys running westwards and southwards from Asifabad, we find very similar conditions, although

the occupation of the land by non-aboriginals seems here to have been of more recent date.

Proceeding along the Pedda Vagu and the projected Asifabad-Utnur Road, we come to Ara (60) and Wariguda (60), which are entirely non-aboriginal; Renganghat was one generation age a pure Gond village, now there is only one Gond house left, Nishani (60) belongs to a *Vakil* of Asifabad, who asks from some Gonds up to Rs. 24 per plough, Indapur (59) is inhabited by both Gonds and non-aboriginals, Devarpalli (80), Kukudhatti (59) and Surdapur (59) are landlord villages with mixed Gond and Marar populations and a sprinkling of other castes, Jheri (59), Khairi (59), Sakda (58), Sompur (58), Gudipet (58) and Deopur (58) are pure aboriginal villages, but belong without exception to absentee landlords. Kerimeri (58) belongs to a resident Muslim landlord from the United Provinces; twenty-five years ago it is said to have been a Gond village of more than 100 houses, but now there are only about 25 Gond houses, while many Marars have come in recently.

South of Asifabad and particularly in the Tilani area, a great deal of land has been acquired by landowners of Velma caste, who live in the neighbourhood of Lakshettipet and in Karimnagar and who, having once gained a foothold in the area, are ousting the aboriginals. The way in which Velma Doras, as they are locally known, gradually eliminate the abariginals is illustrated by the story of Kotnaka Maru of Dugapur (103):

> "I was born in Dugapur and cultivated there until some ten years ago, when there were so many tigers in the neighbourhood that all of us went to live in another village. In those days I paid Rs. 10 revenue. Five years later, when the tigers had gone, we returned to Dugapur where the land had lain fallow during our absence and I applied to the Tahsildar for permission to clear again 40 acres. When I and my brothers had felled all the small growth on these 40 acres, the Girdawar came and said that I could only take 18 acres and that the rest would be cultivated by Velma Dora of Mandmari in Gander Taluq. This Velma Dora acquired some land in Gamaraipet (104) only ten years ago and there he keeps a *gumashta*, but never before we had cleared the land in Dugapur had he raised a claim on it. But the Girdawar gave me only 18 acres and for them I paid Rs. 16 *chobina* to

the Forest *Amin*. For four years I cultivated these 18 acres but last year the Velma Dora took three acres of my land; this year I had already sown Indian corn and *korra* on the remaining fields, when the Velma's *gumashta* brought twenty men with ploughs from Gamaraipet and ploughed up three acres of my sown fields. I have given many applications to the Tahsildar, but because the Velma's *Vakil* is so powerful it is all of no use."

When Kotnaka Maru first told me of his difficulties I advised him to go to the Tahsildar and complain about the Velma's encroachment. He did so but no action was taken. Early in September he was watching his *samai* crop when Siva Reddi, the Velma's *gumashta*, brought 25 men of Gamaraipet all armed with sticks, and they reaped Maru's crop in front of the owner's eyes and carried the grain away. For the particular field, which is *kharijkhata* land, Maru pays an annual revenue of Rs. 5/-. Moreover Siva Reddi threatened to beat Maru and to burn his house if he stayed any longer in Dugapur. Maru reported the matter to the police *patel*, who came to Dugapur and saw the reaped field; but he advised Maru to keep quiet lest the Velma Dora drove him out of the village.

Whereas in this case the dispossession of the Gond cultivator occurred in a rather irregular way, the same result is often achieved in other ways, and lands held on *siwa-i-jamabandi* tenure by Gonds are withdrawn from them and allotted again on *siwa-i-jamabandi* tenure to non-aboriginals.

An example of this is afforded by the experience of Kursenga Bhima and Tsermaki Arju, two Gonds of Belgaon (74) a village near Asifabad. Belgaon is a land-lord village, but five years ago the two Gonds each obtained permission to clear and cultivate 10 acres of *kharijkhata* land in the neighbouring village of Khapri (74). In obtaining this permission their outlay was as follows: two bulls worth Rs. 80 to the *patwari*, Rs. 20 to the *girdawar*, Rs. 20 to the Forest Ranger and Rs. 40 to the forest guard. For five years they cultivated the land and each paid Rs. 5 revenue. But this year, without giving any reason, the Tahsildar withdrew the land from the two Gonds and allotted it, also on *siwa-i-jamabandi* tenure, to Devalal, a rich Lambara, who holds already the larger part of the village-land of Khapri on *patta*. The two Gonds are now left without any land and have to subsist on coolie-work.

Turning to *Rajura Taluq* we find that the majority of villages in the fertile Penganga plains have a mixed population of Gonds and

Kunbis. The population of some villages close to Rajura is purely non-aboriginal, and in many villages the number of Gonds is small compared to that of other castes, but in others Gonds are still the only inhabitants; many of the plains villages belong, however, to absentee landlords. A great many of the Kunbis have come in their own lifetime from the Central Provinces or Berar, but near the Penganga there are some villages where Kunbis seem to have established for several generations. In the villages near the foothills, however, the Kunbi elements represents everywhere a recent influx. The holdings of absentee landlords have also been largely acquired within the last 25 or 30 years; and *sahukars* of British India, who have their permanent residence in Chanda or Yeotmal District and a *pied-à-terre* in one of the larger villages of Rajura, have acquired and are still acquiring land which was previously held by aboriginals. The Land Alienation Act appears to be here little more than a dead letter.

Gonds of Asifabad Taluq complain frequently that even in such villages where some acres of *kharijkhata* or *parampok* land are still available, they cannot obtain permission to cultivate them and that all their applications remain unanswered. They ascribe this, rightly or wrongly, to the hesitation of *patwaris* and *girdawars* to allot land to Gonds when there may soon be an opportunity of giving it to a more affluent non-aboriginal, who is willing and able to pay a handsome gratification.

Owing to their greater wealth and influence non-aboriginal landowners do often succeed in acquiring rights on fallow land which aboriginals have failed to obtain even on *siwa-i-jamabandi* tenure, and in many cases these landlords use aboriginals to make the land arable, but replace them by other tenants as soon as they have fullfilled their function.

> **The village lands of Nokari (12), a deserted Gond site in the plains of Rajura Taluq, were acquired some years ago by a Brahmin, and he called Gonds from one of his other villages, Kavargaon, to settle there and fell the jungle. At first he demanded from a them a rent of Rs. 12 per plough, but two years ago when all the village land had been brought under cultivation, he began raising the rent, and this**

year he is asking of his Gond tenants a rent of between Rs. 40 and Rs. 60 per plough, and threatens to expel them, if they are unwilling or unable to pay, saying that he can get enough Kunbis and Marars to take their place.

Since the aboriginals' position in the landlord villages is definitely unfavourable as compared with the tribesmen's position in Government villages, many Gonds leave a village soon after it has been acquired by an absentee landlord, and try to get land on *siwa-i-jamabandi* tenure. But no sooner have they made the land arable, than they are again in danger of losing it to non-aboriginal *pattadars*. The case of Maravi Jeitur of Sonapur (24) is an example:

"Till three years ago I lived in Pachgaon (25), which is a landlord village, but there the rent was so high that I looked for other land. At that time there were only four houses in Sonapur, and so I and many Gonds from Pachgaon (25), Bendvi (24), Burkunda Khurd (25) and Sonorli (26), all *pattadar* villages, settled in Sonapur. We obtained permission from the Tahsildar to cultivate *khrijkhata* and *parampok* land, cleared all the jungle and paid the *chobina* to the Forest Chaukidar. Now there are altogether 45 Gond households in Sonapur; but none of us was able to get a *patta*. Some time ago we heard that both a Komati and a silversmith of Rajura were trying to get the whole village of Sonapur. So we went to Adilabad and saw the Taluqdar Sahib, but he told us that we must pay Rs. 300 if we want to take the village in auction. And now we have been told that soon the auction will take place and that both the Komati and the silversmith are going to bid."

What is the reaction of the Gonds of the plains villages to this encroachment of outsiders on land which a few generations ago was, if not by briefed right, *de facto* almost exclusively theirs? Some have resigned themselves to their dependent position in the villages of non-aboriginal landlords; not perhaps at once, but after they have moved once or twice and each time experienced that the land which they had made arable and then cultivated for a few years on *siwa-i-jamabandi* tenure, was subsequently acquired by an outsider. Others, however, emigrated into the hills, where they found tribesmen and relations willing to accomodate them in their villages. With the Gond system of optional residence in the wife's village, the fluctuation between plains and hills must always have been

fairly great, and many Gonds of plains villages are married to girls from the hills and have perhaps at some time lived with their parents-in-law. The obvious refuge for those ousted from their villages in the plains and the broad valleys was therefore the hills, and as long as no forest laws forbade the extension of cultivation in the interior, they experienced no difficulty in obtaining new land. Even to-day this process has not yet come to an end, and we have seen that Gonds like those of Jandagura (cf. page 69), exasperated by the demands of their landlords, are still t ying to settle in the interior, and many applications for *kharijkhata* and *parampok* land from such people are continuously received by the Utnur and Asifabad Tahsildars.

In some cases those Gonds who have been forced to leave their villages in the plains are followed by others, who have no immediate economic reasons; they are perhaps even in possession of *patta* rights, but they feel unhappy in villages where they are now surrounded by other castes.

> Last year the Gond *patel* Kanaka Moti of Tejapur (51) near Asifabad, for instance, found himself completely isolated. He has some *patta* land, but all the other Gonds of Tejapur have moved away and he was surrounded by villages belonging to an Asifabad *Vakil*, where Marars and people of Telugu castes were the only inhabitants. The result was that he and his family had nobody to talk to in their own language and that it was no longer possible for them to keep the Gond feasts in the proper manner. He decided therefore to hire out his fields, and in the last hot weather moved with all his belongings to Marlavai, hoping to obtain permission to occupy Burnur (71) an abandoned village site in the vicinity (cf. pages 70–71). Twelve other families, now living in various landlord villages near Asifabad, want to join him as soon as he has found some land in the hills.

In *Utnur Taluq* the situation is different in so far as it contains no lowlands comparable to the country round Asifabad or the Penganga plains, and as communications have only been improved recently. When Utnur was established as Tahsil head-quarters twenty five years ago, the bulk of the land under cultivation was in possession of aboriginals, some of whom had even *patta* rights. Soon afterwards, however, there occurred an influx of Marathas,

Kunbis, Lambaras and Mathuras from Yeotmal, Nander and Parbhani, and it seems that a great many aboriginals within the new taluq resigned or were somehow persuaded or compelled to resign their lands. Thus there exists in the Tahsil office a file of the year 1324 Fasli according to which in which in the villages of: Arjuni (30), Karki (30), Sangwi (30), Kando (31), Dongargaon (31), Sori (31), Jheri (31), Punaguda (31), Koni Kasa (32), Ganeshpur (40), Dhonda (41), Gondala (41), Chorgaon (41), Lokari (41), Kharidatwa (41), Hirapur (42), Dabba Buzurg (42), Dabba Khurd (42), Sonapur (56), Addesar (58), Gaori (70), Ragapur (70), Sitagondi (71), Pulera (71), Lendiguda (71), Pangri (72), Koinur Khurd (84), Netnur (85), Gumnur (85), Kanchanpalli (85), Dhanora (85), Paralavada (85), Lingapur (86), Chorpalli (86) and Parampur and Chenur (both of which are deserted and which I was unable to trace) a total of 2,843 *bighas* with a total revenue of Rs. 1,097 was relinquished by Gonds. The file gives no reason for the relinquishment of all these *pattas,* but considering that some of the villages are now included in the Reserved Forest and deserted, while others have been aquired by outsiders, we may assume that some pressure was exerted on the Gonds.

Voluntary relinquishment of *patta* rights seems also to have taken place at this time, and for this I was given an explanation by Jagapat Rao, the Utnur Raja. He maintains that up to the year 1316 F. a man resigning his *patta* rights on any particular piece of land was entitled to occupy any other piece of vacant land of equal size so long as he continued paying his revenue. Under this rule, so admirably suited to the pecularities of aboriginal economic and social organization, the Gonds could cultivate their beloved light soils in rotation : a *patta* was then not so much the briefed right in any particular piece of land, but a right to cultivate a certain acreage. Jagpat Rao holds that a few years after this rule had been abolished many Gonds relinquished their *pattas* for inferior lands, for they could not cultivate them permanently and no longer could they exchange exhausted areas against other land that had lain fallow for a sufficient period.

There are, however, other reasons why Gonds have even in recent years relinquished *patta* rights, and one of these must be sought in the particular structure of the Gond society, which is not based on the joint family as among the Hindus. When a Gond with a large *patta* holding dies before his his sons have grown to full manhood, there is often no one to took after the property. His brothers may perhaps live in distant villages with their wives' kin, or he himself may have left his home-village and taken over the land of his father-in-law. With the high mortality and low expectancy of life there is often no man both willing and capable of holding the land in trust for the children. Even an adult, but still young and nexperienced, son inheriting his father's land may be frightened by the responsibility of finding the annual revenue of perhaps Rs. 100 or more and feel incapable of managing his inheritance: consequently he relinquishes his *patta*, either retaining as much ground as he can cultivate himself or forfeiting his claim by going to live with his wife's people. When *patta* lapses the other villagers, who cultivated the land of the old *pattadar*, now find themselves cultivating on *siwa-i-jamabandi* tenure and therefore liable to expulsion by Revenue or Forest authorities. It is probably the difficulty which a young boy with little authority among his co-villagers experiences in collecting his rents regularly, and his inability to cope with *sahukars* and minor officials, which make him shun the responsibility of a large holding. The extraordinary dependence of Gond village communities on the leadership of one strong man and the effects of his death without a capable heir may be demonstrated by an example:

> Until five years ago Moda (44) in Rajura Taluq was a big Gond village, containing with its sub-settlements and Kolam hamlets about 200 houses. The *patel* and *patta* holder was Kotnaka Hanu, but when he died his young son did not take over the *patta*; and all the villagers dispersed. Kotnaka Hanu's son lives now in Parandoli with his wife's kin, and a former inhabitant of Moda, Pendur Ramu, now living in Markanja Metta (31), told me that after the *patel's* death the *patwari* and forest officers told the villagers, that now the *pattadar* was dead and since his son had not taken up the *patta*, they could no longer stay in Moda. Shortly after this Moda with its sub-settlements Kikajheri (33) and Andanguda (33) was disbanded and the sites of

the three settlements were included in the Reserved Forest. Pendur Rama has no land of his own and some of the former inhabitants would like to re-occupy Moda, but are unable to obtain permission.

A reason often given by Gonds for the failure of a young heir to ascertain his claim on *patta* land is his lack of cash to pay the high fees connected with the transfer to his own name. Gratifications to *patwari, girdawar* and tahsil clerks, necessary to such a transaction, seem indeed often to amount to two or three times the annual revenue.

In areas with mixed populations the danger of Gond land passing to non-aboriginals on the death of a *patta* holder is very great, and *patwaris* and revenue subordinates have in the past been easily persuaded by substantial gratifications to transfer the land without any formalities to the name of a non-aboriginal. Even nowadays it often happens that such land passes to non-aboriginals.

Examples of this are the following cases:

1. In Dhanora (59), a Gond village of Asifabad Taluq in the Pedda Vagu valley, a large part of the village land belonged to the Gond *patel* Tsakati Isru, who had a *patta* for 200 acres. Two years ago he died, leaving no son, but one married daughter, also living in the village, He was succeeded as *patel* by his brother's son Jangu, and the latter claimed the *patta* land. The *patwari*, however, declared that neither Jangu nor the daughter have a right in the *patta* land, and it was consequently transformed into *kharijkhata* land; the villagers applied for individual fields and are cultivating them at present on *siwa-i-jamabandi* tenure. Ever since, however, Banias of Asifabad have been trying to acquire the whole village in auction, and it is more than probable that they will succeed, and that Dhanora, like most of the neighbouring villages in the Pedda Vagu valley, will soon belong to an absentee landlord.

2. In Dhanur Buzrug (39), a village of Utnur Taluq, which is a mixed village of Gonds and Marathas, a Maratha was police *patel*. Fifteen years ago he engaged Abdul Rus, a Muslim from Telingana, to act as his *gumashta* and teach his own and some of the village children. After a short while Abdul Rus bought 60 acres of land from a Wanjari, but later on he appropriated without payment the land of two Gonds, Maravi Madu and Anaka Sambu, who both died leaving sons who were

minors (altogether their lands comprised 80 acres). Now the minors have grown up, but the land has in the meanwhile been transferred to the name of Abdul Rus, and they have no possibility of recovering it.

Very often it is the *patwari* or the non-aboriginal police and *mali patel* who appropriate the whole or part of a minor Gond's land:

1. An example is a case from Asifabad Taluq. Naitam Jangu of Mandrumera village (80) was a young boy when about 10 years ago his father died. There were no brothers or other close relations of his father to look after the widow's and the children's interests, and so the *patwari* took for himself 8 acres of the land and a *sahukar* appropriated the remaining land of altogether about 25 acres, under the pretext of debts owed to him by the deceased. He also took possession of 8 cows, 4 calves, 4 bullocks, 1 cart, and 2 brass pots, all belonging to Jangu's father. There were no court proceedings, relinquishment of *patta* rights, or any other formalities, but the *patwari* and the *sahukar* simply took possession of the boy's property. Jangu has now no land left; he is very poor and works for other cultivaters.

2. A similar case comes from Utnur Taluq. When Kodapa Kasi, a Gond of Ginnera (39), died, he left *patta* land consisting of four survey numbers. His son Jangu was then a young boy, and the *patel* Jalem Sing, a Mathura residing in Yemekunta (39), had the whole of the land transferred to his own name. Jangu never succeeded in recovering his land.

Apart from these individual cases of dispossession, there occurred some 25 years ago a large scale relinquishment of *patta* lands in the hills as the result of an epidemic. This may have been the influenza epidemic of 1919 or a cholera epidemic, and it is said that at that time many families were decimated and many villages deserted. Numerous heirs of *patta* holders, unable to continue paying the revenue for lands which nobody cultivated, relinquished their *pattas* at this time and many of the villages then deserted are now included in the Reserved Forest.

In Utnur Taluq the settlement of outsiders followed mainly the road, then projected and now almost completed, from Gudi Hatnur (38) to Utnur, and in the triangle between this road and the Nirmal-Adilabad road a great part of the arable land has

already fallen into the hands of Marathas, Kunbis, Lambaras and Mathuras, while those Gonds of that area who have not been forced into the position of dependants are having a stiff fight to retain their rights. Moreover a few Marathas and a great many Lambaras setlted in villages north of Utnur. Some of the Lambaras immigrated about 40 year ago, but others are still arriving from Nander Distirct as well as from the C. P. and Berar. A considerable amount of land is now held by Lambaras on *patta* and the new immigrants often bring sufficient cash to take in auction land which had until then been cultivated by Gonds on *siwa-i-jamabandi* tenure. There are some Lambaras who have *pattas* for several hundred acres and let the land to Gonds. The Lambara *patel* of Mahagaon (55), for instance, owns more than 600 acres but cultivates himself only a small fraction. In most of the mixed Gond-Lambara villages the *patelki* has gone to the Lambaras, and this, combined with their greater shrewdness, enables them to obtain almost everywhere the the best lands.

There are a few villages owned by absentee landlords, and some of the non-cultivating residents of Utnur hold *pattas* for considerable amounts of land in various villages and occupy an even greater area on *siwa-i-jamabandi* tenure. Part of their land they let out to Gonds and Naikpods, not usually at a fixed rate, but under an agreement that the cultivator provides bullocks and seed grain and pays them half of the crop in lieu of rent; the rest they cultivate with servants, many of them Gond, and these they pay mainly in grain.

We have noticed in Asifabad and Rajura Taluqs the tendency of non-aboriginals to acquire land almost immediately after it has been made arable by aboriginals and the latter have paid the value of the timber *chobina* felled in clearing it. The same method is often used by men of non-cultivating castes in Utnur. Two examples from Nagapur (69), a village near Utnur, may demonstrate this.

1. Pandera Malku, a landless Gond of Nagapur, tells that three years ago he obtained permission from the Tahsildar to cultivate a piece of *parumpok* land and to fell the jungle growing there. The *girdawar* and *patwari* measured the land and Malku's name was entered in the revenue register. Malku ploughed the land and sowed oil-seed, but

when the crop was one foot high, Gulam Qadar, a resident of Utnur, came with some men and had the field ploughed up and *chenna* sown. Gulam Qadar reaped his crop, but the revenue was collected from Malku, who was also liable for the *chobina* of Rs. 15 to the Forest Department, but could not pay it at that time. The next year Malku tried again to cultivate the field, but Gulam Qadar drove him off the field by aiming at him with a gun and threatening to shoot him. Gulam Qadar then enlisted the support of the police, whereupon the Subinspector sent a constable for Malku and told Malku that he would get into trouble if he went anywhere near the field. Gulam Qadar, however, did not actually cultivate the field that year, and it remained fallow, no one paying the revenue. This year Malku again obtained permission from the Tahsildar to cultivate the field, but before he could begin work, Gulam Qadar ploughed it up and so intimidated Malku that he did not effectively oppose him. During the Taluqdar's visit to Utnur, Malku brought the case before him, and a few days later the *girdawar* and *patwari* called Malku and handed the field over to him for cultivation. At that time Malku sold a cow and paid the *chobina* of Rs. 15 to the Forest Ranger. But he had hardly started ploughing, when Gulam Qadar, who had in the meanwhile been to Hyderabad and Adilabad, again ploughed up the field and sowed *jawari*, saying that he had obtained an order from the Taluqdar authorizing him to occupy the land.

Similar is the case of Mesram Somu of Nagapur who tells the following story :

2. "For the last fifteen years I have been living in Nagapur and worked for a Wanjari *sahukar*. But this year I applied to the Tahsildar for permission to cultivate 15 acres of *parampok* land. The Girdawar came and measured it and told me that I could cultivate the land; for this I gave him Rs. 5. The Forest Ranger also came and saw the place and demanded Rs. 60 *chobina*. I borrowed the money and paid this sum. But when I had felled the jungle and begun to cultivate two Arabs of Utnur came and told me that I must not cultivate here, for they intended to occupy the land. They also arranged with the Forest *Chaukidar* that he should not allow me to cultivate and so the *Chaukidar* came to my house and told me that after all I could not have this land. But afterwards the *Chaukidar* came again and said that he would allow me to cultivate if I gave him Rs. 40. So I had to pay him Rs. 40, but this was of no use, for he and the two Arabs are still preventing me from ploughing the land."

These two cases are typical of the difficulty which Gonds experience in maintaining such lands as may have been allotted to them on *siwa-i-jamabandi* tenure, and it is noticeable that outsiders seldom apply for land on which jungle growth is still standing, but usually for that made arable by aboriginals.

The only areas where aboriginals have not yet been ousted from their lands by non-aboriginals to any great extent are the hilly tracts to which ascent is by cart-tracks over steep ghats. These tracts include the Manikgarh block in Rajura Taluq, and the adjoining Satmala block belonging partly to Adilabad and partly to Utnur, the Daboli block in Utnur Taluq and the Dhanora and Tilani blocks in Asifabad Taluq. In the latter, however, which slopes gently down towards Asifabad, a good deal of land has already been acquired by non-aboriginals, and it is mainly in the Manikgarh hills between the Pedda Vagu and the Penganga plains and in the hills that stretch from Utnur eastwards across the taluq border, that the population is still almost purely aboriginal. But even here the first beginnings of an alienation of land are already noticeable The villages of Babjipet (7) and Mesapur (42) in the hills north and south of Kerimeri, for instance, have been acquired by a *vakil* and a merchant of Asifabad respectively, and in many villages individual survey numbers are held on *patta* by non-resident non-aboriginals, who who do not cultivate, but let them out to Gonds.

There can be no doubt that unless checked by more effective means than the present application of the Land Alienation Act, the aboriginals, dispossession of their land is rapidly progressing; an example, not from the three taluqs under review, but from the neighbouring Adilabad Taluq, where developments are even more advanced, will show the trend of events.

A group of twelve villages in the plains east of Adilabad namely: Chandpalli (20), Sardapur (19), Karki (30), Chapri (19), Ponar (20), Runkum (19), Patan (9), Sonkas (19), Pithgaon (19), Jinoli (19), Karoni (19), and Warur (19) formed until some 30 years ago the jagir estate of the Gond *mokashi* Korenga Bhim Rao; at that time the population of all these villages was purely aboriginal. When Bhim Rao died, his small son Yesuad Rao the present *mokashi*, was not

granted the estate, which was taken under *Khalsa* administration. Soon afterwards several of the villages were acquired by non-aboriginal, absentee *pattadars*, who soon introduced non-aboriginal settlers, and absentee non-aboriginals were appointed as police and *mali patels* of the twelve villages, including the *mokashi's* own residence Chandpalli. The position is now as follows:

Chandpalli:—Government village; population, Gonds and Lambaras; the latter arrived about 15 years ago and acquired *patta* land; the Gond *mokashi* has *patta* land of Rs. 15 revenue. The *patel* is a Muslim of Dehgaon (19).

Ponara:—Government village; Gonds, Gowaris, Kapus; the Gowaris came 20 years, the Kapus 4 years ago, and all acquired *pattas*; the *patel* is a Kunbi of Kokdur (8).

Runkum:—Government village; Gonds and Kapus, who came five years ago and acquired *pattas*. The *patel* is a Muslim of Dehgaon (19).

Chapri:—belongs to a Komati of Bela (19); Gonds, Gowaris and Kapus.

Pathan:—belongs to a Rohilla of Adilabad; Gonds, Kunbis, Muslims, Mahars.

Pithgaon:—belongs to the same Rohilla; Gonds and Kolams.

Soukhas:—belongs to a Brahmin of Adilabad; Gonds and Marars.

Karki:—belongs to a Komati of Bela (19); Gonds and Marars.

Sardhapur:—Government village; Conds. *Patel* is a goldsmith of Dehgaon (19).

Karoni:—Government village; Gonds and Kolams; the *patel* is a Muslim of Bela (19).

Nagarla:—Government village; Gonds, patel is a Muslim of Dehgaon (19).

Warur:—Government village; Gonds, Dankar, and Kunbis; the latter came 20 years ago from Bela; *patel* a goldsmith of Bela (19).

The deterioration of the Gonds' position in these twelve villages within the life-time of the present generation is by no means exceptional, but can be considered representative of conditions in the plains of Adilabad, Rajura and Asifabad Taluqs.

The Aboriginals' lack of *patta* rights.

The main reason for the Gonds' inability to retain any land which is coveted by outsiders is their lack of *patta* rights. It has been mentioned that at the time of settlement when they might have obtained *pattas* without great capital outlay, they did not realize the importance of *pattas*, but later many of them made

strenuous efforts to get *pattas*. Generally these have failed, however, for meanwhile rules had come into force according to which the Gonds cultivating *siwa-i-jamabandi* lands cannot be granted *patta* rights without acquiring the land in auction. The recent concession that those who had occupied any land continuously for more than ten years can obtain *patta* rights by paying a sum equal to 20 times the revenue, and those who have cultivated the same land for more than twenty years by paying a sum equal to 16 times the revenue, has not materially changed the position, for only an insignificant minority of Gonds can afford such an expenditure, even if payment in instalments is granted. Moreover those few Gonds who would be able to pay the necessary amounts in instalments mostly complain that their applications remain unanswered and that in spite of numerous reminders no action is taken by the Tahsil authorities.

1. Atram Teling Rao, a Gond of Modi (59) in Asifabad Taluq, complains that he cultivates 120 acres of *kharijkhata* land, for which he pays Rs. 130 revenue; for the four years he has tried to get a *patta*. He is prepared to acquire the land in auction and pay for it and he has submitted several applications to the Tahsildar, but without success.

2. The case of Marpatsi Somu of Chintakara (72) is identical. He cultivates 100 acres of inferior land in the hills and pays Rs. 25 revenue; for the last five years he has been applying for a *patta* and is prepared to pay, but the Tahsildar takes no action.

The aboriginals also seem to experience certain difficulties ir obtaining their *patta*-documents when they have acquired land in auction:

The case related by Maravi Somu of Tutra (24) in Rajura Taluq, may serve as an example. "Three years ago I and my father's brother's son Yenku, bid for land at an auction, and I was accorded 82 acres and Yenku 280 acres. Ever since I have paid Rs. 82 revenue and Yenku has paid Rs. 250. But although we both paid the full amount for the land at the time of the auction, I received a *patta* for only 22 acres and Yenku a *patta* for 30 acres. We have given several applications to the Tahsildar, but received no reply and we have never succeeded in approaching him direct. After we had taken the land in auction we had to pay Rs. 100 to the Forest Ranger, Rs. 50 to the

forest *chaukidar* and Rs. 50 to the *patwari*. For none of these sume did we get receipts. Up to now the *girdawar* has not come to measurs out the *patta* land." To this Yenku added that the *girdawar* is now saying that he will only come and measure the land if Yenku gives him as. 8 per acre. So far Yenku, though paying the full revenue of Rs. 250, cultivates only half of the land, for the *chaukidar* prevents him from clearing the rest of small growth; only if Yenku gives him an '*inam*' of Rs. 50 will he give permission to clear the scrub. Yenku wants also to build a house on his *patta* land, but this too the *chaukidar* does not allow.

The present position is that only a small minority of Gonds and even fewer Kolams and Naikpods possess *patta* lands, while the vast majority of the independent aboriginal cultivators hold their land on *siwa-i-jamabandi* tenure and are consequently liable to expulsion at short notice. In most of the Gond villages in the hills about one householder in five or six owns some *patta* land, but there are other villages where none of the inhabitants has any permanent right on their land. Mr. Crofton has mentioned in his tour notes of 10-1-1942 that in the Daboli block seven out of thirty villages contain no *patta* land whatsoever, but this should not lead us to believe that all these villages are either particularly small or of a temporary nature, comparable to the small hamlets of such digging-stick and hoe cultivators as Kolams and Hill Reddis; most of them are Gond settlements built on ancient village-sites and undistinguishable from other Gond villages. The fact that none of the inhabitants possess a *patta* is purely incidental and may in some cases be due to a temporary abandonment of the village following an epidemic or tiger-scare: to name only a few villages from the hilly part of Utnur, in Dabba Khurd (42) with 26 houses, Chorgaon (41) with 19 houses, and Busimetta (57) with 30 houses, no land is held on *patta*.

Comparatively favourable is the position of Gonds and Kolams in a few hill-villages of Rajura Taluq, where the aboriginal *patel* holds a *patta* for the whole of the cultivated land. He lets it out to the other villagers on a non-profit basis, and such aboriginal *pattadars* collect rents which vary between 20 and 33 per cent of the average rents collected by non-aboriginal absentee *pattadars*, who run their villages as commercial enterprises.

The lack of *pattas* is by no means a feature only of the villages in the interior but is a general phenomenon in the whole area, and it is therefore easy for affluent non-aboriginals to acquire whole villages. The acquisition of *siwa-i-jamabandi* lands by non-aboriginals is already far advanced, and even in the hilly part of Utnur Taluq auctions of land have begun in recent years; here it is mainly Lambaras who bid for the land. Thus within the last years land has been acquired by Lambaras in Mankapur (56), Chandur (55), and Tadi Harapnur (55). Tadi Harapnur was originally a pure Gond village, but all the good land has in recent years gone to Lambaras and most of the Gonds have moved to the neighbouring village of Gunjala (55). These Lambaras came from Yeotmal, and just when I was visiting Tadi Harapnur a troop of their relations arrived, who also intended to settle. A few months later they took in auction land to the value af Rs. 170 to accomodate some of the new settlers. Similarly a Rohilla money-lender has recently acquired the whole village of Yenka (55) and settled in it a group of low caste cultivators from the Central Provinces. In the lower-ranges sloping down towards Adilabad the acquisition of hill-villages by non-aboriginals has already far progressed and several villages are now in the hands of *vakils* and merchants of Adilabad Town.

Relations between Aboriginals and Non-aboriginal Village Officers.

Owing to the unsettled land situation, the frequent allotment and withdrawal of *siwa-i-jamabandi* lands, and the auctioning of lands, the *patwaris*, and to a lesser degree the *mali* and police *patels*, play a far more important role than in more advanced districts, where they have only to keep the records of an existing status. All *patwaris* and the overwhelming majority of police and *mali patels* are non-aboriginals, and wherever there has been an infiltration of plains-people the *patelkis* have been monopolized by them; it is only in the purely aboriginal villages of hills that we find Gonds as police *potels*. The particular importance and power of the *patwari* lie not only in the fluid state of the land situation, but have also linguistic reasons; his records are all kept in Marathi, and this is the tongue with which Gonds are most familiar; those who are literate read and

write mainly Marathi, and if they submit a petition, it is generally in that language. But in the Tahsil Office in Utnur, for instance, there is no one who can either speak or read Marathi, the officers and clerks being either Urdu-speaking Muslims, or men drafted from Telingana. Consequently the *patwaris* have continuously to serve as translators and interpreters and stand in most cases between the aboriginals and the officers. Thus no member of the Tahsil staff is able to check the entries in the village records.

In the relations between aboriginals and *patwaris* there is a great difference between the purely aboriginal areas and the areas with mixed population. The Gonds of the interior have on the whole no great complaints against *patwaris*, except in one respect which will be mentioned presently; for here the *patwaris* have little reason to favour one cultivator against the other, land disputes are rare, and no influences of financially more powerful persons prejudice the *patwari* against the interest of the aboriginals; *mamul* is low, about Re. 1 per year and cultivator, and the *patwari* visits the villages so seldom that supplies and unpaid transport are not irksome. The general complaint against the *patwaris* and often against the *girdawars* is that they demand gratifications for the forwarding and supporting of applications for *siwa-i-jamabandi* lands as well as *pattas*, and often fail to deliver the goods. Gonds have as a rule no objection to pay a *patwari* if he really helps them to obtain a piece of *kharijkhata* or *parampok* land, but they get irritated when they pay him perhaps Rs. 10 or Rs. 20 and find out that he either did nothing in the matter or promised something which was impossible to obtain. And we shall see on p. 87 that *patwaris* are fairly unscrupulous in making aboriginals believe that they have obtained permission for them to cultivate a particular piece of land, when in reality they have done no more than forwarded their petitions; sometimes they do not even do this.

In areas with a mixed population, where new settlers and non-aboriginal landlords are always bent on wresting land from the aboriginals and the *patwaris* are often themselves landowners, they act frequently against the interests of the aboriginals. For non-aboriginal cultivators and landlords have usually sufficient means to

obtain the *patwari's* connivance when they encroach on Gond land, and the revenue officers, who are often not in possession of exact records and village plans, generally accept the *patwari's* view. And where the village *patel* is also a non-aboriginal the Gond cultivator has very little chance of retaining his land once an outsider has launched a claim.

A few examples may illustrate the more usual complaints of Gonds against *patwaris.*

1. Atram Bhimu of Wadagaon (54) in Utnur Taluq wanted to cultivate some *parampok* land in Wadagaon and he applied to the *patwari*; the *patwari* took from him Rs. 8 for forwarding the application; three months ago the Tahsildar told Bhimu that his application would soon be considered, but the *patwari* is now demanding more money of Bhimu if he is to obtain the land.

2. Maravi Devu of Pitebangara (53) has cultivated a piece of *kharijkhata* land for four years and paid Rs. 3 revenue; last year the *patwari* extracted from him Rs. 9 promising to get him a *patta* for this land, but this year the *kotwal* and a Madiga prevented Devu from ploughing the field and threaten him with violence unless he gives up the land. The *patwari* extracts money from both parties and supports alternatively Devu and the *kotwal.*

3. Atram Ramu of Bhimpur (42) has cultivated *kharijkhata* land for 16 years and paid a yearly revenue of Rs. 17/4; this year he had already sown the *kharif* crop when a Lambara, who came only four years ago to Bhimpur, took possession of the land and ploughed it up. Ramu complained to the Tahsildar, who ordered the *patwari* to eject the Lambara, and sent the police *patel* (who is also a Lambara) a written order to the same effect. But the Lambara gave Rs. 20 to the *patwari* who consequently took no action; the police *patel* also refused to take any action. The land is now cultivated by the Lambara.

4. Aral Lachu of Sallavada (54) in Utnur Taluq applied this year for a piece of *parampok* land and got the permission to cultivate it and to fell the jungle, the *chobina* for which he has still to pay to the Forest Ranger. Both *girdawar* and *patwari* came to measure the field and handed it over to Lachu. But now the police *patel* Dada Rao of Indraweli, a Maratha, says that it is his field, and that from next year on he will cultivate it; the *patwari* now supports Dada Rao's claim.

5. Gonds of Pitabangara (53) in Utnur Taluq, a village of approximately 60 Gond and 25 Kolam houses, complain that the *patwari* never gives them proper information whether the fields which they cultivate are *kharijkhata*, *parampok* or *patta* land. He only tells them how much revenue they have to pay. This year when they asked for receipts, he demanded Re 1 per receipt, and when they offered only as. 8, he refused to hand over the revenue receipts.

6. Tsakati Balu is the only Gond left in the village of Renganghat (60), a village with a large non-aboriginal population, in which much land belongs to the Brahmin *patwari*. Tsakati Balu, who has inherited *patta* land from his father, complains that the *patwari* demands from him one bullock, saying that unless he gives him this, the land will be resumed by Government and Balu will have to leave the village. The *patwari* also recently confiscated Balu's gun, and I heard from other Gonds that he tried to sell it in Asifabad; one Gond *patel* almost bought it not knowing that it was Balu's. Balu says he is neither in arrear with his revenue nor does he owe the *patwari* any money.

All these complaints refer to everyday occurrences and not to the wholesale appropriation of aboriginal land by *patwaris*, which occurs in many of those areas where the *patwaris* are themselves big landowners.

Equally serious for the aboriginal is the present policy of appointing non-aboriginal, non-resident police *patels* and *mali patels*, of which an example is given on pp. 21, 22. In that case the Gond *mokashi*, whose father held as *jagir* twelve villages, and whose tribal jurisdiction extends far beyond his former estate, has, in spite of many attempts, been unable to obtain the *patelki* even of his own village Chandpalli, and only one year ago a non-resident Muslim of Dehgaon, a village some five miles distant, has been appointed *patel* in succession to another absentee non-aboriginal *patel*. Yet, the *mokashi's* heir is literate in both Urdu and Marathi, and could easily keep all the records required of a *patel*.

The attraction of *patelkis* for non-aboriginals of other localities lies not in the modest official allowance, but in the opportunity it gives for levying from the aboriginal villagers all sorts of dues in

cash, kind and labour. A few examples may demonstrate the form of these dues, and the attitude of such absentee *patels* to the aboriginals :

1. In Mendipalli (39) of Utnur Taluq, for instance. the Maratha *patel* collects from each of the six Gond *patta*-holders a fee of Rs. 1/8 per month. The same *patel* and other police *patels* of Utnur Taluq collected at the time of Mr. Crofton's visit in January 1942 considerable sums from Gonds, under the pretext that by such payment they could buy themselves off from war-service, for which they would otherwise be recruited on this occasion, (The lorries that brought Mr. Crofton's tents and camp kit were described to the credulous Gonds as destined to carry off those recruited.)

2. The police and mali *patel* of Mahagaon (35) in Utnur Taluq is a Lambara, Harilal, who came some twelve years ago to the village and in the surroundiug countryside he now owns several hundred acres of land. Some of the Gonds cultivate his land but most cultivate *kharijkhata* land. This August after the Forest Ranger had collected the usual grazing fees, the *patel* demanded from Gond villagers equal grazing fees for himself, under the pretext that their cattle often graze on his *patta* land. The villagers admit that Harilal's land practically surrounds the village and that it is therefore impossible to prevent the cattle from crossing parts of it when they are driven to the forest for grazing. In all villages cattle cross *patta* land when it is not under cultivation, but no Gond *patta*-holder takes this as an opportunity to collect fees from his co-villagers. The Gonds of Mahagaon complained to the Tahsildar, but the Lambadi *patel* stuck to his claim and the Tahsildar declared that there was no legal possibility of preventing him from collecting fees from villagers who allowed their cattle to cross his *patta* land on their way to pastures of Government land.

3. The police *patel* of Visapur (24) in Rajura Taluq, Mahmad Khan, demands from every Gond who wants to build a new house a fee of Rs. 4. Whenever a Gond dies he collects a fee of Rs. 6 to Rs. 12, according to the relatives' circumstances for the permission to bury or burn the corpse. The Gonds have made several complaints about this fee to the Tahsildar but without success.

4. About the same *patel* of Visapur, I heard a more speeific complaint, typical of many similar extortions. Soyam Lachma cultivates a piece of *kharijkhata* land in the neighbouring village of Sonapur (24). One morning in July 1942, when he came to his field, he noticed that a

mahua tree had been recently felled. Shortly afterwards Mahmad Khan passed this field and, though Sonapur is not in his jurisdiction, accused Lachma of having felled the tree; threatening him with jail and prosecution he finally extracted from him Rs. 6 and one fowl. After some days he returned with two men from Chandur (24) Asim Khan and Ismail Faqir, who have no official function, and between them they 'fined' Lachma a further sum of Rs. 24 and one fowl and one *paili* wheat. But four days later Asim Khan returned accompanied by the Police *Dafedar* of Chandur, and the *Dafedar* fined Lachma Rs. 15 and Asim Khan took from him a further sum of Rs. 2. To pay all these fines, Lachma had to sell a pair of bullocks. Shortly afterwards the police *patel* of Sonapur, a Kunbi resident of Uparwai (24), took up the case of the felled *mahua* tree, and his investigations disclosed that it was not Lachma who had felled the tree, but Kodapa Jangu, a Gond of Sonapur, who had been paid to do so by the police *patel* of Visapur. Notwithstanding the latter is still pressing Lachma for more money.

It would be tedious to quote more examples of the petty exactions and tyrannies of all these non-resident police and *mali patels;* far from being leaders and spokesmen of the village community, they reside at tahsil head-quarters or such market places as Bela or Chandur and regard their villages as objects or exploitation.

The Effects of Forest Reservation on the Aboriginals.

Whereas during the first decades following the opening up of the district the aboriginals of the plains and valleys ran the danger of being dispossessed of their land, the introduction of forest conservancy had in later years a similar effect on those of the hilly tracts.

Until as late as fifty years ago the aboriginals of the hills were subject to no restrictions in the choice of land for cultivation. The Kolams and Naikpods practised shifting-cultivation on hill-sides and the Gonds of most villages cultivated mainly the light soils of gentle slopes and hill-tops in more or less regular rotation, and it seems that only in comparatively recent years did they take to cultivating the heavy black cotton soil of the depressions. The land of lighter soils was usually cultivated for three years and then allowed to revert to jungle, and was not taken again under cultivation until ten or

twelve years later when sufficient humus had collected. That this system was neither detrimental to the forest-growth nor resulted in any appreciable erosion is proved by the fact that the hills of Adilabad District were found to be an area of dense forest when the conditions were first surveyed at the end of the last century. As in most countries where one or another kind of shifting-cultivation is practised, it is indeed only the over-cultivation of land, following the restriction of the area open for cultivation, which tends to result in a permanent deterioration of the soil.

Demarcation of Forest Lines.

The system of cultivating lands of light soil in rotation came to an end, however, when forest lines were drawn round the villages, which were thus established as enclaves within the reserved forest. The demarcation of these forest lines did not take place at the same time in the whole district, nor everywhere were the same principles applied. But the general idea was to include all those areas in the reserved forest which were not actually under cultivation. Thereby a great deal of land, which had in former years been cultivated on *siwa-i-jamabandi* tenure and was lying fallow at the time of demarcation, was included in the reserve, and the aboriginals were thus deprived of its future use. The grave disadvantage of this for the cultivators did not become apparent at once; but after some years when the fields which they had cultivated at the time of demarcation became exhausted and the Gonds wanted to follow their old routine of re-occupying the fallow lands, they could not do so as the land had in the meantime been claimed by the Forest Department. In villages with a fair amount of permanently cultivated black cotton soil, this curtailment of the cultivable land, though preventing the Gonds from growing valuable *kharif* crops, has not resulted in very great hardship, and every year they are leaning more and more on the yield of the heavy soils. But there are other villages, situated on the tops of ranges, where the interference with the cycle of rotation has already led to an extremely serious position. For the Gonds of some of these villages who used to move backwards and forwards between two or three village-sites, alternatively cultivating the

surrounding land, are now pinned down to the one site which they happened to occupy at the time of forest reservation. In Koni Kasa (32), for instance, I found the cultivated land, which lay on the highest point of a ridge, so stony that it was hard to imagine how a plough could be drawn through the rubble, and the inhabitants told me that in the old times they used to cultivate there only occasionally and that much better soil lay further down the hills; but just when the forest line was drawn they happened to be cultivating here, and now could not move back to the better site and lands.

According to the principles of the reservation, *patta* lands were not to be included in the reserved forest, unless the owners could be compensated elsewhere. In practice, however, a good many lands held on *patta* by aboriginals have been included in the reserved forest without compensation being granted, and the owners in many cases still pay the revenue for lands they are no longer allowed to cultivate.

In Serwai (32) of Rajura Range, for instance, the Gond *patel* Siram Karo complained that half of his *patta* land was included in the Reserve :—

"I inherited from my father *patta* land of 650 acres, and this comprised practically the whole village land. I paid Rs. 203 revenue, cultivated a small part myself and let the rest to the other villagers. But three years ago some Forest Officers came and drew a line round the village, right through my *patta* land where crops were standing, and included half of it in the reserve. Then we all begged the Forest Sahibs to move the line; we told them they had not left us enough to cultivate and I showed them my *patta* papers. But they said that only if we paid Rs. 100 would they move the line further away from the village. So I went to my *sahukar* and brought Rs. 100. But as soon as I had given the money to the Forest Sahibs, they went away and left the line where it is. Now I am still paying Rs. 203 revenue for my *patta* land, but on half of it we are not allowed to cultivate. I have made many applications to get my land back but without success."

Similar cases occurred in all the three taluqs. In Yesapur (33) near Deoti, for instance, where all the village-land, including some hill-slopes cultivated by Kolams, is held by one Gond on *patta*, three-fourths of his *patta*-land was included in the reserve, and in

Marlavai (70) the forest line cuts into half one field of Rs. 13/8 revenue, held on *patta* by the Gond *patel*, and completely incorporates in the reserve another *patta* field of Rs. 4/8 revenue ; moreover part of the land formerly cultivated on *siwa-i-jamabandi* tenure is included in the reserve.

> "When the Forest officers came to draw the line," relates the Marlavai *patel*, "they said they would take away all the *kharijkhata* land unless we paid them Rs. 150. But this we could not pay and so we offered Rs. 20 ; then they asked Rs. 100 and we offered Rs. 30 ; at last we gave them Rs. 50, but they still drew the line very near."

Even less successful in their negotiations were the Gonds of Harapnur (85), whose *patel* tells of the demarcation :

> "When the *Naib Amin* and the other forest officers came they promised to draw the line very far from our village if we gave them Rs. 200. To this we agreed and they set to work while two men went to our *sahukar* to fetch the money. But we had had a bad harvest and he would not give us any money. When they returned empty-handed the forest officers, who had already drawn the line far from the village, got very cross and changed all the marks, and drew it right through our fields."

At that time many villages paid sums varying from Rs. 25 to Rs. 100, but the benefits purchased by this expenditure were not great, and only wealthy non-aboriginal landlords were able to prevent an inclusion of cultivable land near the village in the reserves. The lines surrounding the villages of Kerimeri (58) and Deopur (58) for instance, which belong to Muslim and Brahmin *pattadars* respectively, run at a distance of up to one mile from the villages.

Evacuations of Villages by the Forest Authorities.

While villages in which at least part of the cultivated land was held on *patta* were established as enclaves, a number of Gond and Kolam villages which comprised no *patta* lands were entirely included in the reserves and the inhabitants given a time-limit to evacuate the village-lands. In pursuance of the policy of forest conservancy large scale evacuations occurred in the Dhanora, Tilani and Kawal State Forests some twenty years ago, and mopping-up

operations in the same areas resulted recently in the disbandment of the villages of Dainguda (100), Degangutta (100), Pairagarh (101), Dongargaon (110), and numerous Kolam settlements. In other places, such as for instance Rompalli (116), a long established village and seat of a *mokashi* with 60 Gond houses, 8 Pardhan houses and 6 Naikpod houses, the villagers have recently been served with a notice that they must leave after the *rabi* harvest. The case of Rompalli came before the Taluqdar, who decided in favour of the aboriginals, but the Forest Department appealed to the Subedar, who confirmed the evacuation order.[1] Yet, less than three miles from Rompalli, a Velma was allowed to carve a new village from the high and exceptionally good forest at Bhimpur.

Many of the evacuations concerned villages which had been continuously inhabited for long periods, but others became necessary because in outlying tracts subordinate forest officials allowed aboriginals to re-occupy old alternative village-sites, whose inclusion in the reserves was already foreseen. The case of Bhimrelli (116), a village of 10 Gond houses, with 20 adult men. is an example:

> "We used to live in Gimmejari (102)", tells Karpeta Jogu, the Gond *patel* of Bhimrelli, "but some years ago the village was bought by a Brahmin *patteadar*, who drove us away. Then we went to Bhimrelli and the forest *chaukidar* demanded Rs. 25 but allowed us to stay. The *patwari* came and measured our fields, and he too allowed us to stay. For four years we have cultivated in Bhimrelli and paid the revenue to the *patwari*. But one year ago the Ranger Sahib came and saw the village and said we could not stay here. He went away, however, without doing anything and the *chaukidar* said nothing more. So this year we paid the revenue and ploughed as usual, but at the end of the hot weather the *saredar* came and told us that unless we paid him Rs. 60 we must leave the place. But we could not collect so much and gave him only Rs. 10. A few weeks later he came again together with the *chaukidar* and *patwari*, and said that the village must be demolished. Then we went to the Ranger and the Tahsildar in Asifabad, and they too said that we must leave; but they promised we would get some other land. Sometime afterwards we were called to the Court, because the Forest Ranger reported that we were still in Bhimrelli; but in the Court we were only told we must leave the

1. When I visited Rompalli sometime after the evacuation order had been confirmed, I was told that within human memory no Taluqdar, Tahsildar, Divisional Forest Officer or other Gazetted Officer had ever visited the village, or indeed any of the neighbouring villages.

village, and we had all to put our thumb-marks on a paper. About the same time the *patwari* and *girdawar* measured out some land for us in Ranakannapalli (103) and the *saredar* took us there, and said we must move to that land. But this land is quite small, hardly enough for three families, and in Bhimrelli we are twenty adult men. The *saredar* admits that the land in Ranakannapalli is too small, but he says that he cannot do anything about it. Now we have received the order that we must move from Bhimrelli before next Saturday (August 6th), but all our crops are sown, and the Indian corn and *jawari* are more than a foot high. What shall we eat if we have to leave now? And where shall we stay in Ranakannapalli, now in the rain? There is no grass left to thatch the new houses, and it is much too late to cut the jungle on the piece of land given to us,—this year we can neither burn it nor sow any new crops."

In Utnur Taluq similar evacuations took place when the Utnur State Forest and the Kawal State Forest were reserved, and at that time many villages of considerable size were disbanded.

By the encroachment on their land in the lowlands by non-aboriginals and the ousting from certain parts of the hills by the Forest Department, the aboriginals are caught between Scylla and Charybdis, and a vicious circle of migration to, and subsequent emigration from, the hills has begun.

A good example of this is the fate of a Gond community now settled in Hirapur (24), near Chandur (24), in the plains south of the Penganga:

Originally these Gonds lived in Visapur (24) on the edge of the plains, but this village was acquired by a Marwari, who soon asked exorbitant rents; so the Gonds left their village and went into the hills, where they settled at Kosombi (34); there they stayed for three years, cultivated and paid revenue, but two years ago they were ordered by the Forest Department to evacuate Kosombi, and so they returned once more to the plains. There they settled on a deserted site called Hirapur and made the land arable, but as they have no *patta* rights they are afraid that they will not remain for long in indisturbed possession of Hirapur, which may any moment be acquired by one of the *pattadars* of the surrounding villages. (Other Gonds still live at Kosombi, but those now settled at Hirapur had occupied a site at some distance from the present village).

An example of the opposite course is the movements of a group of Gond families now living in Busimetta (57):

> They originally lived in the hill village of Patnapur (73), but had to leave that village when the Dhanora State Forest was established. So they went to settle in Sangwi (58) in the Pedda Vagu valley, a village belonging to an absentee Muslim *patta lar*; at first he demanded a rent of Rs. 10 per plough, but gradually he raised the rent to Rs. 40 per plough; the Gonds found this impossible to pay and six years ago moved again into the hills to settle at Bosimetta; there no one has a *patta*, and some of the difficulties they have lately been experiencing are described on pages 111–2.
>
> Another group of families now living in Busimetta were ousted from Narsapur (54) by non-aboriginal emigrants from the plains, who acquired most of the land at Narsapur.

The Effects of Forest Conservancy on Kolams and Naikpods.

Hard hit as many Gonds are by the reservation of forest areas, their position is still favourable compared to that of the majority of Kolams and Naikpods. Both these tribes stand on a much lower level of material development and show many common traits with the Hill Reddis of Warangal District and the Baigas of the Central Provinces. Their traditional method of agriculture is shifting-cultivation or *podu* on hill slopes, and for this they use digging-sticks and primitive hoes. Except for a few Kolams and Naikpods who have taken to independent plough-cultivation, the members of these tribes possess no cattle and as a rule not even goats, sheep or pigs, chickens and dogs being their only domestic animals. The dissimilarity between Gonds on the one side and Kolams and Naikpods on the other is not confined to their economic status; there is also a striking difference in mentality, which shows clearly the greater primitiveness of the latter. A Gond, for example, is usually well informed about all the villages and even their more prominent inhabitants within a radios of two days' journey, he knows more or less the functions of the various Government officers and has a rough idea of his rights in regard to the land and forest-produce, and if wronged will often make attempts to get his case heard. A Kolam or Naikpod is in contrast extraordinarily simple-minded and

limited in his outlook; he may have lived for several years in a locality and may yet be unable to give the name of more than the immediately adjacent villages, is incapable of describing the relative position of his own hamlet with the help of stones or a sand drawing, has practically no idea of the circumstances of the peoples in the neighbouring villages, is entirely vague in regard to such matters as *kharijkhata*, *parampok*, *patta* land and reserved forests, and his reaction to any kind of difficulty is either flight or submission. Whereas most Gonds know their kinsmen up to the third degree and are able to say where they live, Kolams of a disbanded village, whose inhabitants were scattered, easily lose all contact with each other, and profess ignorance as to the whereabouts of their nearest relations. They have very little other aspirations than to be left in peace and allowed to find a bare livelihood. For this reason Kolams seem to be content to live in the villages of land-owners, whose *patta* land includes a few hill slopes; and if there they are permitted to cultivate in their old style and are sheltered from threats of expulsion by forest officials, they submit to almost any demands for unpaid labour etc. which their landlords make and which Gonds would find unbearable.

Their standard of life is much lower than that of the Gonds and their settlements are much smaller; even to-day these seldom consist of more than about 12 houses on one site, while in the old days before Forest Reservation hamlets of only three and four houses were scattered over the hills at points convenient for *podu*. While the Gonds of old, shifting their fields in a definite cycle of rotation, retained one village-site over a period of ten or fifteen years, the Kolams and Naikpods shifted their houses almost as a often as they shifted their fields; their houses are much smaller than Gond houses, often containing only one room, and so to rebuild was no great matter. The economic resources of the *podu*-cutting cultivator are also meagre. The area of steep hill-side which can be cultivated by one family with hoe and digging stick can in no way be compared to the area a Gond shifting cultivator with plough and bullocks to help him could till, and the crops sown and reaped, consisting mainly of small millets, *jawari* and maize, and certain vegetables, such as

beans, taro and marrows, provide a family with sustenance only for about seven or eight months of the year, while for the other months wild fruits and roots form the mainstay of diet. Thus the Kolams and Naikpods grow no crops for sale such as cotton and oil seed, and for their cash requirements they depend on the sale of jungle produce and baskets, in whose manufacture they are expert.

It seems that before their dispersion caused by the reservation of forests, the Kolams settled mainly in the higher parts of the Tilani and Dhanora State Forests in Asifabad Taluq, of the Manikgarh State Forest in Rajura Taluq, of the eastern part of the so-çalled Daboli block in Utnur Taluq and the eastern part of the Satmala State Forest, which belongs partly to Utnur and partly to Adilabad Taluq. Where Gonds and Kolams live side by side, the Gonds settle usually at the foot of the highest ridges and cultivate the valleys, plateaux and gentle slopes, and the Kolams build their hamlets on ridge tops and cultivate the steep hill-sides below. Many Kolams still live in these areas, but others have emigrated to the valleys and plains, where they subsist by coolie-work and in rare cases by independent plough cultivation.

The Naikpods are to-day often found in the same jungle settlements as the Kolams, but are more numerous in the southern part of the District than in Rajura and Adilabad Taluqs. Their main strongholds seems to have been the hills rising from the Godavari valley and many used to live in the Utnur State Forest; when expelled from there they settled in the villages round Utnur and along the Utnur-Gudi Hatnur road, where they work for non-aboriginal land-owners. Only a few of them possess cattle of their own and hardly any have *patta* land.

At the time of the demarcation of Forest Reserves many Kolam and Naikpod villages were disbanded and the inhabitants compelled to leave their houses and the hill-slopes where they used to cultivate, while some settlements, and particularly those in the immediate vicinity of Gond villages, were established as enclaves and in these were included the hill-slopes then actually under cultivation. Though nominally shifting cultivation was here allowed to

continue, the restriction of the Kolams' land to that under cultivation at the time of demarcation virtually ended their traditional form of economy; for after a very few years the slopes included within the enclaves were utterly exhausted and the Kolams were prevented from felling any new forest. Consequently the larger part of the community had to emigrate, unless they where able to obtain some level land and learn from their Gond neighbours the art of ploughing. There are nowadays Kolam settlements where most or even all inhabitants practise plough cultivation; the bullocks, however, are usually not their own, but are hired from either Gonds or *sahukars*. But where there are any hill-sides within the enclaves they are cultivated with hoes and digging-sticks for as long as they yield even the meagrest crop.

The degree to which the Kolams' economy and social organization has been broken up by the forest policy of recent years can be judged from the developments in the Tilani State Forest. Over this massif of hills, in many parts broken by deep ravines and poor in level ground, were once scattered numerous settlements of Kolams, who could live in areas too rugged for the Gond type of cultivation. But now many of the settlements are disbanded and numerous Kolams have moved to the Manikgarh Forest in Rajura Taluq.

For the fate of those who remained, the example of the settlements of Boramgutta (101), near Pangri Madra, may be taken as typical:

> Boramgutta consisted in July 1942 of three settlements, A, B, and C. None of the inhabitants of these settlements had ploughs or cattle and they did not even possess goats. In settlement A, which had existed for more than 20 years, there were eight houses; three years ago a forest line was drawn round the village and only four fields were included within the enclave; they were cultivated with hoes and the total revenue was Rs. 12 and the *mamul* to the Forest Guard Rs. 4. Settlement B lay less than two furlongs from A, but outside the enclave and consisted of four houses; the inhabitants have moved there from settlement A only this year and have cut a piece of jungle outside the enclave, because they said it was impossible for them to subsist any longer on the land within the enclave, as the fields, now cultivated for more than three years in succession, did not yield enough food for 12

families. But hardly had they sowed on their new fields when the *chaukidar* and *patwari* ordered them to go back to settlement A. Tekam Burma, one of the men of Boramgutta, is the nominal head of a whole group of Kolam villages, but only he and these few people have clung to their ancestral land:

"My father", he says "was *dodomankak* (hereditary headman) of many villages; Boramgutta (101), Gopera (101), Kottagudem (101), Burdamadugu (102), Dampur (101), Dongargaon (115), Tunkunur (101), Pairegarh (101), and other hamlets were all in his hand; but now most of them are deserted, for the Forest Officers will not allow the Kolams to stay; the people in these villages were all our relatives, but they were scattered here and there, and now we don't even know where they live and which of them are still alive."

Settlement C is about a furlong from B and consists of four houses; Atram Gangu, the oldest man of the small group, tells of his experiences:—

"We used to live in the hills near Revalgudem (100) and Goinna (87), cultivating now on this and now on the other hill. But the forest people stopped us cutting *podu*; then we went to Mangi (115) and cultivated with some Naikpods, but after one year we had again to leave. So one year ago we came here, and settled on an old site near Boramgutta,; the *patwari* saw the fields we had cut and collected Rs. 12 revenue for all four households; he did not tell us that we won't be allowed to stay. But a few days ago, he and the *chaukidar* came and said we must go away. Why did they not tell us that before? If they had said so in the hot weather, we might have been able to move somewhere else, but now, with the maize sprouting and no chance of cultivating anywhere else, - what shall we do?"

Similar was the fate of the Kolams of Pangri Madra (87). Here lies a Bhimana shrine, where every year in December an important Kolam festival is held, and the hereditary *pujari* of this shrine with a group of households have always lived at Pangri Madra, while other Kolams dwelt in outlying hamlets.

Atram Gangu, the present *pujari*, told me that some years ago when the forest lines were drawn, the village site and the whole land of Pangri Madra was included in the Reserve, and the Kolams expelled. As he is the *pujari* of the Pangri Madra Bhimana he could not go far away, but received permission from the Gonds of Chintal Madra (87) to settle on their land. There he and some families stayed for three years, but one year ago the Gonds told them that they could not

spare the land any longer and so he and eighteen other Kolam families built a settlement at a short distance from the village. But now the forest officers tell them that they must vacate that site, or their houses will be burnt down. The Kolams have neither cattle nor ploughs, and since they are forbidden to do hoe cultivation, they subsist precariously on coolie work for Gonds and the sale of baskets.

It seems that in some places Kolams and Naikpods have been able to remain in the reserved forest with the connivance of forest subordinates and *patwaris*, but the price they have to pay for the privilege is usually high, and they may be told to leave their village at a moment's notice.

1. The Kolams of Chalbari (73) in the Dhanora State Forest, for instance told me: "Since our grandfather's time we have lived in Chalbari and now there are ten houses in our village. In the last years we paid a revenue of Rs. 5 per household, and gave an annual *mamul* of Rs. 10 to the *chaukidar* and Rs. 10 to the *sardar*; but this year, as we have rebuilt some of our houses, the *chaukidar* demands Rs. 30. We have no cattle and no goats; we only cultivate with hoes. Two months ago, when two of our young men came from work in an old *podu*-field, the *chaukidar* took away both their axes and he will not give them back".

Three years ago six Kolam families of Chalbari had to emigrate because they were not allowed to cut new *podu* and they have now settled in Deopur (58), a village of a Brahmin *vakil*.

2. Not far from Chalbari, but further down in the valley, lies Aligudem (73), a settlement of Naikpods. Until two years ago they lived in Kakarbordi (72), near Babijheri (73), but frightened by the Babijheri incident they went to settle at Aligudem. There are eight households, and none of them possess any domestic animals; two men, however, are cultivating flat land belonging to a Brahmin *pattadar* with hired bullocks and pay him Rs. 9 rent per plough; but the remaining six men cultivate a hill-side outside the Reserve with hoes. For this they paid last year a revenue of Rs. 8 per house to the *patwari* and to the Forest *chaukidar* they paid Rs. 0 *mamul*. But this year there is a new *chaukidar*, and he demands Rs. 40 from the eight households. They say that in Kakarbordi conditions were much better; there they paid only a revenue of Rs. 2 per house and Re 1 per house to the *chaukidar*.

3. Another example comes from Choponguda (47) in Rajura Range There are 16 Kolam houses in Choponguda: only one man has a

plough, 9 do hoe-cultivation, and 6 subsist on coolie-work for Gonds of Pulara (47) and Gunjara (47). The total revenue of the village amounts to Rs. 21. But the *mamul* of the forest *chaukidar* by far exceeds this sum. In Sati (Nov.–Dec.) 1941 he collected Rs. 16 and 10 *mankal* of oil seed; in Chait (March-April) 1942 Rs. 10 and 20 *mankal* of *jawari*; and in Akari (June–July) 1942 again Rs. 13 and 8 chickens. One of the Kolams, Maravi Bhimu, felled twelve years ago a patch of jungle for a *podu* field and was fined Rs. 50 by the *chaukidar*; but he could not pay and fled to the estate of the Bambara *mokashi*. This year, when he saw that the old *chaukidar* had been transferred he returned to Choponguda, but the new *chaukidar* knows of the case and demands from him still the old sum of Rs. 50 and the Forester demands an additional sum of Rs. 20.

Many of the Kolams and some Naikpods, who used to live in the area of the Dhanora and Tilani State Forests, have sought refuge in the hills of Rajura Taluq. Here the Gond *mokashi* of Bambara (48) has still retained his *jagir* estate, in which the Forest Department does not interfere, and he allows a considerable number of Kolams to live and cultivate on the higher hill-slopes. Their position is favourable, for they pay him per house only Rs. 4, can cut as much *podu* as they need, and have to pay no *mamul* to forest subordinates.

But not all Kolams from Tilani and Dhanora Forests were so fortunate as to find refuge in this *mokashi* estate, whose owner perhaps sees to it that his forests are not overcrowded, and the majority are now faced with conditions only slightly preferable to those which put them to flight. An example is the fate of a group of Kolams now living in Palejari (35); Siram Bhima, the headman, tells of their fate as follows:

"We were all born in the hills near Moar (73) (i. e. in the Dhanora State Forest); but many years ago the forest lines were drawn and we were no longer allowed to cut *podu*. So we left and went to Rajura Taluq. For some years we lived in Bari (46), but then came bad years and we could not find enough food; so we went to the plains and settled first in Jheri Jamni (29) (near Adilabad), and there we did coolie-work; after three years we went to Bibigaon (12) also in the plains; there too we did coolie-work, and had no fields of our own; but often there was no work and we had to starve. So two years ago we decided to return to

> the hills and came here to Palejari, where there were already five Gond houses. None of us has any cattle and we cultivate only with hoes. We are seven households and each pays Rs. 3 revenue to the *patwari*. But the *chaukidar* gives us great trouble. Last Chait month he came and demanded Rs. 50 from us; all we could pay, however, was Rs. 5 and this we gave him. But he was not satisfied and took away many of our implements; 6 hoes, 2 axes, and 2 sickles. He never gave them back, and now and then he comes to the village and says that we must go away."

Forest officers often complain about the reluctance of Kolams to take to plough cultivation and their obstinancy in sticking to *podu*. But it appears that even where Kolams have on their own completed the transition to permanent cultivation, their enterprise has hardly found the encouragement one might have expected. This may be demonstrated by the case of Chinna Jheri (59) in the Pedda Vagu valley:

> About 20 years ago Chinna Jheri was a Kolam village of 10 households, who all cultivated with ploughs. They had altogether 250 acres. Tekam Bhimu, who told me the story, possessed a *patta* and paid an annual revenue of Rs. 35 for his *patta* land. When the first forest-lines were drawn, he was told by the forest officers that unless he paid Rs. 100 he would have to give up his land; as he could not pay, they took away his *patta* document and he, together with all the ten households, was forced to evacuate Chinna Jheri; ever since he has tried to regain his *patta* land, but in vain. Some families went to live in the neighbouring Pedda Jheri (59), but five years ago that village was acquired by a Rohilla, who has now raised all the rents.

A considerable number of Kolams have lately settled on the land of those non-aboriginal *pattadars* who have been able to arrange for a large belt of forest round their villages to be included in the enclaves, and here there are often hill slopes available where the Kolams can still cultivate in their traditional manner. In Deopur (58) for instance, a village in the Pedda Vagu valley which belongs to a *vakil* of Asifabad, there are 10 Kolam households which gathered in recent years from Chalbari (73) in Asifabad Taluq, Pauargudem (72) in Utnur Taluq, and Markanj Metta (33) in Rajura Taluq; three of the men have ploughs and hire bullocks; the rest cultivate with hoes.

The Naikpods seem as a rule to make less effort to find places where they can continue cutting *podu* and many live now in the villages round Utnur, where they practise plough cultivation and do agricultural coolie-work. But hadrly any of them have their own fields; not only have they no *pattas*, but most of them have not even succeeded in obtaining *kharijkhata* or *parampok* land and cultivate the land of non-aboriginals, mainly Muslims of Utnur "on share". By this arrangement the landowner pays the revenue and receives one half of all crops, if the cultivator provides seed grain and plough-bullocks: but if bullocks and seed grain are also provided by the land owner, the cultivator's share is only one third. Most Naikpods who enter such agreements have, however, no stock of grain to tide them over the first year's work and so the landowner gives them monthly advances of grain until the harvest. By the time of the harvest all these advances plus accrued interest are, at least according to the landlord's reckoning, equal to the labourers' share of the harvest, and so he takes the whole crop and next year doles out to the Naikpod only monthly allowances of grain and occasionally small cash sums as advances on the next harvest.

An example of these conditions is the village of Sallavada (54). This village is approximately 1½ miles off the Utnur-Gudi Hatnur Road.

> Here there were one generation ago only three Naikpod houses; now there are 22, and all the recent immigrants have come from the vicinity of Kalmadgu (113), the Tilani Forest and other hilly parts, where they used to subsist on *podu*-cultivation. None of the 22 Naikpods has *patta* land and only five men cultivate small plots of *parampok* land on their own; all the others subsist on coolie-work for Marathas. All their attempts to get *kharijkhata* or *parampok* land either in Sallavada or neighbouring villages have as yet failed.

It would thus seem that even where Kolams and Naikpods have learnt to plough, they do not reap the benefits of this more efficient mode of agriculture, but with rare exceptions have to work for landlords of other castes.

Auctioning of Forest Produce.

While the reservation of forest areas and the virtual prohibition of shifting cultivation have in many ways revolutionized the economy

of the aboriginals, their exploitation of the natural resources of their habitat was further limited by the auctioning of such forest produce as grass, *mahua*, *chironji* (*Buchanania latifolia* berries) and bamboo. The auctioning of these products is resented by the aboriginals, not so much because it restricts the supply for their own domestic use, but because it gives outsiders a lever for the collection of various fees and dues. It appears indeed that many contractors take leases of grass, *chironji* and *mahua*, not with a view to exporting these articles for sale, but only with a view to levying from the aboriginals payment for their domestic consumption, reaping thereby a handsome profit.

Thus the contractor who takes the *chironji* contract for a group of villages usually does not collect the fruits, but some time after the fruit season tours the villages and charges the aboriginals either per house or per tree for the fruit which he assumes they and their children have eaten. The charges vary between as. 2 and as. 8 per house, or as. 4 to Re. 1 per tree. The plea of elderly Gonds that they don't collect *chironji* is never accepted, and the contractor, who is often an Arab or accompanied by an Arab servant, generally succeeds in bullying the aboriginals into paying the full amount. Another, though far less frequent, method of exploiting a contract, is shown by the example of a Muslim *vakil*, who possesses some *patta* land in Chinaguda (31) and at the same time takes the *chironji* contract for 14 Gond and Kolam villages; claiming that he is entitled by right of his contract to all the *chironji* in the area, he compels the aboriginals of all these villages to collect the *chironji* without paying them any wages and he threatens to fine those who don't deliver a minimum amount.

Similarly *mahua* flowers are auctioned to contractors, and these collect from the Gonds and the Kolams as. 2 and in rare cases as. 1 per head of cattle on the ground that the cattle feed on the corollae. The Gonds complain that in former times they used *mahua* flowers both for distilling liquor and as food; every year they collected large quantities and stored them against times of scarcity; if their crops failed they mixed the dried flowers with *jawari* flour and ate them

boiled. But now if they are seen by an excise peon gathering the flowers or any quantity is found in their houses, they are heavily fined.

Grass is also auctioned and the contractors act on the same principles. Export of grass is apparently unprofitable, and so the contractors wait until the rains have started and then tour the villages and collect per house as. 8 to Re. 1, irrespective of whether a man has thatched his house anew or has only used a few bundles for repairing his roof. Last year the Gond *patels* of Marlavai (70) and the surrounding villages wanted to take the grass contract themselves, but they did not succeed and it was taken by a non-aboriginal of Utnur who collects Re. 1 per house.

In some villages of Rajura Taluq the fees for *mahua*, *chironji* and grass are moreover collected in British coinage, and it is also here and in Adilabad Taluq that contractors levy them not per household, but demand bulk sums from each village.

Bamboo is auctioned only in some localities, and the contractors then collect annual fees from the Gonds for the bamboos used for fences, platforms and wattle walls, in a way similar to the grass contractors.

As two contracts are rather surprisingly seldom taken by the same man, the average aboriginal village experiences the visitation of three to four different contractors, whose cash demands must all be fulfilled, and often at a time when it is least convenient.

Where there are mango and tamarind trees, they are also auctioned, and many Gond *patels* complain that although they would like to take the contracts themselves they get no chance, since the auction takes place at the tahsil headquarters, and they do not hear in time when it will be held, The Gond *patel* of Serwai (32), where there are many magnificent mango trees, told me that last year he paid to the forest *chaukidar* a sum in advance on the understanding that the *chaukidar* would bid for him at the auction; he then had the trees watched by several people, only to realize in the end that the contract had gone to a *Bania*; the *chaukidar* never returned the advance money.

Forest Dues and Fines.

In almost all the hilly parts of the Adilabad District the forest lines are so close to the villages that the aboriginals have no other choice than to graze their cattle in the reserves, and grazing fees are collected as a matter of course. They amount to as. 4 for cows, as. 14 for buffaloes and as. 2 for goats; while in Utnur Taluq plough bullocks are free, as. 4 per bullock is collected in Rajura Taluq. The general collection of these fees began only three years ago, after the boundaries of the enclaves had been demarcated, and the Gonds plead still on every possible occasion for their reduction; they resent that most of the wealthy landlords arranged for the forest lines to be drawn far away from their villages, and pay therefore neither grazing fees nor the fees for ploughs or timber for house building. The Muslim *pattadar* of Kerimeri derided in conversation the idea that he and his villagers should pay any forest dues "like ignorant Gonds", and said he knew how to handle forest subordinates so that they kept clear of his village, except for the one time when they come for their annual *mamul*.

The Forest Department levies per plough an annual fee of Re. 1/1 for the wood needed in making ploughs and implements, and a fee of Re. 1/1 for building material; but actually up to Rs. 5 per plough is collected by some *chaukidars* as "*dumpa patti*," as these combined fees are locally known.

Notwithstanding this annual fee, when a man actually builds a new house, he has to pay for the building materials at the valuation of *chaukidar* or Ranger. From Rs. 5 plus two chickens, for a small Kolam house, up to Rs. 30 plus one calf for a fair-sized Gond house, is the usual price, and in most cases the *chaukidar* determines and collects the amount without any such formalities as reports to the Ranger or receipts for payment. In the more accessible villages the dues for building materials are in many cases collected by the Ranger, but the Gonds complain that there seems to be no system in the valuation and that they never know how much they will have to pay; they also say that it makes no difference whether they take the

wood from the open forest or the reserve; for the forest officers assume in any case that it is taken from the reserve and demand payment accordingly.

If a village is burnt down, which is not an altogether infrequent event, the *chaukidar* generally demands a certain sum for the rebuilding of each house, and the experience of Gonds tends to show that it is better to comply with his demand than to apply for permission from higher authorities, The following cases may exemplify this:

1. In the middle of May Kanaka Lachu, the Gond *patel* of Islampur (99), came to Marlavai and told that in January all the 16 houses of his village were burnt down. He then applied to the Forest Ranger at Janaram (114) for permission to take materials for rebuilding them and sent by registered post two applications, one to the D. F. O. in Nirmal and one to the Tahsildar in Lakshetipet. Weeks and months passed and he got no reply and whenever he approached the Ranger, he was told that no order had yet come. In the meantime all the villagers lived in temporary shelters and the *chaukidar* kept particularly close watch that they should not cut any timber. When the rains approached some families got so desperate that they moved to Seti Harapnur (85) and Wadagaon (54) where they had relations, but the Ranger was still refusing permission to rebuild the houses.

2. A slightly different case, but with the same result, is that of Nokari (23) in the Manikgarh Forest: Nokari, a Gond village of 12 houses was completely burnt down in Divali 1941 ; the *chaukidar* demanded Rs. 120 for the permission to rebuild. He told the Gonds that there was no point in approaching the Ranger, since only he (the *chaukidar*) could give the order. When the Gonds wanted to cut grass and keep it in readiness against the time when they got the permission to rebuild, the Police *Dafedar* of Chandur (24) came and forbade them to cut it, unless they paid him Re 1 and one fowl per house. Since then he has come three times to see that they have not cut grass secretly ; and the Forest Guard sees to it that they do not cut any bamboo or timber. On July 25th, well in the middle of the rains, they were still living in temporary sheds, and saw no possibility of finding the necessary Rs. 120 for the *chaukidar*, which is more than their total revenue.

Another source of difficulty is the Gond and Kolam custom of erecting marriage-booths, memorial posts, and marriage commemoration posts. The *chaukidars* usually ask up to Rs. 6 for a marriage

booth, and when I went to Lendiguda, a Kolam village, to attend a wedding, I was told that no booth had been erected because the people could not afford the fee for the *chaukidar*.

Ever since the forest-lines have been drawn close to the villages, and often through *patta* and former *kharijkhata* land, there occur innumerable cases of Gonds being fined for the illicit felling of jungle both for cultivation and for housebuilding.

An example of the way in which such fees and fines are often collected is the case of Pulera (71) in Utnur Range.

Atram Somu, a Gond of Pulera (71) built a new house in autumn 1941 and informed the *chaukidar* beforehand of his intention to do so. When the house was built the *chaukidar* demanded and received Rs. 25, but gave no receipt. Soon afterwards Somu cleared of small jungle growth some *kharijkhata* land, which had lain fallow for some time; he had obtained permission from the Tahsildar to cultivate there and the *girdawar* had measured it and demarcated it with stones. When the *chaukidar* saw the felled jungle, he asked for Rs. 100, but Somu had no cash and so the *chaukedar* took one pair of young bullocks.

In January the Forest Ranger came to Pulera and saw the newly cleared land; at that he demanded from Atram Somu Rs. 200 for the value of the timber, and when Somu explained that the *chaukidar* had already taken one pair of good bullocks worth Rs. 60 in lieu of cash payment, the Ranger declared that this was no affair of his and insisted on the payment of Rs. 200. He said he would not let Somu go until he paid that sum and Somu was kept in the Ranger's camp for eight days and taken first to Rasimetta (71), then to Addesar (58) and then back to Rasimetta. On the return to Rasimetta, the party met a Bania from Asifabad who had come incidentally to the village to collect some debt, and Somu managed to borrow from him Rs. 60 and paid these to the Forest Ranger, who agreed to accept them instead of the initial demand of Rs. 200; the receipt which he gave to Somu, and which the latter showed to the Taluqdar, was however, only for Rs 3/8. The *chaukidar* kept the bullocks, until in June I mentioned the case to Dr. Dost Ali Khan, who compelled him to return the animals to Somu.

In July the Ranger visited Pulera again and saw that another villager Atram Deo had built a new cattle-shed. For this he made Deo pay Rs. 16; (this sum amounts to 4/5 of Deo's total land-revenue, which

is Rs. 20). The Pulera Gonds say that the usual sum for a cattle shed is Rs. 4 to 5, but that the Ranger is now annoyed with them because they complained about the affair of the bullocks. "If we built houses like the Marlavai men" (who enjoy a temporary respite from *chaukidar* exactions) they told me, "the *chaukidar* would put a rope round our neck and hang us. Sooner or later some one will be killed in Pulera,—perhaps one of us, perhaps a *chaukidar* - someone will once take a stick, and there will be a fight. Whenever a *chaukidar*, policemen or *chaprasi* comes he demands rice and chickens and tea; if we give him *jawari* he abuses us and says we should give it to his horse."

Friction between the Forest Authorities and the aboriginals arises frequently over *kharijkhata* land, which has been included in the proposed reserve; occasionally the Tahsil authorities, not realizing the exact position of the new forest lines, give permission to take under cultivation one or the other survey number which now lies actually outside the new enclaves and in far more cases revenue subordinates, and particularly *patwaris* and *girdawars*, make the aboriginal believe that the permission to cultivate will be, or has been, issued in order to be able to ask for gratification; when the forest officials later fine the unfortunate aboriginal for illegal felling and cultivation, the *patwari* or *girdawar* deny having done more than forward the aboriginal's application.

A few examples may demonstrate this difficulty:

1. Five years ago Kursenga Ragu, a Gond of Belgaon (74) in Asifabad Taluq, received permission from the Tahsildar to cultivate 50 acres of *kharijkhata* land; he applied for this land with a view to taking it gradually under cultivation as his sons grew up. At first he cleared only 10 acres and for this the *chaukidar* demanded Rs. 40 *chobina*, but gave no receipt. Ever since Ragu has paid the revenue for the entire 50 acres and this year he wanted to clear more of the land but the *chaukidar* forbids him to do so, saying that what he has not cultivated up to now has in the meantime been included in the reserved forest.

2. This year Mesram Baku, a Gond of Wadagaon (54) in Utnur Taluq received permission from the Tahsildar to take 40 acres of *purampok* land under cultivation; now he and some of his co-villagers have cut the jungle on this land, which lies *outside* the reserved forest, but the *chaukidar* forbids him to cultivate and says that an order of the D.F.O. would be necessary

3. Last February Gonds of Busimetta (57) in Utnur Taluq asked me what they should do to get more land for cultivation. I advised them to apply to the Tahsildar for permission to cultivate some more *kharijkhata* land, and they consequently went to Utnur and submitted an application, which the Tahsildar promised to consider. A fortnight tater the *patwari* came to Busimetta, measured out 16 acres of new land on which was small jungle growth, and gave them a piece of paper with Urdu writing, which they believed to be the Tahsildar's permission to cultivate the land in question. For this he demanded and received Rs. 5. Consequently two men, Pusam Ramu and Siram Kesu, began felling the jungle on this land. At the end of March these two Gonds together with most of the other men of Busimetta came to Marlavai and told the following story:

"Two weeks ago the Ranger Sahib of Utnur come to our village and saw that we had cut some jungle on the land the *patwari* had measured. We showed him the paper the *patwari* had given us, but he put it in his pocket, abused us for felling the jungle and beat us severely with his stick." (Both men still showed the marks of heavy beating) "Then the Ranger said that we would have to pay a fine of Rs. 50 and he took us with him to Utnur, and said we would be put into jail unless we paid the fine. In Utnur he shut us into a house and said we would have to stay there till we paid; for two days we were kept there shut in and were forced to peel *amla* fruits for making chutney; all this time we were given nothing to eat and were not allowed to go out and get food from nearby Gonds. On the third day, however, the Sirpur *chaukidar* lent us some of his own *jawari* and we cooked it. Then we were made to put our thumb marks on a paper and promise that we would pay Rs. 50; we did it to get free, but neither of us has money or cattle; we are working for other Gonds and have nothing to pay with."

On June 4th Gonds of Busimetta came with tales of new exactions by the Forest *chaukidar*. They had complained before that in many of their fields there are *Buchanania latifolia* trees, whose shade stunts the growth of the crops and provides shelter for the birds ravaging the crops. On a visit to Busimettà I convinced myself of the truth of this statement; some fields look more like fruit groves than plough land, up to twenty-five trees standing on individual survey numbers. Although the Gonds had, when 6 years ago they were allotted the land, paid altogether Rs. 150 to the *chaukidar* for the value of the timber, they were forbidden to fell these trees, which, no longer hemmed in by other forest growth, had spread their branches and made half of the fields more or less valueless. (The same complaint comes from many villages). In despair three Gonds had cut a few of the

trees on their fields and the *chaukidar* had come to fine them. He demanded Rs. 35 from Atram Balarsao (whose annual revenue is Rs. 20), Rs. 10 from Kumra Gangu (whose revenue is Rs. 17) and Rs. 10 from Kumra Malku (whose revenue is Rs. 30). Moreover he taied to collect the fine of Rs. 50 the Ranger demanded from Pusam Manku and Siram Kesu, and threatened to send them handcuffed to jail unless the sum was forthcoming. At last the villagers staved him off by collecting and giving him Rs. 25, for which he gave no receipt.

3. Another case typical of the type of difficulty which many Gonds in all three taluqs experience is that of the Gonds of Irapur-Walgonda (68), a village in Utnur Taluq :

A group of Gonds, consisting of Kinnaka Pakru, Kumru Godu, Para Jeitur, Chikram Isru, Pendur Gangia, Maravi Bhimu, Pendur Pandu, Pusam Dama, and Torisam Bhimji, lived in Sitagondi (38), a village near Adilabad belonging to a Marwari, who demanded a rent of up to Rs. 70 per plough. Since they found this unbearable, they looked for other land and picked on Irapur-Walgonda, where they had relations, who told them that there was more *kharijkhata* land available. Two years ago they made an application to the D.F.O. and asked for permission to cultivate in Irapur-Walgonda. For almost one year they heard nothing, but during the rains 1941 the Forest Ranger of Utnur sent them word through ther relations that he would come to Irapur and demarcate the land. Consequently the men went to Irapur on the appointed date, and the Forest Ranger came, stayed for four days, measured the land which they wanted to cultivate, and demanded Rs. 200; they paid Rs. 50 in the village, and brought later Rs. 150 to his house in Utnur, but he gave them no receipt. When he measured the land, he told them that by Divali they would get the final cutting order. Certain to get the land, for which they had already paid Rs. 200, the men brought their families and possessions from Sitagondi, and settled at Irapur. But Divali passed and they heard nothing. So they started felling the jungle which was mainly small shrubby growth and prepared the land for cultivation, In the meanwhile the *girdawar* and *patwari* came to measure the land and received from the Gonds gratifications of Rs. 90. In March 1942 the Ranger came again to Irapur, and seeing that the jungle had been felled, blamed the Gonds for anticipating the order and fined them Rs. 50; he explained that the D. F. O. had refused permission to cultivate the area and forbade them to remain in Irapur. Only in July soon after the visit of the Taluqdar, before whom the Gonds brought their case, did the Ranger give Kinnaka Pakru a receipt for Rs. 200, being the sum the Gonds had paid one year previously, before they had left

their old village or cut any trees. Even now, however, they are debarred from cultivating the land, and the *chaukidar* does not allow the women to weed the rice, which they have surreptitiously sown.

Allotment of *kharijkhata* land by the Revenue Authorities is contested by the Forest Authorities not only in doubtful cases (i.e. where the forest lines have not yet been definitely fixed), but sometimes also when the allotted land lies clearly with the village-enclosure. This may be seen from the following example from Savati (47):

Early this year Soyam Chinnu and eight other Gonds of Savati (47) applied to the Asifabad Tahsildar for additional *kharijkhata* land and their application was granted, each receiving a formal written permission to cultivate a certain number of acres. Although all the survey numbers allotted to them lie well within the enclave, the *chaukidar* forbade them to cultivate the land, unless they paid him very substantial gratifications. At the end of October when the time for ploughing the land was long over, he allowed them to cultivate half of the land allotted to them, and for this permission he had received from Soyam Chinnu Rs. 20, from Korveta Lingu Rs. 20, and from Korveta Jangu Rs. 40; but to none of them did he give receipts. From the other men he demands similar sums, but they have as yet been unable to pay. Last year he collected under the same pretext Rs. 60 and the year before Rs. 50 from individual villagers.

The Gonds of Savati complained that the *chaukidar* can do as he likes, as no other Forest officer ever comes to their villages, and the *patel*, Soyam Chinnu, told of an incident, which is perhaps worth quoting, since it demonstrates the difficulties many Gonds experience owing to a certain lack of co-operation between Revenue and Forest authorities.

Seven years ago the Forest Authorities decided to evacuate Savati and expelled all the inhabitants, including Soyam Chinnu, who had a *patta* for 100 acres. Forest *chaukidars* demolished and burnt the houses and the Gonds went to live in the neighbouring village of Pulera where they camped for three months under tamarind trees. They then made several applications and even paid for a telegram to Hyderabad; at last they received permission from the Taluqdar to return to Savati but had to rebuild their houses.

Levies by Forest Subordinates.

We thus see that the aboriginal when offending consciously, or—as occurs much more frequently—unconsciously, against forest regulations, is subject to heavy fines, and I have been to villages

where the aggregate forest fines of the last year have exceeded the amount of revenue paid. But even as long as the Gond and Kolam remains well within the limits of the law, he is subject to numerous extortions by forest subordinates.

An annual *mamul* of Re. 1 per house for the *chaukidar* is the ordinary usage, but with this cash payment few *chaukidars* are satisfied and the majority also demand contributions in kind from aboriginal villagers. It goes without saying that every *chaukidar*, *saredar* and Ranger expect to receive free supplies during their stay in any aboriginal village, and as long as they don't stay too long, and their appetite for fowls is not immoderate, there is little resentment over this custom. The extortion of food stuffs far beyond the consumptive powers of any one person or family is on the other hand felt to be a definite hardship.

A few examples taken at random from villages in the three taluqs may demonstrate the volume of these levies by *chaukidars;*

1. In Dabba (42) a village of Utnur Taluq, but Adilabad Range, the *chaukidar* collected this year Re. 1 *mamul* per house, Rs. 4 (instead of Rs. 2/2) per plough, 1 *goni* of *jawari*, 48 seers of oil seed, 48 seers of *dal*, 80 seers of rice, 32 seers of green *dal*, 3 seers of chillies, 4½ seers of *san* hemp for ropes; moreover, the villagers have to bring 2 chickens monthly to his *chauki* in Chorgaon. When the Gonds, who knew that the *dumpa patti* is only Rs. 2/2, asked the *chaukidar* for a receipt the *chaukidar* told them; "If you ask for a receipt, I will take Rs. 10 more from you and will not allow you to put a foot into the forest."

2. In Punagudem (31) in Adilabad Range, a village of 9 Gond houses, the *chaukidar* collected: Rs. 20 *mamul*, Rs 50 *dumpa patti* for eight ploughs, 48 seers of *jawari*, 32 seers of rice, 2 maunds of cotton, 4½ seers ghee, 6 seers chillies, 6 seers *san* hemp, 3 seers tobacco and 12 chickens.

3. In Markagondi (46) of Rajura Taluq, a village of 10 Gond houses, the *chaukidar* collected: Rs. 3 per plough, 72 seers of *jawari*, 48 seers oil seed, 40 seers *chironji*, 4 fowls; he demanded Rs. 40 *mamul*, but the villagers could give him only Rs. 25 and promised the rest for later. (The total revenue of Markagondi, which lies on hilly stony ground, is Rs. 50). Two men have repaired, not completely rebuilt, their houses,

and the *chaukidar* demands now from each Rs. 25; he threatens that unless they pay, the same will happen to them as happened to the Gonds of Babijheri.

4. In Devaigura (89) of Asifabad Taluq, a village of Gonds, Kolams and Naikpods, the *chaukidar* collected this year a round sum of Rs. 100 for the 30 ploughs, but gave receipts only for 13 ploughs at Rs. 2/2; moreover, he took 120 seers of *jawari*. The Kolams complain that he does not allow them to take bamboos for basket making, nor posts and bamboos for field platforms. Thus they have to watch their fields standing on the ground and cannot properly scare away the birds.

5. Yellapur (32) in Rajura Taluq was deserted a few years ago and re-occupied in 1939. The new settlers paid Rs. 100 to the *saredar* for the materials to build 16 houses but got no receipts. Last year the *chaukidar* collected Rs. 5 per plough, and Rs. 20 for jungle felled, altogether Rs. 100; the total revenue of the village in the same year was Rs. 54. This year he demands from the *patel*, Mesram Dongur, alone Rs. 50: namely Rs. 10 for 3 ploughs, Rs. 30 for the materials for three cattle sheds, and Rs. 10 for the timber on a piece of cleared *kharijkhata* land.

6. Pandera Dobi of Kusombi (34) in Rajura Taluq, a village of 8 Gond houses and 1 Kolam house: "Five years ago the forest *Nazim Sahib* came to Rajura and we applied for permission to cut 80 acres of jungle at Kusombi. Soon afterwards the *Maddalyar Sahib* came to the village, showed us the land which we may clear and collected Rs. 200 for the value of the timber; for this gave he us a receipt. The Ranger asked at the same time for a present of Rs. 50 and this we paid, but it was not of much use, for he soon got transferred. We cleared the land and cultivated it for one year paying Rs. 40 revenue. But three years ago the *chaukidar* came and started planting teak on two survey numbers, each about 20 acres, where we had already sown *jawari*. We protested and the *chaukidar* said he would not plant any more if we gave him Rs. 50; but we had only Rs. 35 and these we gave him. We have altogether 10 ploughs, and for each plough he collects annually Rs. 4/10, and gives no receipt; moreover, he takes 8 seers of *jawari* and 1 basket of chillies per plough; and two or three chickens every time he comes to the village; now he threatens to plant more teak on our fields unless we pay him the remaining Rs. 25.

Exactions of this kind by forest subordinates are by no means confined to remote villages but occur equally in the immediate

vicinity of divisional forest headquarters, and where plantation works have been begun the Gonds complain that they have to do forced unpaid labour.

Gonds of the villages Pataguda (62), Ardavai (76), Kopagudem (62), Lakshimpur (62), and Velingi (62), (some 5 miles N. E. of Asifabad), who came to Marlavai in October 1942, complained that the *chaukidar* of Khamana (62) collects besides the plough tax an annual *mœmut* of Rs. 4. per plough (there are said to be altogether 400 ploughs in his beat) and moreover 8 seers of *jowari*, 1½ seers chillies, and 1½ seers cotton per plough, and at sowing time he asks an additional seer of whatever seed is sown from each plough; for the permission to build a house he asks Rs. 15 to Rs. 60; and when he catches a Gond with an axe in the Reserved Forest he demands a fine of Rs. 2 and one fowl, and in case of non-payment, confiscates the axe. The Gonds of Kopagudem, Lakshimpur and Velingi, which are revenue villages, have for the last three years been forced to work ten days in every year in teak plantations and to bring with them their own ploughs and bullocks; they say that they have never yet received any payment for the work, but were forcibly recruited by the *chaukidar*.

The Background of the Babijheri Incident.

In view of all these exactions by forest subordinates the bitterness with which all Gonds, Kolams and Naikpods regard the forest administration is hardly surprising. But before discussing the events at Babijheri in 1940, which, considering the general peacefulness of Gonds and the absence to-day of a martial organization, must be considered in a light different from an affray with a head-hunting frontier tribe, I should like to quote two more recent incidents which illustrate the general atmosphere responsible for the outburst of Babijheri.

1. The scene is Deopur (58), a village in Asifabad Taluq at the end of the Pedda Vagu valley. The whole village belongs to a Brahmin *vakil* of Asifabad and comprises 40 Gond and 10 Kolam households. The *vakil's patta* covers more land than is actually under cultivation and the forest line lies far from the village. Consequently there was the understanding between landlord and tenants that both the Gonds and the *podu*-cutting Kolams could cultivate any part of the *patta* land they liked, as long as they paid him the fixed rent per plough and hoe. This year the Gond *patel* Mesram Paiku with some other Gonds cut a

piece of jungle which they say consisted mainly of dried bamboo on *vakil's patta* land in order to enlarge their fields. On June 30th the *chaukidar* came to the village; when he saw the felled jungle he told the Gonds that they would have to pay a fine of Rs. 2000 (*sic*), but gradually reduced his demand to Rs. 425. On July 3rd the Deopur Gonds paid him Rs. 200 in cash without getting a receipt and he announced that within eight days he would come again to take Paiku to jail unless the remaining Rs. 225 were forthcoming. Two months previously he had collected Rs. 80 *mamul* and on the occasion of these two visits he collected from the Gonds and Kolams of Deopur the following articles: 2 *gonis* 32 seers of *jawari*, 10 maunds of cotton, 3 maunds of chillies, 8 seers of *chironji*, 8 seers of oil seed, 1 wooden cot, 17 baskets, and 20 chickens—in addition to 5 consumed in the village.

On July 4th Mesram Paiku and about 25 Gonds and Kolams came to Marlavai and asked my advice; they said they could not pay the rest of the fine and they were terrified of what would happen to them when the *chaukidar* returned and they had not got the Rs. 225; all the more as their *chaukidar* was the same man who had been the *chaukidar* of Babijheri at the time of the affray. I advised them to go at once to Asifabad to see the Forest Ranger and tell him of their difficulties. Consequently they went to Asifabad, but did not find the Ranger in: so they returned and when soon afterwards they heard that the Taluqdar was in Marlavai they came again and told him their story.

On July 24th, Mesram Paiku and other Gonds came once more to Marlavai in great excitement and told me that 8 days previously the Muslim police *patel* and the *jawan* of the *chaukidar* had come to their village and that the latter threatened Paiku in his own house and in front of the police *patel* and the assembled villagers, that unless he came at once to the *chaukidar*, the police would come and shoot him and that in any case he would be put into jail. Paiku declared that he had brought his case before the Taluqdar and would gladly go to the Ranger, but refused to go to the *chaukidar's* house. During the next seven days the *chaukidar* sent two more messengers, both threatening that police constables would take him to jail unless he came at once to his (the *chaukidar's*) house.

Paiku was genuinely frightened. "This *chaukidar* has already caused Bhimu's death", he said, "now all our lives are in danger and we are shaking with fear like leaves." I had great difficulty in persuading him to try once more to see the Ranger. "If anyone sees me in Asifabad I may be put into jail at once; there nothing is asked and no order is necessary to put us Gonds in jail." At last, however, the men promised to go to Asifabad and talk things over with the Ranger.

On August 7th Paiku and most of the Deopur Gonds and Kolams came once more to Marlavai. They said that they had been to the Ranger in Asifabad, but that he had only said when they told him of their difficulties, that, as it was their *chaukidar*, they must find a way to get on with him and that the provisions the latter had taken were only the usual *mamul;* when they told him about the Rs. 200 he did not say whether they would get these back. Without seeing either the *chaukidar* or *saredar* the Gonds returned to Deopur, but the very next day the *chaukidar* and *saredar* arrived in Kerimeri (58), the next village to Deopur, and the day after the *chaukidar* and *saredar*, together with the Kerimeri *pattadar*, a native of the U. P. They looked at the cut jungle, and then told the Gonds that if they made things up with the *chaukidar* and withdrew the complaint made to the Taluqdar the whole matter would be hushed up and the *chaukidar* would even return Rs. 20 of the Rs. 200 which they had already paid and not insist on any further payment; otherwise a report would be made about the cutting of the jungle and they would have to go to jail. The *saredar* then produced an agreement already written out and asked the Gonds to put their thumb marks to it. But the Gonds refused, saying that they were well within their rights in felling the trees on their landlord's *patta* land, that if there was any question of payment for the timber, it was for their landlord to pay, and that they had reported the matter to the Taluqdar and would wait for his decision.

In great anger the *saredar*, the *chaukidar* and Kerimeri *pattadar* departed and when they returned to Kerimeri they wrote a report according to which the Gonds were said to have assaulted them in the jungle and treatened to beat them. Then the *pattadar* compelled one of his Gond servants, Wika Mukeru, who had accompanied him, to put his thumb-mark to this report and promised him Rs. 20 if in any future interrogation he would uphold the story of the assault. Mukeru complied in so far as he put his thumb-mark on the document, but as soon as the police had gone, he informed the Deopur Gonds of the charge made against them by the forest officials. The whole proceedings in Deopur at the time of the officials' visit had been witnessed by two men of Rasimetta, the *patel* Wika Jeitur, and Kumra Manku, and both declare that the Deopur people behaved in a perfectly orderly fashion and that there was no fight whatsoever. The *patel* Wika Jeitur is a relation of the Kerimeri *pattadar's* servant Wika Mukeru, and reproached him severely for putting his thumb impression to the allegations of the *saredar*, *chaukidar* and *pattadar;* Mukeru declared that he acted under duress and would deny the allegation if he should ever be called upon as witness.

Probably owing to the intervention of the Taluqdar, the accusation of the *saredar* and *chaukidar* against the Deopur Gonds was dropped; but the *chokidar* never returned the Rs. 200 which he had already collected.

It may also be useful to quote another incident which may throw some light on the attitude of suspicion and fear which colours all the aboriginals' relations with the police; and it seems probable that it was this suspicion and fear which prevented the Gonds of Babijheri from giving themselves up to the police when called upon to surrender were and thus largely responsible for the loss of twelve lives.

2. The following incident took place at Lendiguda, 2½ miles northeast of Marlavai. Lendiguda is a Kolam village of 10 houses and its inhabitants are some of the few Kolams who have taken to independent plough cultivation and succeeded in their enterprise. They are considerably poorer than the average Gonds, but the *patel*, chiefly owing to his practice as a magician and healer, is comparatively prosperous.

At the end of September 1942, the Excise Sub-inspector of Utnur accompanied by two excise peons and three servants went to Lendiguda and discovered *ganja* in a field of the Kolam *patel* Geram Mutta. (Since the closing of out-distilleries the use of hemp-drugs seems to have largely replaced the drinking of liquor among the aboriginals.) The Excise Sub-inspector confiscated the *ganja*, and made a *panchanama* and two *begari* men who had come with him from Marlavai were asked witness the discovery of *ganja* by giving their thumb-impressions. At that time the Kolam *patel*, Geram Mutta, was away in a distant village attending a *panchayat*, but other Kolams say that the Sub-inspector told the villagers that they should send for Mutta, and that unless the latter paid him Rs. 200 he would make a report and all the villagers would have to go to jail; later however he agreed to accept Rs. 100. The next day two men went to fetch Mutta, and the Excise Sub-inspector, leaving the *ganja* in the *chauri* guarded by a peon and a servant went to Daboli, saying he would come back after Mutta's return and collect the money. Each of the two peons demanded Rs. 5 and each of the three servants Rs. 2 to keep quiet about the matter.

What exactly followed the Sub-inspector's departure is doubtful: according to the excise peon eight Kolam men forced an entrance into the *chauri* and, threatening to beat him and his servant, carried off the *ganja*; whereupon the peon and his servant ran to Daboli to report the assault to the Sub-inspector.

The Kolams, however, tell a different story: they say that soon after the Sub-inspector had left, the peon pressed his demand for Rs. 5 for himself and Rs. 2 for his servant, saying that otherwise, however much Mutta gave to the Sub-inspector, he would expose them and they would have to go to jail. But the Kolams refused to give anything until Mutta's arrival. This infuriated the peon and when he demanded rice and a chicken for his dinner and they only brought him some rice and a small fowl, he threw both in their faces, and made off for Daboli. Three Kolams then took the *ganja* from the *chauri* and threw it away in the forest.—Against the accusation of the assault the Kolams say that at that time there were not eight men in the village for Lendiguda consists of only ten households and two men had gone to fetch Mutta, two had gone as *begari* men with the Sub-inspector to Daboli, and two had gone to Challbari in Asifabad Taluq to make *puja* at a Bhimana shrine.

However this may be, it is now generally agreed that the Sub-inspector did not return from Daboli to Lendiguda, but went straight to Utnur, and the Kolams heard nothing more about the matter for three weeks.

But on Sunday October 18th, the Police Sub-inspector of Utnur with two peons come to Lendiguda. Mutta was again not in the village, but some other men ploughing the fields ran away when they saw the party approaching. Only Tekam Gangu remained in the village and he was at once hand-cuffed and tied up in the *chauri*. In the late afternoon Mutta returned to the village and was at once tied up in the *chauri*; with him were three Pardhans and these were detained by the police and made to work to bring water, wood etc. Later in the evening Mutta's son, Boju, a boy of hardly more than 14, came home with the cattle and he too was tied to a post in the *chauri*. Many of the women and children fled the village when it was occupied by the police and excise officials, but Mutta's womenfolk remained and they too were shut in the *chauri* and Mutta's eldest wife was beaten by the head-constable with a stick.

Mutta's account of the subsequent events is as follows; "When I was tied up in the *chauri* the Excise Sub-inspector said that if I gave him Rs. 100 he would set me free, but I declared that I had not so much cash in the village. Then he asked me to show him the missing *ganja*. I answered that I did not know exactly where it was, for I was not in the village when it was thrown away. Then he asked Boju to produce the *ganja*, and Boju said that he had seen some *ganja* in the forest when grazing the cattle, and would show him the place. So they tied a rope round Boju's waist and led him away like a dog.

After a short while all returned with the *ganja* to which Boju had led them, But they tied Boju again to a post and then they started beating both of us as well as Tekam Gangu. I was tied upright to a post with my hands behind me and the Police Sub-inspector ordered that I should be beaten till I revealed the whereabouts of the rest of the *ganja*. Tben the Excise Sub-inspector and his peon beat me with switches on the thighs, the buttocks and the back and over the head. This lasted the whole night. When the cocks crowed they tied me with my wrists to a rafter of the roof and beat me while I hung there. At last I lost conciousness. When I came to my senses again, it was light and I asked for some water. They gave me a drink and I said: "If I have to die, shoot me with a gun, but don't beat me to death." But they tied me again to the post. Then the Sub-inspector started to torture Boju in various ways; he put a stone on the floor, put the boys hand on it and then placed the leg of a cot on the hand, the peon then jumped up and down on the cot; all this I could not see very well for I was tied with my back to Boju's corner of the *chauri*, and I have not been able to talk to Boju since, for he is now in jail;" (Mutta's wife who peeped though the thicks while all this was going on said that a jagged stone was placed in the palm of the boys hand and that the Sub-inspector then trod on the stone.) "But what was the use of all this, for neither Boju nor I knew where the rest of the *ganja* was. Then they began beating me again; during the whole day and the following night I was beaten off and on and so were Boju and Gangu but by that time I was already half out of my senses, and cannot remember anything very distinctly."

When I saw Mutta at mid-day on Tuesday, October 20th, he was still completely dazed and bore the marks of heavy beating, he had an open Y-shaped wound running from the ear to the collar bone, his thighs and buttocks showed stripes of raw flesh, and his whole body was so swollen and bruised that he could hardly move. His half-grown son Boju was in a similar condition and the palms of his hands were inflamed and swollen as a result of the torture with stone and cot Whereas Mutta and Boju were beaten mainly by the Excise Sub inspector and peon, Tekam Gangu and another Kolam who came in and gave himself up on Monday morning were beaten by the Police Sub-inspector and constables.

On Wednesday 21st, Mutta was released on bail given by the Gond *patel* of Marlavai, but he says that before he was actually freed he had to pay Rs. 60 to the Excise Sub-inspector. Mutta's young son Boju however, and four other Kolams, who in the meantime had returned to the village, were taken to Both. Later the head-constable returned to Lendiguda to arrest two more of the Kolams.

When Mutta was tied up in the *chauri*, four Kathis (black-smiths) of Daboli, the brothers Atram Pandu, Gangaru and Bhimu, and Atram Dau passed by Lendiguda, and ignorant of the presence of the police went to Mutta's house for a chat and a smoke. They were immediately arrested and Atram Pandu, who was carrying a gun was tied to a house.post and severely beaten by the Police Sub-inspector. The others were also beaten on the buttocks and back. The same evening the Police Sub-inspector with two constables went to Daboli and arrested the wives of two of the Kathis and brought them to Lendiguda; the Kathis were accused of having come to Lendiguda to attack the police and free Mutta, but they answered that they carried a gun because the country was infested with tigers. They say that the Sub-inspector then demanded Rs. 200, saying that unless they paid, he would take them to the court at Both. When they declared themselves unable to pay such a sum, he reduced his demand to Rs. 100 and then to Rs. 80; they offered Rs. 40, but at last agreement was reached on Rs. 60. On Tuesday morning the Kathis Atram Bhimu and Gangaru were released and allowed to go to Daboli to fetch the money. They borrowed it from the Gond *patel*, and returned with the latter's son, Mesram Lachu, to Lendiguda. When they arrived the Sub-inspector told them to hand the money over to the head-constable, and they paid to the latter Rs. 60. At that all the Kathis were released.

Five Kolams, including Mutta's 14 years old son, are now awaiting trial in the jail at Asifabad; the charge against them is dacoity (*dakú*), for according to the police, by removing the confiscated *ganja* from the *chauri*, they have appropriated Government property and according to the excise peon's statement, they did this under the threat of force. Mutta is in Lendiguda but awaits trial on the charge of growing *ganja*, and a police constable remains in the village in order to arrest the other villagers when they return to their houses,—in the meanwhile there is no one to carry on the agricultural work and the harvest is already ruined.[1]

It is now possible to understand how the long friction between the Forest and Police subordinates on the one side and the aborigines on the other, and the latters' exasperation could lead to the affray of Babijheri in 1940. Whereas I have not seen the official report on this incident, I have discussed it with numerous Gonds and a few local officials, and the following notes on the developments preceding the clash represent mainly the version of the Gonds.

1. All the accused were subsequently acquitted.

The leader of the Gonds at Babijheri (73) was Kumra Bhimu whose home-village was Sankepalli (90), about 5 miles from Asifabad. The Gond *patel* of Kerimeri (58), Siram Ramu, a generally reliable informant, told me that at the root of the Babijheri trouble lay the resentment felt by all Gonds that any outsiders, whether Brahmin, Muslim, Komati or Rohilla, can get *patta* land, but only Gonds cannot obtain *patta* rights; Kerimeri was a flourishing Gond village of 100 houses before it was acquired by the present *pattadar*—but none of the Gonds got *pattas*, for the whole village was given to a Muslim from the U. P., whose cousin was at the time Tahsildar in Asifabad; now only about 25 Gond houses are left, and the village is peopled by Marars and other castes. Kumra Bhimu too had repeatedly tried to get land somewhere;—he was an intelligent young man who could read and write. From his home-village, where most land had fallen into the hands of non-aboriginals, he went first to live in Surdapur (59), a village of a Muslim *pattadar*, and from there to Kakarghat (36) (near Dewara), where he stayed for 3 years; ultimately he settled in Babijheri and lived there for about 5 years.

Babijheri was until about three years ago a village of 12 Gond houses with about 50 Kolam and Naikpod houses scattered in small hamlets in the hills round the main village. When the lines of the Dhanora State Forest were drawn, Babijheri, like so many villages (cf. p. 33), was not established as an enclave, and the inhabitants, who had no *pattas*, were told that they must evacuate the village. As they had not left by the fixed date, all their houses where burnt by the forest-guards. Many Kolams and Naikpods dispersed and went into Rajura Taluq; but the Gonds and nine households of Kolams got permission to settle in Jhoreghat (73), a site east of Babijheri. It is said that the *girdawar* and *patwari* came and measured out some land. The forest *chaukidar* (the same man, who took recently Rs. 200 from the Deopur Gonds) then came and told the Gonds and Kolams that they could cut as much forest as they liked if they paid him Rs. 500; then the Gonds and Kolams borrowed the money, paid it to the *chaukidar* and cleared further land;—but after a time the *chaukidar* came again and said that the Rs. 500 was only for himself; if the Gonds wanted to stay they would have to

pay Rs. 2,000 for the *saredar* and Ranger; otherwise they would be driven away and their houses burnt as had happened in Babijheri. Then, it is said, Bhimu and four other Gonds went to Hyderabad, and they are believed to have brought from there permission to cultivate 57 acres at Jhoreghat but when they showed the paper to the *chaukidar* the latter still insisted on payment of Rs. 2,000, and again threatened to burn all the houses. It was apparently then that the first serious quarrel ensued between the *chaukidar* and Bhimu.

The sum of Rs. 2,000, fantastic as it may seem, was mentioned to me by several entirely independent informants in widely separated villages;—the *chaukidar* probably hoped that the Gonds would start bargaining as the Deopur Gonds did, and pay a few hundred rupees; but Bhimu was not prepared to do this; he seems to have been a powerful personality with great influence among the Gonds and a moderate amount of education.

He tried therefore once more to approach the higher authorities directly and on the 13th Shehrewar, a Thursday, he sent a petition by registered post to the D. F. O.. with a copy to the Second Taluqdar, in which he applied for permission to be allowed to stay and cultivate in Jhoreghat. But on Friday the Forest Ranger sent, without the knowledge of the D. F. O., a party consisting of the *saredar*, several *chaukidars*, and one Arab with a gun, to enforce the evacuation of Jhoreghat.

As the party approached Jhoreghat they burnt without warning several outlying settlements and it is admitted from the official side that some cattle, tied up in sheds, were trapped and thus perished. When the forest party arrived in Jhoreghat the Gonds, enraged by the firing of the hamlets, opposed them, but without fire-arms; the Arab threatened to shoot Bhimu and when Bhimu raised his hand, as the Gonds say in self-defence, the Arab shot him through the palm of the hand. At that the assembled Gonds fell upon the party, and gave them a good beating, which in two cases necessitated hospital treatment. All the forest subordinates, however, made their escape and walked home.

Up to this point the stories of all Gonds tally even in details, but about the later stages there is some confusion. It seems, however, that Bhimu and the Gonds of Jhoreghat decided to resist evacuation by force and collected several hundred malcontent Gonds to support them. There are some indications that Bhimu claimed magical powers and the faculty of hearing the voices of gods, but in this there is nothing extraordinary, for in almost every Gond village there is a *bhaktal* who is capable of trance-experiences and at certain ceremonies is possessed by "gods" and prophesies under their inspiration. Bhimu was apparently of the same mental disposition, but possessed in addition great intelligence and power of leadership. Hence he was able to voice the latent dissatisfaction and exasperation of the Gonds and to arouse several hundred men to active resistance against the forest subordinates, and this involved them ultimately also with the police. I believe, however, that far too much has been made of his reputation as a religious leader; the idea that he intended to found a "*Gond Raj*" or had any such far-reaching plans seems to me entirely erroneous; his and his co-villagers' aims were always strictly limited, namely their undisturbed cultivation of land in Jhoreghat. The fact that hundreds of other Gonds rallied to his cause, is a symptom of their bitterness against the forest subordinates, and in this way they hoped they might rid themselves of their burdens. The final negotiations between the Taluqdar and the aboriginals had to be carried out by intermediaries, who may themselves have been too excited or confused to deliver the messages of both sides without exaggeration and distortion, and this led to the belief that Bhimu made extravagant demands;—he himself unfortunately refused to come to the Taluqdar's camp, probably for exactly the same reason that Mesram Paiku of Deopur, fearing immediate arrest, could hardly be persuaded to go to the Ranger in Asifabad. But it is significant that even in these negotiations the main demand of Bhimu was freedom from *dumpa patti* and grazing fees and the extortions of forest subordinates; and here he meant presumably not so much the legitimate fee of Rs. 2/2 per plough, but the sums actually collected by the *chaukidars*: *mamul*, cart-loads of grain, dozens of fowls, calves and sometimes plough-bullocks.

While it seems therefore misleading to attribute to the action of the Gonds and Kolams at Babijheri any other motive than their bitterness against the evacuation of the villages and the exactions of forest subordinates, it is more than likely that during the days between the burning of outlying hamlets and the beating of forest-guards, and the final shooting of Bhimu, the Gonds were morally supported by non-aboriginal outsiders who considered a clash between Gonds and the Government authorities in their interest. Whereas the Gonds of Asifabad Taluq maintain silence about this point, I was told by Gonds of Utnur Taluq that during the last days before his death Bhimu was in touch with a Brahmin *vakil* in Asifabad, who encouraged him in his stand Bhimu himself stayed in Jhoreghat, but his messengers went at night to the *vakil's* house where they were promised money and support; the *vakil* told them, however, that "even should they have to die, they must not mention his name." It is further stated that certain merchants of Asifabad promised the aboriginals sufficient grain and other necessaries to see them through their difficulties.

The end of the Babijheri incident is too well known to need description; when Bhimu finally refused to give himself up to the police, the police party advanced into the hills, where he and his followers had gathered, and when Bhimu fired a shot, the police opened fire, killed eleven Gonds on the spot and wounded many more.

Though it would be an exaggeration to say that the Gonds consider Bhimu a martyr and tribal hero, all those who knew him personally speak highly of his intelligence and character and blame the forest officers, and particularly the *chaukidar* involved in the Deopur affair, for his death. This feeling is strengthened by the behaviour of the forest subordinates themselves, who are now in the habit of using Babijheri as their most effective threat whenever a Gond or Kolam fails to satisfy their demands; for in such a case they simply tell him that unless he complies with their wishes or pays a certain sum, his fate will be the same as that of Bhimu.

Minor Demands on the Aboriginals.

There can be no doubt that the exactions of money and provisions by forest subordinates are those which are felt most keenly by Gonds and Kolams, but they are by no means the only demands on their economic resources. *Girdawars, patwaris* and tahsil *chaprasis* consider it their right to be fed by the villagers wherever they camp, and the two former usually levy a moderate *mamul*, but they seldom collect provisions to be carried home. Many Gonds complain on the other hand that police constables make regular foraging tours. During my stay in Marlavai, there were numerous times when policemen visited Marlavai and the neighbouring villages and collected all sorts of provisions without payment; sometimes they had a cart and carried all away with them, and sometimes they sent for chickens, ghee, *chironji* and other food-stuffs to be collected from each village by the *kotwal*. The reason given to the Gonds for these collections was each time different: once it was the "*Moril Sahib*", who had sent for provisions, and once the *Amin Sahib* or perhaps even the *Circle Sahib*. Among the more amusing pretexts was the story that the Sub-inspector of Utnur was preparing his brother's marriage and was therefore in need of great quantities of ghee and *jawari*; in this particular case the two constables even consented to accept cash, should there be no ghee in the village, so that they themselves could buy the ghee required for the festivities. Another time a new Circle Inspector had arrived and wanted to build an annex to his house; so the Gonds of each village had to deliver several cart loads of grass, while the Kolams had to make mats for *purdah* walls.

In villages near police stations the aboriginals are moreover expected to supply the constables regularly with milk and ghee without payment, 'fines' being imposed on those whose deliveries are disappointing.

It seems that Kolams and Naikpods who have as a rule no cash to buy themselves off and are even less capable of any resistance, are often recruited for unpaid labour by police subordinates.

A case from Islampur (99) is typical of the demands with which they have frequently to comply:

> Islampur is a Gond village and at some distance lies a hamlet of Naikpods. None of the Naikpods possess cattle or ploughs, and since *podu* has been stopped they subsist mainly on jungle roots and fruits and to a lesser extent on the wages for occasional agricultural labour. The headman Komati Rajaya complained that the Police *Dafedar* of Udampur (98) makes continuous demands on their labour and their chickens. Moreover he uses the Naikpods again and again to collect timber and other forest produce for him without payment. Quite recently he has ordered from them teak wood for eight cots; they have had to fell the trees, then cut them into suitable shapes as required by the carpenter, and carry these to Udampur. They say that if they cut for themselves even the smallest three they are fined and beaten by the *chaukidar*, but that they have to fell teak for the policemen at Udampur without getting any reward.

The Arabs who guard the Tahsil treasury go seldom far afield, but try to satisfy their needs by taking their toll from those aboriginals who can be bullied into acquiescence when they bring their produce to the weekly bazaars.

Another burden on the often strained economy of the Gonds is the extortions of wandering bands of so-called beggars, who visit the country during the dry season. They arrive in villages, usually armed to the teeth, and demand from the *patel* provisions and cash. If he refuses, they camp in the village, extort grain and catch chickens or even goats to feast on, without paying much attention to the timid protests of the villagers. To rid themselves of the unwelcome guests the villagers usually collect some money and grain and the band moves on with the booty to the next village. I have even heard of cases when the 'beggars' requisitioned carts to transport their swollen stores. Such bands are not to be confused with the intinerant entertainers who tour the District during the hot weather and who are modest in their demands and on the whole rather welcome.

When I camped in Pangri (72) last January, news came from a neighbouring Kolam village that a crowd of beggars had been there

for three days and had eaten the village clear of chickens, all the time demanding money, which the villagers did not posess. The next day the band appeared in Pangri and demanded from the *patel* Rs. 25 in cash as well as provisions; they were most dangerous-looking fellows with colourful clothes, and each carried a dagger or a long sword. When they saw me they forgot all about their money demands and declared that they were poor *faqirs* and were begging for food. But several of them turned out to be residents of Asifabad, who outside the 'touring season' probably follow quite respectable vocations.

> About one month previously a band of sixty well armed men, with ponies and guns, had been through the country. In Kerimeri (58) they collected on their arrival two goats and 48 seers of *jawari*, and demanded Rs. 2 from each houses, threatening to burn the whole village if their demands were not satisfied. The Muslim *pattadar*, who was away at the time of their arrival, found them encamped on the outskirts of the village, preparing the goats and *jawari* for a meal and he managed to get rid of them without allowing them to take anything more from the villagers; but the Gonds of other villages were less fortunate, and he says that the band carried on their pack-ponies large quantities of food stuffs, evidently looted from various villages.

The Gonds say that the police do not take any action against these bands, and in Pangri I was told of a group of 30 or 40 "*sadhus*" who had toured Utnur Taluq some months before; wherever they went they collected money, and it is said that they stayed some days in Utnur itself under the very eye of the police.

The Relations between Aboriginals and Police.

With this we come to one of the main grievances of all those aboriginals who have dealings with outsiders: the great difficulty of obtaining protection for their interests and property. The aboriginals believe, rightly or wrongly, that the police, and to a lesser degree the revenue authorities, will never take action against affluent landlords or other non-aboriginals who encroach on their land and property. Several incidents quoted above tend to show that this

belief is not entirely unfounded, and the following cases, given in the versions as seen and told by Gonds, illustrate their disadvantage in any dispute with non-aboriginals:

1. Torosam Bhimu a Gond, now living in Lakshetipet (68), near Utnur, used to live in Tandra (68). Seven years ago Gulam Qadar, a resident of Utnur, suggested that Bhimu should come and cultivate his land in Nagapur (69), a village close to Utnur. Bhimu agreed and brought all his cattle, altogether 20 animals, to Nagapur and built a house there. Then he cultivated Gulam Qadar's fields for six years, sometimes using his own and sometimes Gulam Qadar's bullocks, and they shared the crop in equal parts. During the period Bhimu borrowed neither cash nor grain from Gulam Qadar, for he had his own *sahukar* in Tandra. Two years ago, however, he quarrelled with Gulam Qadar and that year Gulam Qadar appropriated the entire crop, refusing to give Bhimu his share and moreover took possession of all Bhimu's cattle, i.e. 4 bullocks and 16 cows. Bhimu says that he owes Gulam Qadar no money and that ever since he has tried in vain to get back his cattle. One Sub-Inspector of Police told Bhimu that he could take back the cattle, but just then he was transferred and the Sub-Inspector who came after him did not act on his petitions; the present Sub-Inspector lives in Gulam Qadar's house and so, Bhimu says, there is no hope that he will take up the complaint.

2. Geram Karu of Javra (21) in Rajura Taluq, told me that his mother Geram Bairu Bai, has a *pattu*, and 11 years ago she hired out half of the land to a *sahukar*, Malekar Kesoba, in payment of a debt for a period of ten years. But now the *sahukar* refuses to return it, and when Karu tried to cultivate the whole land, complained to the police. At this the Sub-Inspector of Police sent for Karu and gave him a good beating; backed up by the police the *sahukar* now threatens Karu that unless he keeps quiet, he will take over the remaining half of Bairu Bai's land.

3. Gulam Qadar, a resident of Utnur, had a Gond servant, Torcsam Gangu, who lived in Nagapur (69) and owned one bullock, one cow and two calves. One and a half years ago one of Gulam Qadar's bullocks and Gangu's bullock were stolen; first Gulam Qadar accused Gangu of having stolen his bullock, but the police found the real thieves and the matter went to the Court at Both There Gulam Qadar declared that both bullocks belonged to him, and the Magistrate believed him; Gangu did not understand what was happening at the Court, but when they came back to Nagapur Gulam Qadar took also

Gangu's cow and calves, saying that the Court had given them to him; when Gangu remonstrated Gulam Qadar beat him. "If a man like Gulam Qadar beats us or takes our cattle", Gangu told me, "there is no use in going to the police, for they will do nothing for us Gonds."

4. Tekam Bhima, a Kolam, lived in Shampur (54) and had a very good bull. Two years ago, Khairat Ali, a Muslim of Utnur, saw this bull and consequently went to the Police Sub-Inspector and told him that he had hired out that bull to Bhima, and that the latter now refused to return it. He convinced the Sub-Inspector by pointing out that no Kolam would own such a fine bull, and the Sub-Inspector allowed Khairat Ali to take away the bull from Bhima. This case is famous among the Gonds of the neighbourhood and Khairat Ali is notorious for having played the same trick on other aboriginals:

Kanaka Manku, a Pardhan of Pulera (71), for instance, says that when he lived in Marlavai some 5 years ago he possessed five buffaloes. One day, while he was not in the village, Khairat Ali came and drove them off and when called before the police claimed them as his. His subsequently sold them, and Manku never got them back; all the Gonds of the vicinity knew Manku's buffaloes and confirm his story in every detail. The Police *Patel* of Marlavai, Atram Lachu Gond, tells me that he did his best to recover the baffaloes for Manku, but without success it is believed that Khairat Ali gave the Police Sub-Inspector part of the money realized.

5. Mathuras of Both Taluq have for some years come every year to Jainur (70), near Marlavai, to graze their cattle for six months of the year, and this year they brought about 1,500 head of cattle. The Gonds have often told me of the damage done by these cattle, which the owners allow to stray into their fields. This year I saw myself how the Mathuras' cattle completely destroyed the crop of one big rice-field and damaged several *jawari* fields; the Gonds complained repeatedly to the police, but although the Sub-Inspector passed through both Marlavai and Jainur in October, he took no action.

Many aboriginals hold that whereas the police authorities afford them little protection against exactions and encroachments or outsiders, they are always ready to enforce a non-aboriginal's claim against a Gond or Kolam, or to punish aboriginals for alleged offences. A recent incident may exemplify this;

Early in October 1942 the Maratha *patel* of Ponna (52) reported to the police that among the Gonds of Aligudem (52) there was a witch who was working black magic. At this police constables of the Ichora Police Station (51) went to Aligudem and arrested one man from each Gond

house. They took the arrested men to the Police Station at Ichora and kept them in confinement for four days. Only wher the Gonds agreed to pay the police constables Rs. 50 were they released and allowed to return to their village.

An example of police interference in tribal matters on the instigation of non-aboriginals is afforded by a case that occured some time ago in Khairi (44) and Kerimeri (58), of which I was told by the Muslim *pattadar* and the Kolams of Kerimeri.

"A Kolam girl of Khairi had been promised to a man of Kerimeri, but he was slow in coming to fetch her and so her parents married her to a boy of their own village. Shortly afterwards the first man, together with some of his Kolam friends of Kerimeri and Jheri (59), went to 'capture' the girl in the traditional way and succeeded in taking her to Kerimeri. (According to tribal custom a *panchayat* would then have been held and if the girl decided to stay with her original betrothed, the husband would have been accorded compensation). But Khairi belongs to a Muslim landlord and he reported the case to the police. Consequently a head-constable and a constable came to Kerimeri and investigated this case of 'abduction'. Through the intervention of the Kerimeri landlord an agreement was reached, however, and the abductor paid to the aggrieved husband Rs. 20 and was allowed to retain the girl. But on his way back to Asifabad the head constable passed through Jheri and 'fined' the Kolam Kulandi Bhima, whom he knew to be comparatively prosperous, Rs. 100, for his and the Jheri Kolams' participation in the abduction."

Interference by the police in tribal affairs is not only confined to cases where tribal custom seems to be contrary to the law. The following case demonstrates that entirely harmless activities of aboriginals are sometimes also prohibited by the police authorities, and even used as an excuse for levying fees.

In October Gonds of Chandpalli (20), Chapri (19), Pithgaon (19), Runkum (19), came to Marlavai and complained that for the last three years the police constables of Bela have forbidden them to dance and play drums. (From the beginning of August till after Divali all Gonds dance almost every fine evening and between Dassera and Divali groups of dancers go on visits to neighbouring villages and sing Dandari songs.) Each of these three years the villagers have been fined sums up to Rs. 12 for dancing. A week before Divali they returned to Marlavai and said that they had asked permission to dance this year, but that the police had again refused.

Excise Police.

Liquor distilled from *mahua* flowers (the corollae of *bassia latifolia*) played until recently an enormous rôle in the ceremonial life of Gonds and Kolams. It was used at most religious rites and such social functions as weddings and funerals, and in prayers and songs it figures prominently. Till about 15 or 16 years ago there were out-stills in many Gond villages, and their abolition was felt as a great hardship by the aboriginals. Nowadays liquor is seldom drunk, for liquor shops are only in such centres as Utnur and consequently at great distance from most Gond villages, and the price of about Rs. 1/8 per bottle is above the average aboriginal's means. Sugar-water is therefore substituted for liquor on most ceremonial occasions but the Gonds believe that their gods are ill-content with such temperate feasting :

> "As long as we offered them liquor", I have often heared Gonds say, "the gods gave us harvests twice as good as they are now and illness seldom visited our village. For at the village boundary we kept a flask full of liquor and in times of sickness also over the housedoors. So when the disease deities came they drank their fill and left us in peace. We also tied gourds with liquor to the pole in the centre of the threshing place and when the *bhut* and *shaitan* came they drank the liquor and left us the grain;—now they take the grain away and therefore little is left to us."

But while sugar-water is served to the gods, the Gonds and Kolams themselves have largely taken to hemp drugs which seem to be to-day the most usual substitute for liquor.

The Psychological Condition of the Aboriginals.

We have described the position of the Gonds, Kolams and Naikpods in the three taluqs. It remains to give a few examples of their own reactions to the developments which are steadily reducing their standard of life, and of their attitude towards those whom they consider responsible for their present status. The utterances by which they give vent to their feeling of helplessness need not all be taken literally, but they serve as a thermometer for the general atmosphere and help us to understand such outbursts of discontent as the Babijheri incident.

"A thousand and six Tahsildars and Taluqdars have come and gone" said the men of Busimetta (57), "to all we have told that we need *pattas* and land from which we cannot be driven at one moment's notice; but they don't do anything for us, they send us from one place to the other, but nothing happens. When an officer comes and we want to talk to him, we can't even get near him; when we approach his tent the *chaprasis* drive us away. It is only the *patwari* and the *girdawar* to whom we can speak:—they demand two or three rupees and promise to do something next year, but they do nothing and often we never see their face again. But all the time people come to our village, now to collect eggs, now cucumbers, how *chironji*, now ghee; today it is for the Ranger, to-morrow for the police Amin, the next day for some other Sahib; they take it away but never pay even a single pice.— What is the use of going to the higher officials and complaining about the forest people? They are all friends and brothers and do nothing. It is like talking and singing before a man who is blind and deaf—he can neither see nor hear us;—so it is if we go to the camp of an officer,—we must sit so far that he cannot even hear our voice."

And the men of Bhimrelli (116) who were threatened with expulsion from their village complained: "The Government has a lot of land, but they don't give it to us. However often we may go to Asifabad, it is of no use; no officer ever listens to us, even if we took a stone and hit his head he would not take any notice of us. But rich men like Velma Doras get all the land they want; to-day this village is given to a Brahmin, to-morrow that village to a Muslim, there is land for all of them, only not for us. For they have money and can pay; bnt where shall we find the money for the *patwari*, and the *girdawar* and the *chaprasis* and the clerks,—by the time we get to the Tahsildar we must spend a whole bag of money,—and where shall we take it from? It is not growing on trees." When I suggested they might go to the Forest Ranger or District Forest Officer about their troubles, they retorted: "Why should we go to the *Amin Sahib*? Unless we bring him money he will only beat us, and the *saredar* and the *chaukidar* will also kick us; last time we went to the *Madadgar*, he did not even listen to us."

With similar utterances pages could be filled, and it is always of the inaccessibility and the deaf ears of local officials that the aborigi-nals complain.

The Gonds realize that their position is deteriorating more and more and that their economic possibilities are dwindling, while the demands on their resources are steadily increasing. This feeling was expressed to me by Atram Bhim Rao, a member of the Raja family who resides in Kanchanpalli (85) and tries to continue performing, though in a reduced form, the Raja's functions at such ceremonial occasions as Dassera. He is an intelligent man and comparatively well educated, being literate in Marathi, Telugu and Urdu: "My grandfather was still a rich man with a big house and hundreds of head of cattle ; at the great feasts Gonds and Kolams from the whole Sirpur *patti* assembled and he feasted two and three hundred men at a time. But I am so poor that I can only just provide a goat and some *jawari* ; so only a few people from the nearest villages come to me. I have still seen something of the old times and know what my father told me. But soon all this will be forgotten and the young people of to-day no longer know what it is to be a Gond,—they are just struggling to keep alive. And when an officer comes to Utnur and we try to see him and tell him of our difficulties we are treated as *junglis* and kept far away from him: 'these are after all only Gonds, what do they matter, they say ; they might just as well say 'only dogs'. Whether we teach our sons anything or not makes little difference. Just as no one listens to us, so no one reads what we write; the application of a Gond is only fit to be thrown away. Who will bother to give a jungly Gond a receipt for payments? Last Pus month when a Sahib from Hyderabad came to Utnur hundreds of Gonds went there, but we saw him only from a distance and were kept away even from the Taluqdar's tent."

In the aboriginals' minds there is a deep sense of frustration and hopelessness ; they feel that they are considered as people without rights, that they can never prevail against the wealthier outsiders who are gradually taking possession of their country, and that subordinate officials are not so much intent on enforcing laws

and rules, but on gaining personal profits, and that even in such matters as the demarcation of forest lines or police investigations money determines their actions. Whenever aboriginals want to approach an officer it costs money, and even if they penetrate through the barrier of peons, subordinates and clerks they seldom get a decision, but are told to submit an application to which they never get a reply either positive or negative.

What exasperates them perhaps most is the difficulty of obtaining a clear decision. Even a negative decision to a petition would be preferable to long procrastination; for this implies running expenses for gratifications to subordinates, who play the profitable game of letting the applicant believe again and again that just one more small payment would hasten the longed-for decision.

An example of this procrastination, which I have watched through all its first stages, though not to the end which may be still far off, is the case of Kanaka Moti quoted on page 74. Moti was the last Gond in Tejapur (61) near Asifabad and felt so isolated among all the new-comers that he decided to emigrate. He heard from relations in Marlavai that in the neighbouring village of Burnur (71), which has been abandoned for a few years, there were, besides the 100 acres *patta*-land held by a Mathura, about 300 acres vacant *kharijkhata* land. So he came on a visit to Marlavai and talked to the *patwari*. The *patwari* declared that he saw no reason why Moti should not get some *kharijkhata* land in Burnur, and promised to forward his application and to settle the matter for Rs. 15. So Moti, realizing that he must be on the spot to get the land, moved at the end of March with all his family and cattle to Marlavai. Next he approached the Tahsildar, who gave him good hope that he might get the land and said he would personally visit the place when he next went on tour. In April the Tahsildar came and explained that from his point of view there was no objection against re-occupying Burnur, but he would discuss the matter with the Forest Ranger. Some weeks afterwards the Forest Ranger arrived, said there was in principle no difficulty, but before giving the necessary permission to cut the low jungle growing on the land, he would have to consult the D. F. O. In June the D. F. O. arrived in Marlavai and the

case was put before him ; only then did the Ranger explain that curiously enough no enclosure line was drawn round Burnur ; this, however, he thought must be an omission, for according to the revenue records there were more than 100 acres of *patta*-land in Burnur, for which the revenue was still paid. The D.F.O. declared that in this case only the I.G.F. could make a decision, for if no line demarcated the enclave it was evidently proposed to abolish the whole village ;—anyhow he said he would discuss the matter with the Taluqdar. In July the Taluqdar came and declared that it was quite wrong to include a village with so much *patta*-land in the proposed Reserve, and that it was for the D. F. O. to correct the mistake and give permission for the re-occupation of Burnur ;—he would certainly discuss the matter with the D. F. O. At the end of September came a Forest Working Plan Officer, who brought a map and on this we saw with astonishment that an enclosure line was actually drawn round both the *patta* and *kharijkhata* land of Burnur—he suggested that the demarcation party must have omitted to demarcate the enclosure line, though they entered it on their papers. And he promised to discuss the matter with the D. F. O.....

It is not difficult to imagine the effect of these proceedings on the mind of an illiterate Gond who fails to understand why none of all those important sahibs, whose impending arrival had long been announced and who come with large staffs and huge bundles of files, cannot say yes or no in so simple a matter as the allotment of some *kharijkhata* land.

There are many cases where aboriginals have continued for five more years to submit one application after the other for the allotment of *kharijkhata* land or the granting of a *patta*, for which they were prepared to pay, without getting any final answer and perhaps without even being given a chance to talk personally to any officer above the *girdawar*. While in Utnur, with its predominantly aboriginal population, Gonds can get a direct hearing by the Tahsildar, many Gonds from Rajura told me that it is impossible for them to speak to the Tahsildar, even when he is touring, and that they have to employ a *vakil* if they want an application even considered.

Many Gonds believe therefore that their best chance of success is to get on the better side of *patwaris* and forest *chaukidars*, for particularly in the unsettled regions much can be done with the connivance of these two functionaries, and there are cases of Gonds and Kolams who have lived and cultivated for years within the reserved forest, only because they were prepared to satisfy the *patwari's* and *chaukidar's* by no means moderate demands, and many a Gond prefers paying substantial gratifications and getting what he wants, to hanging about offices and camps of higher officers without getting his case decided for years. He is not altogether wrong in believing that the people who really matter are *girdawar*, *patwari* and *chaukidar*; for they can and often do act without a formal decision by higher authorities and on the other hand often fail to carry out their superiors' decision should it conflict with their own interests or the interests of those who can exert monetary influence.

What is perhaps most noticeable in almost every aboriginal is his scepticism as to the good will and sympathy of higher officers, and though some revenue officers enjoy a certain popularity, because they make few material demands and are personally accessible, there remains the conviction that they will be transferred before they have been able to achieve anything of real benefit to the aboriginals. The *patwaris* and *chaukidars*, on the other hand are more or less permanent, and even the latter usually local men, who remain all their service in one Range, and often for years on the same beat. The aboriginal knows therefore that he cannot escape them, and that complaints to higher officials generally have no other effect than drawing down the wrath of *patwari* or *chaukidar* on his head, and that he will suffer as soon as the sympathetic officer has left the taluq. To the aboriginal it is therefore really the lowest subordinates who represent Government and by whose conduct he judges the attitude and intentions of Government towards the tribesmen.

Conclusions.

No collection of examples taken at random from the numberless cases of dispossession and economic distress and oppression of Gonds, Kolams and Naikpods can truly picture the magnitude of teh

administrative problem created by the present position of the three tribes. A process is already far advanced which unless checked and reversed can have only one result: the reduction of both the free forest-folks and the substantial Gond peasants with their still flourishing and complex culture to landless labourers, economically placed no better than the depressed classes, but unlike them lacking the adaptability, sharpness of wit, thrift and resistance developed during centuries of servitude.

In the case of the Kolams we find to-day only the scattered remnants of a people which forty years ago lived in well defined tribal groups, each with its ancestral territory and religious head. And so much were the Kolams considered the original owners of the land that wherever Gonds lived within the territory of such a group, Kolams functioned as *pujari* in the worship of the local deities. To-day this organization has been broken up, the reservation of forests has forced many Kolams to leave their hills and *podu* fields, and seek employment with those plainspeople from Karimnagar, Nander, Parbhani and the Central Provinces who have largely occupied the lowlands and even pushed into the interior. Thus all the Kolams of the hills now established as the Garlapet State Forest, who till 15 years ago populated the villages of Sonapur, Jolapur, Paurguda, Mahagaon and Bagalvayi (all square 48), were expelled from the forest and live now under extremely precarious conditions in the villages of non-aboriginal landlords. But the majority of the Kolams still remain in the hills and among them hardly one-fourth has taken to plough-cultivation; for instance among 31 Kolam households in hamlets attached to the Gond villages Chorpalli (86), Yellapatar (86), Jamuldhara (100), Pitagudem (86), Netnur (85), Kanchanpalli (85) and Seti Harapnur (85), only 7 possess ploughs, while 24 rely on *podu* cultivation with hoes, which is now virtually illegal.

The same holds largely true for the Naikpods, a fair percentage of whom lead still a jungle life without possessing either cattle or ploughs. But they are fewer in number, and those of Adilabad represent, as it seems, only an outpost of a tribe found distributed over considerable tracts of Karimnagar and Warangal Districts.

Speaking Telugu as their mother-tongue and having associations with plainspeople of longer standing, they seem more able to adopt themselves to the role of farm servants and cultivators on other people's land.

The damage already inflicted on the tribal life and economic status of the Kolams and Naikpods by the expulsion of many groups from their traditional habitat cannot be entirely repaired, but it may well be possible to prevent a further deterioration of their position and alleviate the existing distress by making allowance for their special needs and granting them concessions similar to those enjoyed by shifting cultivators in other parts of Hyderabad, as for instance the Hill Reddis of Warangal District. These concessions, though necessitating a certain adjustment of forest rules, need not run counter to the broader outlines of forest policy and may in the long run even prove beneficial to the Forest Department. For the reservation of large forest-tracts is evidently aimed at their future exploitation, and it seems somewhat doubtful whether the present policy of evacuating the forest folks from these tracts will not lead to labour difficulties when the time comes to exploit the timber and bamboo. Labourers from the plains may well be loath to work for long in such inhospitable and thinly populated hills as, for instance, the southern part of the Tilani State Forest, and when most of the existing villages have been disbanded, and both water sources and rest-sheds are left untended, forest labourers as well as forest officials may find conditions even more difficult. On the other hand, the people in these areas best suited for forest labour are the local Kolams and Naikpods, who, unlike Gonds to-day growing *kharif* and *rabi* crops, raise only one crop a year on their *podu* fields, and that during and directly after the rains; consequently they would have ample leisure during the greater part of the dry season for work as forest labourers. Their incomparable familiarity with the forest should make them far better suited to forest labour than any plainsmen, and since they are used to felling timber on their *podu* fields, and accustomed to the climatic conditions in the hills and particularly the severe chill of a winter months, they would probably have far more stamina than low-caste labourers drafted from the

plains or the Godavari valley. By forcing the forest folks into the open country, the Forest Department would seem not only to deprive itself of a valuable potential labour force, but also to increase the pressure on already limited land available for cultivation. That the substantial Gond peasants should take kindly to forest labour seems improbable, for although Gonds in such places as Janaram in Lakshetipet Taluq do work for the Forest Department, and in the future landless Gonds of the plains might also take to forest work, the present economic system of the independent Gond cultivators provides them with a fairly robust livelihood and the larger part of the year is already fully occupied in the round of agricultural activities. Not so the *podu*-cutting Kolam and Naikpods. Their cultivating season occupies but a few months in the year and their store of grain lasts them only two or three months after the last harvest. If allowed to remain in the hills, they would undoubtedly take to forest labour, and gain thereby a comparatively remunerative livelihood during the off-season, instead of relying for many months on basket-making and root-collecting.

I believe therefore that the retention of the Kolams as a forest tribe will be not only in their own interest, but also in that of the Forest Department, and in view of this I would suggest the following measures:

1. No further compulsory evacuation of Kolams from hill-villages should be undertaken for a period of at least twenty years, when the progress of Kolams in the lowlands and the usefulness of Hill Kolams as forest labourers could be reviewed and the policy reconsidered. Where Kolams live in the hills only on tolerance, i.e. between the old forest lines and those drawn recently, enclaves should be established in order to legalize the occupation of the existing and alternative village sites of each group. The hill-slopes on which Kolams still practise *podu*-cultivation are those of inferior soil and forest growth, and I understand from local Forest Officers that considerable areas now included in the reserves are, owing to shallow soil and steep gradient, practically valueless from the point of view of Forest Conservancy and exploitation. It is just these slopes which the Kolams and Naikpods seem to prefer for their hoe-cultivation and such lands might therefore be set aside for *podu*. In order to avoid soil erosion it would be necessary, however, that not less than [illegible] land should be allotted to each community

permits of the normal cycle of rotation; i.e about ten times the area cultivated in any individual year. *Taungya* cultivation on land with better soil, where exploitation and subsequent teak-plantation is feasible, could also provide a livelihood for many Kolams, but before such an enterprise, which requires close co-operation and disinterested guidance, could succeed, the relations between forest subordinates and aboriginals would have to undergo a radical change.

2. Those Kolams who have already taken to ploughing and cultivate *sitwa-i-jamabandi* lands on 'one year's tenure' should be granted *patta* rights under the special *kaoni* rules irrespective of the duration of their occupancy.

3. Large numbers of Kolams are to-day cultivating the lands belonging to non-cultivating castes; but they are inexperienced cultivators and consequently unable to pay high rents, and even when employed as agricultural labourers are liable to ejection as soon as other labour is forthcoming. Within the framework of the existing laws, it would certainly be difficult to protect these Kolams against displacement by new settlers more desirable as tenants from the landlord's point of view, but attempts could be made to provide them with lands of their own and to help them over the initial difficulties by loans similar to those granted by Government this year to *patta*-holding Gonds.

4. To those Kolams still living in the hills special concessions should be accorded for the collection of minor forest produce and the use of bamboos. Basket-making is an important home-industry of the Kolams, but nowadays they barter baskets only to Gonds in the neighbourhood of their villages and in fear of the forest-guards do not dare to bring baskets to the markets. Since with a very few exceptions little commercial exploitation of bamboos takes place in the areas inhabited by Kolams, free use of bamboos, for both domestic use and the manufacture of baskets, could be granted to Kolams for a stipulated period without necessitating any sacrifice on the part of the of the Forest Department. The encouragement of basket-making would be of permanent advantage to the Kolams; it would provide them with an additional and legal source of income and thus help them over a period of economic change.

The problem of the Gonds is altogether different from that of the *podu* cutting Kolams and Naikpods. At first sight their position seems more hopeful, for the disintegration of their tribal life is not as far advanced and can probably still be arrested. But the dangers

threatening their economic status are greater than it is generally realized; it is only in late years that the full results of the invasion of their ancient habitat by outsiders have become apparent. For at first the acquisition of land by non-cultivating outsiders, which began perhaps fifty or sixty years ago, charged only the legal and not the economic status of the aboriginal cultivators. The new landlords were content to leave the Gonds in their villages and in occupation of their fields, and, unable to replace them at once with tenants more expert in agriculture, they did not demand higher rents than the Gonds were able to pay. But as communications improved and plainsmen streamed in, the land gained in value and rents, and today a Gond cultivating the land of a landlord near Asifabad or Adilabad pays about four to five times more rent than his neighbour holding land or cultivating Government land on 'one year's tenure'. A rent which a Gond finds uneconomical does not necessarily appear so to a Kunbi or Marar, who brings with him far greater experience in agriculture as well as in marketing and the arrangements of his money affairs. It is important to bear in mind that many of the Gonds who are at present forced from their land by the exorbitant demands of *pattadars* and are consequently in search of land in the hills (cf. pp. 13, 14) are those whose villages have been acquired by merchants and *vakils* not recently, but perhaps one generation ago. These villages lie generally close to the centres of administration, but we would be under an illusion if we believed that this development, which practically cleared the vicinity of Asifabad of aboriginals, is not spreading: in the Pedda Vagu valley and to a lessor extent in the Moar valley much of the land already belongs to absentee landlords, and since aboriginal villages have been auctioned to non-aboriginals as lately as the last few months, exactly the same process that has not only dispossessed, but actually eliminated the Gonds from many plains tracts, will repeat itself in the years to come in the hills. For it is inconceivable that a merchant or a *vakil* who buys a village as an investment should for all time be content to allow it to be inhabited by Gonds, if tenants of other castes will guarantee him a higher income and will be altogether more manageable than the aboriginals, who, unaccustomed to the hierarchy of Indian village life, retain much of their traditional independence.

Moreover, every year landless cultivators from over-populated districts in the west and north come into Utnur Taluq (and to a lesser extent into other taluqs of the district) led by the rumour that land is still available, and while some of them bring with them sufficient funds to acquire land in auction, others succeed in obtaining *kharijkhata* land on 'one year's tenure' and still others accept work with landlords of non-cultivating castes; both these classes of immigrants oust aboriginals from lands which they cultivated on 'one year's tenure' or as tenants of non-aboriginals.

Besides the pressure from the side of new settlers, there is also the pressure exerted by the Forest Department: the inclusion of many ancient village sites, of large areas of *kharijkhata* and *parampok* land formerly cultivated under *siwa-i-jamabandi* tenure, and even of a considerable amout of *patta*-land in the Reserved Forest has seriously narrowed the area available for cultivation, and this narrower area they are expected to share with all those Kolams who are forbidden to till the hill-slopes and have now to cultivate on level ground, as well as with immigrants from other areas.

The most important part of any scheme for a stabilization of the Gonds' economy is therefore the threefold necessity:—

A. to secure for the Gonds the continued possession of the land now held by them on *patta* or cultivated under the *siwa-i-jamabandi* tenancy rules, i. e. on one year's tenure;

B. to find land for those Gonds whose villages have been acquired by non-aboriginal landlords and who have had or have now to yield to the pressure of more progressive castes and are therefore rendered landless;

C. to make provision that those Gonds who are still living on the land of non-aboriginal landlords, as, for instance, almost the entire population of the Pedda Vagu valley in Asifabad Taluq, cannot be ousted from their villages or cannot be burdened beyond a certain degree by the raising of rents and miscellaneous fees; or if that is impossible, that sufficient other land is allotted for them and they are given a chance to move within a stipulated period to such tracts as may be set apart for the aboriginals.

These results can only be achieved by the formulation and enforcement of a new policy vis-a-vis the aboriginals; its essential points will have to be:

1. Land alienation laws which prevent the transfer of any land from aboriginals to non-aboriginals and do not allow of any exceptions; for as long as transfers are possible under certain conditions, Banias and *vakils* can always find ways and means to circumvent the law.

At present revenue officers generally sanction agreements between aboriginals and *sahukars* whereby the aboriginal's *patta* land is handed over to the *sahukar* for a limited period in payment of a debt. But it often happens that the *sahukar* refuses to return the land to the *pattadar* after the expiry of the period, and many Gonds in this position complain that *patwaris* then enter the *sahukar's* name on the revenue register in place of the Gond's name and that Tahsildars fail to enforce the aboriginal's claim but refer the *patta* holder to the Civil Courts, where an impecunious aboriginal is evidently at a great disadvantage. No such circumvention of the Land Alienation Act should therefore be countenanced by the Revenue Authorities. As aboriginals for the purpose of the Land Alienation Act should be classified: Gonds, Kolams, Naikpods, Pardhans and Totis; but under no circumstances Lambaras, Mathuras or Wanjaris.

2. *Patta* land is frequently lost to the aboriginals through the inability of minor heirs to get their claims recognized or to continue paying the revenue and the absence of close relations willing to manage the holding until their majority (c. f. p. 76) The simplest way by which such occurrences could be prevented would be to arrange that all *patta* lands of such minors should be held in trust by the revenue authorities until the heir is 25 years of age; it would be necessary to stipulate a fairly high age, for a fatherless Gond boy, before setting up his own household, must often work for some years in his father-in-law's house. Up to that time the land should be treated as *kharijkhata* land and let out on 'one year's tenure' to local aboriginals (if anyone is willing to cultivate it), but when the heir reaches the age of 25 years he should be given the option of taking up his *patta* rights and obligations, and only if he declines should the land be incorporated in the *kharijkhata* reserve set aside for use of aboriginals (cf. below paragraph 4.)

3. At present only a minority of Gonds possess *patta* land, whereas there are many ancient Gond villages where no one or perhaps only one or two men have *pattas* and all the rest cultivate *parumpok* and

kharijkhata land. All this is nevertheless old Gond land and the possession of *patta* is in most cases incidental. As the average Gond is quite unable to acquire *patta* land by paying 16 times the revenue, it might be worth securing such land for the aboriginals by allotting it to the actual cultivator under the special *Loni* rules irrespective of the number of years a particular survey number has been occupied by the present cultivator. Until the enactment of such rules, no allotment of *kharijkhata* or *paramp k* land, last cultivated by aboriginals, to non-aboriginals either as *patta* land or on *siwa-i-jamabandi* tenure should take place in any of the taluqs of Adilabad District.

4. In many Gond villages there is *kharijkhata* land which is of too inferior quality to be permanently cultivated, and is therefore only periodically taken under cultivation. It might be worth while not to allot such land as *patta* land unless the villagers press for it, but to retain it as *kharijkhata* land with the proviso that it cannot be cultivated by anyone but aboriginals, and to create thereby in each village a certain *kharijkhata* reserve.

5. When the new forest lines were drown some three years ago in Utnur Taluq, and earlier in Rajura and Asifabad Taluqs, a considerable acreage of *patta* land and large areas of *kharijkhata* land previously cultivated by Gonds, were included in the reserved forest. Thereby a serious shortage of land has been created, and the only remedy seems to be to move the forest lines sufficiently far from the villages so that all *patta* land and, except in the rare cases where valuable timber may have grown on former *kharijkhata* land, all lands previously cultivated *siwa-i-jamabandi*, should be included in the enclaves. Moreover the forest lines should be drawn so that Gond villages are brought in line with the principles observed in non-aboriginal villages: i. e. provision should be made for the growth of population and for sufficient open forest to meet domestic needs.

The establishment of enclaves of such villages as were deserted at the time of the demarcation of lines owing to epidemics or tiger-scares and were therefore included in the reserved forest, should be reconsidered, if former inhabitants or neighbours short of land wish to reoccupy the land.

6. In order to accomodate the many landless Gonds whose villages have fallen into the hands of outsiders and who have since been forced out by their landlords, various radical measures would be necessary. By throw-

sufficient land could probably be found for landless Gonds, Kolams and Naikpods of Utnur Taluq and perhaps also some of Both and Adilabad Taluqs. But this will offer no solution for the many Gonds who inhabited the lowlands of Asifabad, Rajura and Lakshetipet Taluqs etc, and were dispossessed by the large scale granting of *pattas* to non-aboriginal landlords. I understand, however, that many of these absentee landlords not only hold *pattas* for hundreds of acres, but occupy an even larger area of *para-pok* and *kharijkhata* land on one year's tenure, and that others, with the connivance of *patwaris*, have occupied surreptiously more land than authorized by their *patta* document without paying additional revenue. If both *siwa-i-jamabandi* lands and the lands thus held illegally were withdrawn from the absentee landlords numerous Gonds could be settled on the land under the special *kami* rule. As the withdrawal of *kharijkhata* land from aboriginal cultivators and its subsequent auctioning is a normal occurrence, the ousting from *siwa-i-jamabandi* cultivation of members of non-cultivating castes should meet with no difficulties. Drastic as this last suggestion may appear it could, even if put into force to the limit of feasibility, restore to the Gonds *only a fraction* of the land they have lost within the last fifty years. As such a measure could not be carried out at once, ample provision should in the meantime be made that within circumscribed areas, which are considered as predominantly aboriginal tracts, all granting of *patta* rights to non-aboriginals should cease until such time as the new settlement is completed.

With the recognition of the Gonds' right in the land which the tribe has occupied for centuries and the institution of measures to provide them with sufficient inalienable land for their needs, the foundation for a permanent stabilization of Gond economics would be laid, and there can be no doubt that the tribe's future depends primarily on a satisfactory settlement of the land-question.

There remain nevertheless a number of minor difficulties to which the Gonds are at present subject, and in order to remedy these the following measures, most of which could be applied with equal advantage to Kolams and Naikpods, might be considered:—

7. The majority of aboriginals in the three taluqs live close to forest which at present is not commercially exploited. Yet they are greatly restricted in the use of forest produce and particularly in timber for house-building. The rates charged for building material by forest officials seem to be often unduly high, and the fact that *chaukidars*

can and do collect fees on their own opens the door to various abuses. These abuses could be avoided by introducing an annual 'house-fee', payable by every aboriginal per plough in place of the amounts collected at the time of house-building. The fee could be calculated by dividing the sum actually received by the Forest Department for building material within a taluq during the previous year by the number of ploughs for which *dumpa patti* has been collected; and it is improbable that it would amount to more than as. 8 per plough. At present the aboriginals complain that although they pay an annual fee of Rs. 2/2 per plough, which should cover their requirements for wood and bamboo needed for implements, minor structures, field platforms and fences, they can be charged again at the discretion of the *chaukidar* for practically any wood utilized. If an annual house-fee were to be introduced, there would be no more need for the individual valuation of building material, and the aboriginals would be able to construct houses without the fear of being subsequently pressed for inordinate amounts, sometimes surpassing their total land revenue, as well as for calves or goats as gratifications for *chaukidars*.

8. Grazing fees and plough fees should no longer be collected by the *chaukidars*, but after the counting of the cattle the village-*patels* should be given a time limit in which to bring the amounts to the Forest Ranger's office.

9. Grazing fees, which were introduced only 3 years ago, are at present considered a hardship by the aboriginal, because owing to the proximity of the forest lines they have no choice but to pay them, whereas they see that big landlords, who were able to arrange for the enclosure lines to be drawn at some distance, are not liable to such payments. If the lines were to be shifted from the immediate vicinity of the villages, the individual should be given the choice whether he wants to graze his cattle in the reserve and pay the fees or content himself with the limited grazing in the open forest.

10. Frequent friction occures between Forest Officers and aboriginals over the amounts the latter have to pay for the value of jungle growing on *kharijkhata* or *parampok* land allotted to them by the Revenue Authorities; the valuation, often carried out by the *chaukidar* without reference to the Ranger, is in many cases arbitrary, and it might be more satisfactory if the Revenue Authorities obtained a valuation of the forest growth from the Ranger before allotting the land and then collected the amount from the prospective cultivator when issuing the permission to cultivate, and ultimately credit the sum to the Forest Department. Special provssion in regard to the value of timber will have to be made for the land to be allotted under the special *kuoni* rules.

11. No collection of forest fines by *chaukidars* should be permitted; to-day all Rangers in the three taluqa give *chaukidars* a free hand in collecting fines and seldom consider appeals by aboriginals against such impositions, while sometimes they claim an additional fine on their own, thereby discouraging aboriginals from bringing such cases to their notice.

12. The system by which contracts for grass, *mahua*, *chironji* and bamboo are auctioned and the contractor allowed to collect dues from the aboriginals under the plea that the latter use these commodities, should be discontinued. Contractors should only be allowed to exploit and export the commodities themselves, without taking forced and unpaid labour from aboriginals or collecting from them general fees per house or head of cattle. The prohibition on the collecting and storing of *mahua* flowers by aboriginals should be abolished since these constitute a valuable food-reserve in times of scarcity. Preference should be given to aboriginals in the acquisition of mango and tamarind crops within their village land; a fixed fee per tree at valuation should be stipulated, and only if the villagers decline to take the crop themselves at that rate should the trees be auctioned.

13. While other aboriginals in the Dominions enjoy special privileges in regard to excise rules—the Chenchus being permitted to distill *mahua* liquor free of charge and the Koyas having been granted two free toddy palms per household—no similar concessions have been allowed to the Gonds. It might, however, be worth considering a return to the system of out-distilleries, both to provide the Gonds with liquor for their ceremonies and to counteract the spreading of the use of hemp drugs.

14. The present usage whereby in areas with mixed populations only non aboriginals, and often members of non-cultivating castes who do not reside in the village, are appointed as police and revenue *patels*, is, though perhaps convenient for the Revenue and Police Officers, of definite disadvantage to the aboriginals and should be discontinued. Wherever aboriginals predominate in numbers, the village officers should be chosen from among them, for only then can they represent the interests of the population instead of playing the role of subordinate officials.

15. At present no aboriginals are employed as *chaprasis*, or as subordinates in any Government Department; there are no Gond *chaprasis*, forest-guards, or police constables. In largely aboriginal areas this

exclusion of aboriginals from Government service seems to be neither necessary nor advantageous, and many legitimate grievances of Gonds and Kolams would to a large extent disappear automatically if the subordinates who have to spend the greater part of the year in their villages were themselves aboriginals. As a first step I would suggest appointing literate Gonds of *Raja* and *Mokashi* families as *patwaris* in the *patwari* circles where they reside and still function as tribal headmen. Sufficient men both intelligent and intimately familiar with local conditions, and literate in Marathi (in which language all *patwari* records are now kept) and often also in Urdu, would be available to serve as *patwaris* in all circles with an overwhelming aboriginal population. Simultaneously so many Gonds and Pardhans should be appointed as tahsil *chaprasis* and as forest peons, and as soon as possible as forest *chaukidars*, that at least one aboriginal is employed in each Tahsil office and Ranger's office.

16. It might be seriously considered whether the authority of village *panchayats* and the existing jurisdiction in tribal matters of *Rajas* and *Mokashis* could not be granted some sort of official recognition. Though most disputes between aboriginals are still dealt with by the tribal *panchayats*, it does sometimes occur that a more sophisticated or well-to-do Gond or Pardhan, if dissatisfied with a *panchayat* decision, brings his case before the police and induces the Sub-inspector to enforce a claim which runs counter to tribal custom. This applies particularly to marriage and inheritance cases, and it might be advisable to restrict police interference in matters of tribal custom, or make it subject to an appeal not by one of disputing parties, but the supreme *panchayat*, consisting in Utnur for instance of the Gond raja and the Gond *patels* of the villages concerned. The cases subject to tribal jurisdiction would of course have to be clearly defined.

17. An important desideratum for Gonds is primary education. At present only those near such centres as Utnur can send their children to Government schools, but so keenly is the need felt for a knowledge of reading and writing, that many Gond *patels*, *mokashis* and *rajas* have employed private tutors to teach their sons, nephews and sons-in-law when these boys reach the age of 17 or 18, and surprisingly satisfactory has proved this adult education. Consequently there are in many villages one or two Gonds or Pardhans literate in Marathi, some of whom are trying in turn to impart this knowledge to others.

The clamour for Goveranment assistance is general, and a first step, involving no very great expense, might be to appoint several touring

teachers, each with a definite cycle of villages, who should give further instruction to those already able to read and write, distribute books for home study, and help with advice and temporary assistance in the education of the younger boys. No more than a modest proficiency in reading and writing and the simplest reckoning can be achieved in this way, but until such a time as funds become available for the establishment of village schools even this would be a boon to the Gonds. Later it might be attempted to recruit and train teachers from among those Gonds who are already literate and would only need a comparatively short training to become proficient in writing Gondi and Marathi.

Whereas the appointment of travelling teachers would be only an emergency measure, and the instruction imparted by them to adults would have to be based on the existing knowledge of reading and writing, a definite policy could be adopted as funds became available for regular primary education in village-schools. In these Gondi will have to be the medium of instruction and the teachers will have to be Gonds. For the transcription of Gondi the Nagri script will be most advantageous for it is comparatively easy and will be useful in teaching Marathi, the second language of the Gond schools. In the higher standards Urdu should also be taught, for even a modest knowledge of Urdu, in which all official documents and receipts are written, is far more useful to the aboriginal than Marathi. The knowledge of Urdu would also make the aboriginals eligible for appointments as subordinates in all Government departments.

18. Medical relief is still far from satisfactory and touring dispensaries, whose main equipment should consist of quinine, anti-yaws serum, and external remedies for skin troubles, would fulfil the double task of rendering practical help and popularizing hospital treatment.

In this note no mention has been made of such matters as the indebtedness of Gonds, the need for protection of aboriginals against the fraudulent dealings of money-lenders, or the possibilities of co-operative marketing of their produce ; for these are problems not entirely peculiar to aboriginal areas, and are not of the same urgency as the land, forest and education questions, with which must fall or stand all schemes for the improvement of the aboriginals' position.

Indeed unless the present system of substantial and unforseeable cash-levies by subordinates under the pretext of fines and gratifications is abolished, the aboriginal is definitely dependent on

the *sahukar*, from whom he can get cash when in need of it. It goes without saying, however, that the illiterate and rather improvident Gond, who evinces on the whole little shrewdness in marketing, would profit from co-operative sale societies more than any other cultivator. Particularly for the disposal of such crops as cotton and oil-seed, which are mainly grown for sale, co-operative marketing would be invaluable to the Gond, while Kolams and Naikpods might be greatly benefited by the disposal of minor forest produce through a co-operative society, such as is available to the Chenchus of Madras, or the purchase of minor forest produce by the Forest Department at fixed rates, such as has recently been instituted in the case of the Chenchus of Hyderabad. In introducing co-operative marketing full use could be made of the considerable influence wielded by many Gond village *patels* who could function as the collecting and forwarding agents and could on the whole be relied upon not to defraud their co-villagers. No doubt substantial advances by Government would be required to place a co-operative society on a sound financial basis, and I feel that a survey of the potentialities of Gond economy and agriculture by an investigator familiar with local trade conditions would have to proceed the launching of any scheme for co-operative marketing.

An amelioration of the aboriginal's position as here suggested is an undertaking of considerable difficulty ; it involves the solution of complicated administrative problems and can therefore not be achieved in a short time. Moreover any change of policy in favour of the aboriginals would only become effective if followed by a complete re-orientation of attitude among the local executive, and such a development too cannot be expected over night. On the other hand, it should be realized that only quick and radical action can dispel the gloom and disaffection which has taken hold of Gonds and Kolams, and which may lead to events perhaps more tragic even than Babijheri. Nothing can be gained by ignoring the fact that the aboriginals of Adilabad District are present intensely suspicious of all Government officers, and that their psychological attitude is far from satisfactory. The first step in any scheme for an improvement of their economic status must therefore aim at

raising their spirits and convincing them that their legitimate claims will receive increasing attention. With this in view I would suggest a number of measures which, without prejudicing future decisions on policy, would bring immediate relief, and afford the aboriginals such benefits as are feasible within the existing laws:

a. The appointment of a gazetted revenue officer as Special Aboriginal Tribes officer to whom Gonds, Kolams, Pardhans, and Naikpods can bring their grievances, and who has power to intervene on their behalf with the local Revenue, Forest and Police Authorities. The appointment of such an officer would not be without parallel in other parts of India, for as late as October 1942, a "Special Officer for the protection of Aboriginal and Hill Tribes in the Thana, Kolaba and Nasik Districts" has been appointed by the Bombay Government, and in Madras Presidency the post of a Special Chenchu Officer existed for many years. The need for a special officer is best demonstrated by the fact that although I could give little practical help there have been between March and November 1942 (except for a break during the height of the monsoon) hardly two consecutive days on which aboriginals from other villages have not come to my house in Marlavai or to my temporary camps in other villages, and on some days up to fifty Gonds and Kolams have come to tell of their difficulties from as distant areas as Both and the vicinity of Rajura and Asifabad. The Aboriginal Tribes Officer would have to have his permanent camps in a central position, perhaps somewhere near Daboli in Utnur Taluq, and not in one of the existing tahsil headquarters, and would have to spend at least six months of the year in touring.

b. The auctioning of land cultivated at present by aboriginals under *siwa-i-jamabandi* tenure should be temporarily suspended. In Utnur Taluq the auctioning of a considerable acreage of such land in villages near the Gudi Hatnur-Utnur road has been announced for December-January and all these auctions, which would necessarily lead to further acquisition of Gond land by non-aboriginals, should be cancelled.

c. All applications of aboriginals for *kharij-khata* and *parampok* land at present on file in the Tahsil Offices should be reviewed and where vacant *kharij-khata* and *parampok* land is available outside the Reserved Forest they should be granted without delay, and the Forest Authorities should be advised not to prevent the cultivators from clearing the land pending the advance payment of *chobina*,

but collect such dues fixed at a reasonable level by Rangers at the time of the Revenue collection.

d. In each taluq permission should be given to aboriginals to re-occupy a certain number of deserted village-sites where *kharijkhata* land is available. This measure would mainly have the value of a token, demonstrating to the aboriginals a change of attitude towards their needs.

e. In villages where aboriginals constitute more than 5% of the population the posts of police and *mali patels* should be immediately conferred on aboriginals and the non-aboriginal holders asked to resign.

f. All evacuations of Gonds, Kolams and Naikpods from villages at present occupied should be suspended and Kolams and Naikpods should be left temporarily in possession of such *podu* fields as are now under cultivation. This concession should embrace evacuations already announced.

There can be no doubt that such or similar measures would rapidly improve the atmosphere among the aboriginals and re-establish confidence in the intentions of Government. And to have a contented and politically reliable aboriginal population in the Adilabad District seems to be definitely in the public interest.

Marlavai,
15th November, 1942.

CHRISTOPH VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF

Tour Notes on the Position of the Aboriginals in the Both, Kinwat and Adilabad Taluqs of the Adilabad District.

INTRODUCTORY.

IN March and April 1943 I toured for five weeks the ta'uqs of Both, Kinwat and Adilabad in order to compare the position of of the Gonds and other aboriginals in these areas with those prevailing in the taluqs of Utnur, Asifabad and Rajura, described in my Note of November 1942. The following extracts from my tour diary will will show that in Both and Kinwat the social and economic status of the Gonds, Kolams and Naikpods is very different from that of the aboriginals inhabiting the hilly tracts of Utnur, Asifabad and Rajura. The infiltration of progressive immigrants from neighbouring districts and the Central Provinces and Berar, the consequent alienation of the aboriginals' land and their reduction to landless labourers, have gone much further, and what only threatens the Gonds of the hill tracts is here largely an accomplished fact. Whereas in the hills many aboriginals, though not in the possession of *pattas*, are cultivating Government land on *siwa-i-jamabandi* tenure, there is very little unsettled land in Both and Kinwat, and Gonds who have no *patta* land of their own, must either hire fields from landlords or seek employment as agricultural labourers. It seems that the alienation of the aboriginals' land has gone furthest in Kinwat, whereas in Both, at least in a few villages, a certain amount of land is still in the hands of aboriginals. Here too, however, the Gonds have been pushed out of most of the bigger villages which were developed by the incoming Telugu and Marathi populations, and to-day they mostly live in smaller settlements, frequently together with Banjaras and Mathuras.

Whereas the general standard of living in Both is far higher than in the hill tracts of Asifabad, Rajura and Utnur, the Gonds have as a whole not profited from the development of the Taluq.

For with the opening up of communications practically all the best lands have fallen into the hands of immigrants from Telingana and Marathwara, and the Gonds who cultivate to day as their tenants have to pay such high rents that even where they benefit, perhaps from better marketing possibilities, they can only just make a living. They have no part in the prosperity of the new-comers evinced by the substantial town-like houses in such big villages as Sonala or Hatnur, but live in outlying hamlets in wattle-walled houses no better than those of any hill-settlement. However, where fortunate circumstances allowed Gonds to remain in possession of their land, they, like any other section of the population, are capable of raising their standard of living; this is proven by the economic enterprise of men like the Gond *patel* of Geram (cf. Diary, March 11th. p. 163) and the *patel* of Pardi Buzurg (cf. Diary, March 13th, p. 166). But in Both Gonds who own still a fair amount of land are rare exceptions, and in Kinwat they are still fewer. In the west of Kinwat the existence of such historical sites as Sikkar and Mahur suggests that this area has been subjected much longer to infiltration than the environs of Kinwat itself, where the Gonds still remember the time when the land belonged to them. To-day non-aboriginals own most of the land throughout Kinwat, and most Gonds live as tenants and agricultural labourers without any hope of improving their standard of life.

There is also a difference in the psychological attitude of the Gonds of the two taluqs. In Both they are still struggling against their gradual dispossession and have retained a good deal of their tribal culture; in Kinwat, on the other hand, they have largely resigned themselves to the lot of non-occupancy tenants and labourers, and their cultural life is in an advanced state of decay.

It is noticeable that there the cultural unity between Gonds and Pardhans has almost completely broken up. Most Pardhans live on daily labour and have forgotten the old Gond myths and how to play the *kingri*, their traditional string instrument. Consequently the Gonds too are gradually forgetting their traditions and have become slack in the cult of their clan-deities. Many of the Pardhans do not

even know Gondi any longer, and converse with the Gonds in Marathi, which is rapidly becoming the Gonds' second language.

A dangerous development in both Taluqs has been the sudden raising of rents by absentee landlords during the last two years and their tendency to withdraw their land from Gond tenants, who have cultivated it for many years, and to have it cultivated on their own behalf by employing bailiffs and daily labour. This is probably due to the fear of inflation, and hits the Gond tenants every hard.

Conditions in those parts of Adilabad which I visited resemble to a great extent those found in the open country of Utnur Taluq and the plains of Rajura. Many of the villages are owned by absentee landlords, and the Gonds in several villages complained that even the available *kharijkhata* and *parampok* land is not allotted to them, but to Brahmins, Komtis and Muslims who live in Adilabad and let it out to landless cultivators at high rents. Since all this land on *siwa-i-jamabandi* tenure is re-allotted annually, it is difficult to understand why the Tahsildar gives the land to non-aboriginal residents of Adilabad rather than to the local aboriginals. A case quoted on April 11th (cf. Diary p. 205) shows that even where Gonds have at first succeeded in receiving permission to cultivate on *siwa-i-jamabandi*, felled the jungle, and paid for the value of the timber, the land was soon taken away from them and re-allotted, also on *siwa-i-jamabandi*, to residents of Adilabad.

If the Gonds of this District are granted the benefits of special *laoni*, sufficient land for many families could still be found in Adilabad Taluq by withdrawing *siwai-i-jamabandi* lands from members of non-cultivating castes, who hold land as a commercial enterprise. In Both and Kinwat a certain amount of land not yet held on *patta* might be found by a close village-to-village survey, and this could be given to Gonds under the special *laoni* regulations. It is also possible that a great deal of the land acquired during the last 30 years by the members of *patwari* families was obtained by illegal means and could consequently be withdrawn from the present holders and given to aboriginals. But even if so radical a course of action should be followed, the land freed in this way would probably

be insufficient for the needs of all, or even the greater part of aboriginals, and the only hope for an improvement and stabilization of their position lies in legislation for the protection of tenants.

In the whole of Both and Kinwat neither Kolams nor Naikpods do shifting cultivation. The number of Kolams is very small; some are mainly engaged in basket work, while others, attached in groups of a few houses to villages of other populations, make a living as agricultural labourers. The basket-making Kolams could be greatly helped by special concessions for bamboos, which now they have to buy at considerable rates from contractors. Along the borders of Yeotmal, there are, moreover, a few communities of so-called Marathi Kolams; they do not intermarry with the Hill Kolams and speak a form of Kolami greatly mixed with Marathi. They are almost without exception agricultural labourers.

The Naikpods of these three Taluqs are also divided into two endogamous groups; those in the west of Both and Kinwat who seem to represent the original population of the hills stretching into Berar and who speak their own language, and the Telugu-speaking Naikpods, many of whom seem to have come from the Godavari area together with progressive Telugu populations. In the former group one finds a few Naikpods who are independent cultivators, but the Telugu Naikpods are in their vast majority daily labourers and farm servants.

In Both and Kinwat the land has been settled for a long time, and there is less difficulty over forest lines than in such taluqs as Utnur, but the complaints against the extortions of forest-guards are fairly general.

In both these Taluqs the aboriginals consider not being allowed to collect and eat *mahua* flowers a great hardship. These are auctioned to contractors, who however do not collect them, but levy from the villagers a fee per head of cattle for the *mahua* flowers eaten by buffaloes, cows and goats. The Gonds say that the contractors would not object if they ate the flowers, but that the police and excise constables prosecute them if they are seen collecting *mahua* or flowers are found in their houses. The Second Taluqdar

with whom I discussed the question, was also of the opinion that aboriginals would make themselves liable to prosecution, if they collected *mahua* flowers. In Utnur and Asifabad Taluqs on the other hand, the aboriginals were told by the Tahsildars that they may eat them, and since the *rabi* crop was in the hills almost a complete failure (partly owing to hail and rain storms in December and January), the aboriginals subsist now largely on *mahua* and dry the flowers in great quantities for consumption during the next weeks. (Here there is, however, the difficulty that the contractors are attempting to exploit this situation and to collect additional fees per household).

In Adilabad I heard many complaints against the numerous '*pattis*', such as *ghas patti mahua patti, bamboo patti, chiron'i patti*, which are all farmed out to various contractors and their servants who are free to levy from the Gonds whatever sums they like.

From an ethnological point of view the most important result of this tour was perhaps the discovery of a hitherto unknown language spoken by the Naikpods in the western part of Both and Kinwat. It shows close affinities to Kolami, and makes it probable that Kolams and Naikpods represent two branches of an ancient aboriginal population which belonged to the cultural stratum of hoe-cultivators. This language is, however, confined to the Naikpods in the west; all those east of Both and in the taluqs of Adilabad, Nirmal, Utnur and Asifabad speak Telugu as their only tongue.

Both, Kinwat and Adilabad lie in an area of contacts between Maratha and Telugu culture. Telugu populations seem to have infiltrated along the line of the present Nirmal-Adilabad road, which follows an old trade-route, and fanned out round Both and particularly east and west of Adilabad. In the plains extending some ten miles west of Adilabad the population is almost purely Telugu and has, in many villages, completely displaced the former Gond populations. It seems that this influx of Telugu castes, who doubtless came from Karimnagar, began several generations ago. The majority of the Marathi-speaking populations, which in Both are most numerous in the villages near the Penganga, and which are

found in every part of Kinwat, came on the other hand, not earlier than some 30 or 40 years ago, from Parbhani and Nander, and partly from Berar; only Mahur and the surrounding area seem to have been an old centre of Marathi culture.

The influx of Lambaras, Mathuras and Banjaras, who now form a very large section of the population in Both and Kinwat, also occurred only some 40 or 50 years ago, and it seems that in Kinwat the bulk of these castes came from Berar, while in Both they have come from Parbhani and Nander. Many Mathuras still maintain their old prejudice against agriculture and are mainly cattle breeders, but the Banjaras and Lambaras have turned their shrewdness as traders to great advantage and have succeeded in establishing themselves as on their own land.

Though one might expect Telugu, as a Dravidian tongue, to be more congenial to Gonds than Marathi, they seem to adopt Marathi much more readily as a second tongue, using it not only in intercourse with other castes, but even employing it in songs within their own villages. During the whole tour I met only two Gonds who could read and write Telugu, but a fair number of Gonds in these taluqs are literate in Marathi and some of them have been to schools in Yeotmal District.

Extracts from a. Tour Diary

8th MARCH—15th APRIL 1943.

8th March. Nizamabad to Nirmal.

The Taluqdar of Nizamabad took us in his car from Nizamabad to Dichpalli, the leper home, where a good deal of adult education is going on. Dr. Dow, the missionary in charge was away but Dr. Wyder met us and showed us round. We were both surprised how well and happy most of the lepers looked; most of their scars were well healed and they did not seem to suffer from any great disabilities. None of them, even those in the wards, had the ghastly appearance of lepers who don't receive treatment. We had a long talk with one of the teachers who teaches adults by the Laubach method. He is himself a leper. He showed us charts in Marathi and sitting on the floor demonstrated the first lesson. He was most enthusiastic over the method, and Mrs. Wyder told us of the phenomenal success they had had in Berar, where she and her husband had worked until recently. She was insistent that school buildings and school discipline were of no importance for the Laubach method, and rather hindered than encouraged progress. What is important is post-literacy reading. Here we are certainly up against a difficulty—for most of the literature she told us of has a definitely Christian bias. Mrs. Wyder showed us copies of a monthly journal called the Treasure Chest edited in eight Indian languages including Marathi, but I don't think it can be of much use for our Gonds.

From Dichpalli we went to Dudgaon, where we met the Rev. Mr. Early. His work is among the Telugu speaking populations and he has in the last ten years or so extended it to the Gonds of Both Taluq; these two are taught in Telugu. Mr. Early was far less enthusiastic about the Laubach method; perhaps because it is not suited to so difficult a script as the Telugu. He has two

pantulu working among Gonds,—a Telugu-speaking man, who also speaks Gond fluently, working in Timtipalli, and a Gond teacher in Kandegaon.

Later in the afternoon we reached Nirmal. We drove through the very atractive old town and after waking up the instructor of Government School for Arts and Crafts went to see the school. It has not been open for long, but we had the impression that it is not as keen in encouraging old Nirmal crafts, as training students to turn out goods for the modern urban markets. In a neighbouring house we saw examp'es of the famous Nirmal lacquer work which had been ordered privately. Though the artist is employed as a teacher in the Arts and Crafts school we saw none of this type of lacquer work in the school, all the wooden articles manufactured there being painted in bands of pastel pink and blue etc. A feature of the school is that 90% of the pupils are Muslims.

9th March. Halt Nirmal.

Nirmal is in many respects one of the most attractive towns in Telingana. Most of the houses are old and even those that are new are built in traditional style. In the courtyards of many of these houses Hindu artisans still carry on their crafts, and we spent the morning watching silk weavers, cloth dyers and printers and brass workers at work.

In the evening we talked to a Koli. There are apparently quite a number of Kolis in the country surrounding Nirmal. Many of them are domestic and agricultural labourers,—our informant works for the local Munsiff—while others take contracts for fruit-picking in gardens as well as in the jungle. Although there are Marathi-speaking Kolis, all those round here speak Telugu and call themselves Mutrasa. There are also, according to our informant, many Kolis in Karimnagar.

10th March. Nirmal to Ichora.

Left Nirmal at 4 P.M. in a crowded but not too unpleasant bus and drove up the steep *ghat* into Both Taluq. The bus goes first to Both and then back on to the main Adilabad road. The

country near Both is rather barren and stony and only the stream beds are lined with trees. Even the river which has descended over the falls at Pochera and Kuntala is only a trickle just now.

When we arrived at Ichora, 29 miles from Nirmal, we found Lachu *Patel* and Moti *Patel* with other Gonds of Marlavai waiting on the road, and they welcomed us in true Gond fashion while the people in the bus looked on in astonishment. We were most touched to see how pleased they were at our arrival; we had been away so long, they said, that they doubted whether we were really coming.

11th March. Halt Ichora.

In the afternoon I rode over to Geram to see the *Poi Patel* of the Kanaka *Persa Pen.* The *patel*, Kanaka Jagaram, is one of the most progressive Gonds I have yet seen and his village is very different from other Gond villages. The *patel's* house and several other houses are built of stone and grey mud and have tiled roofs, and that of the *patel* is build round a large courtyard. It has carved doors which were made by a carpenter from Telingana, and under the eaves hang large earthen pots in which white pigeons have their nests. The *patel* said that he had bought the pigeons in Adilabad; he seemed very proud of them and some of them had wings painted purple.

At present Geram contains 40 Gond households, 11 Pardhan households, 16 Telugu-speaking Naikpods, 20 Koli households, 8 Kunbi and a few Madigas and other low castes. But originally it was a pure Gond village, and all other castes came within living memory. The *patel* and the other Gonds still own ¾ of the village land, and the rest is held by the newcomers; the *patel* alone pays a revenue of Rs. 200. Close to the village is a garden: the *patel's* father planted some of the mango trees and the present *patel* extended the garden and has recently planted a fair number of orange trees. This garden is watered by a deep well from which two pairs of bulls can draw water simultaneously. Close to the well I noticed an erect stone, painted white and still showing the blood of a recent sacrifice. The stone represents the Maisama of the well;

and when the wooden rollers were repaired recently, a chicken was sacrificed to the deity of the well. The garden is very big and contains mangoes, bananas, limetrees and orange trees planted some threee years ago; between the rows of trees are beds of *brinjals* and onions, which the *patel* grows for local sale. He keeps a special gardener, a Raj-Gond from Wun Taluq in Yeotmal who says that he learnt gardening in Nagpur.

Whereas in other Gond villages there are no pigs, I saw quite a number in Gerjam and the *patel* told me that he has started pig-breeding which is all the more profitable as he doesn't need to feed them, for they live on the village refuse.

The *patel* himself can read and write in Marathi and Telugu and says that his father kept a teacher for him. For the last 2½ years he has also been employing a teacher for the village children, an Iyevar (Brahmin) from Telingana, whom he pays Rs. 100 per year; he also gives him food, and though many people send their children to school, almost the whole financial burden is born by the *patel*. I saw the school: a shed in front of the *patel's* house, where about 12 children were writing Telugu and Marathi on slates. Half of the children are Gonds, and the rest Naikpods, Kunbis and other castes.

The *patel* said that he had no difficulties with revenue or police officials, but that the forest-guards and Foresters all demanded *mamul*. The forest-guard, for instance, collects as *nayar patti* Rs. 4 instead of Rs. 2/2 and takes also supplies for each plough. If the Gonds refuse to pay the *mamul*, the forest guard does not allow them to take fire-wood. He also complained that some 3 months ago a settlement officer came and took from him 12 acres of land which for the last 20 years he had cultivated under *sira i-jamabandi* tenure. Two of these he gave to a rich Mahar, and ten were included in the *gairan*.

A very old man told me that in his youth Ichora was not yet a village; there was only a shed for the post runners and the land was all covered by jungle. Only later Kunbis and other people from outside came and built houses and a Muslim of Adilabad acquired all the land.

While I was still in Gerjam some Gonds from Maliyal came to see me; they complained that two Komtis of Adilabad acquired their village some 25 years ago and are continously raising the rent. A man with 2 ploughs who used to pay Rs. 20 pays now Rs. 50.

In Gerjam are several families of Kolis, who all came some 15 years ago from Karimnagar. I was told that in Urdu and Marathi they are called Koli, in Telugu Tenegoru, in Gondi Telingawar, and in Sanskrit Mutras; the Kapus sometimes call them Bantavarlu. These Kolis all speak Telugu.

12th March. Ichora to Pardhi Buzurg.

This morning the Siram *Mokashi* of Dupparpalli near Ichora came to see me. He is a rather miserable person and nothing but the name is left of his position. In the old times the Siram *Mokashis* held jurisdiction over many villages and their territory adjoined that of the Karatwada *Deshmukh*, the Kaddam River being the boundary. Dupparpalli and Gubba seem to have been their traditional seat, and the *Persa Pen* of the Siram clan is still in Gubba, while the *Sati* and *Bin* are at Ichora near Dupparpalli. In Dupparpalli there are still 40 Gond houses, but all the land belongs to the Muslim *maqtadar* of Ichora, and the *mokashi* who cultivates with 3 ploughs pays Rs. 53. Only in Gubba two Gonds own some land.

The village on our way to Pardhi was Adegaon Khurd, which contains no Gonds, but Kunbis, Kolis, Naikpods, Muslims, Telugu craftsmen etc. Here we saw in a row five carved female figures which represent Sargamma, a deity worshipped by Kunbis and propitiated in times of disease with sacrifices of buffaloes, goats and chickens. The village has good houses built of brick, some double-storied, but the lower castes live in the usual ramshackle manner in wattle-walled and thatched sheds.

The next village, Pipri, looked equally prosperous. There were no Gonds, but many other castes, including Naikpods. The next two miles were through cultivated land and over a low stony ridge covered with low, sparse shrub. Then we came to Kandli, a small village lying in open treeless country. The only large tree is

a *pipal* tree and round this a high platform, perhaps 15 × 15 ft. and some 3 feet high, has been built of grey hewn stone. The stone platform was built by the landlord, Ganga Sing, a Rajput, who is *patel* of Girwur, a village one mile to the north. Kandli looks decidedly less prosperous than Pipri and most of the houses are rather miserable buildings of wattle and mud. The only substantial house belongs to the landlord Ganga Sing.

The population consists of Gonds, Naikpods, Lambaras, and Madigas. Originally Kandli was a pure Gond village, but now there are only seven Gond households; four families left this year and went to Kuntala because they had no land and could not pay the high rent demanded by the landlord. The Gond *patel* told me that none of the Gonds has any land and that he himself, who cultivates with 3 ploughs, pays a rent of Rs. 110. The Naikpods on the other hand do not hire land from the landlord, but work his land and give him half of the yield. The Lambaras came some 35 years ago to the village and some of them hold land on *patta*. Although the Lambaras are evidently better off than the Gonds, their houses are on the whole even less solid.

Just before reaching Ballanpur, we crossed the Kaddam where our ponies and carts had difficulties in crossing; the flow of the river is fairly swift and the bottom of the river is covered with slippery boulders and debris; and muddy water reached to the bellies of the ponies. On the far bank we found encamped a band of curious looking people; men, women, and children with pack-bullocks on which scraggy chickens were perched. Loaded on the bulloks were bundles of many coloured rags and many of the people had small boxes that at first I took for cages. They were dark-skinned and some of the men had unusually long and unkempt hair. We asked them who they were, and they said they were Pardhis from Nizamabad and were on their usual tour snaring and shooting birds and selling them to the villagers. I did not see any guns, although they said they used guns and not bows, but the apparent cages turned out to be frames for small snares that unfold and are put in the grass and used to snare small birds like partridges. The Pardhis said that their own language is Gujerati.

Ballanpur lay rather desolate on a dry piece of land. There were about 20 houses, all small and built in the ordinary Gond style with wattle-walls plastered with mud. The village land is of much poorer quality than that over which we had passed earlier in the morning and this may be the reason why the population is entirely Gond. The *patel*, Geram Nagu Rao, is an intelligent man and knows how to read and write Marathi; he owns land and pays a revenue of Rs. 50 but has to share it with four brothers. More than half of the land in the village belongs to Lachma Sing, a Rajput of Hatnur, who owns land in many villages in the surrounding country. Ballanpur was founded by the *patel's* father, but after the land had been cleared by the Gonds a Brahmin of Both acquired a *patta* which he sold later to Lachma Sing. The *patel* told me that since this land remaining to him and his brothers is not sufficient to support them he wanted to emigrate to Utnur Taluq and had his eye on an abandoned site close to Utnur. He went to Utnur during Mr. Lillie's visit and gave an application for this land, but has heard nothing since.

In the afternoon we passed through Kota, a substantial village with a Hanuman relief under a big tree, and large houses built of stone and mud, tiled roofed. We saw the *mali patel*, who was of Wani caste, and heard that there were no Gonds in the village, but Wanjaris, Kunbis and other castes.

Next we came to Sonala, an even bigger place with a main street of quite a town-like character. Some of the houses had upper stories and balconies like those of Nirmal, but were not so well finished. As we rode through this street a young man greeted us in English; he turned out to be a teacher of the Dudgaon Mission. He told us that only Madiga children come to his school and that he has a Christian community of 130 souls. He teaches only in Telugu, but there is also a Government school in Sonala where Urdu and Telugu are taught.

After a long ride across flat fields we reached Pardhi Buzurg, a Gond village at the foot of a range of low hills.

19th March. Halt Parâhi Buzurg.

In the morning we went to see the village. On the outskirts the houses were of the usual mud and wattle type, but in the centre of the village we came to three big houses built of stone and grey mud and roofed with tiles. They were evidently fairly new and belonged to the *patel* and his brethers. Nearby was a well, lined throughout with stones and with a cement railing and wooden wheels. It was very neatly built and the *patel* told me that he had paid Rs. 40 for the digging and Rs. 30 for the cement work of the upper structure. The water is excellent, and the waste water, which overflows when pots are filled, is lead to a small plot of bananas. Further on we passed through a street with even larger tiled houses with courtyards and beautifully carved wooden doors. I was told that the carpenters from Telingana ask for one of these doors including frame about Rs. 100. Between two of these houses was another draw-well of equally good finish. Neither the *patel's* house nor any of the other houses built of stone and mud have verandahs which otherwise play so important a rôle in the Gond's social life. In the *patel's* house are several rooms, all rather small and in one was the *Rota Pen* (house-god). However, there is apparently no idol, and all I was shown was a large sword in its sheath.

The *patel* is of Torosam *pari* and Bhimana is his house-god But after seeing the well-built stone houses of the village it was rather an anti-climax to be shown the Bhimana shrine on the outskirts of the village: in a half decayed shed stands one single carved stick, not half as big as the largest peacock-feather holders of other Bhimanas. While in the villages of the Tilani area the gods are far better housed than their worshippers, here the position is just the opposite.

The extraordinary difference in the houses of the village,—the mud-walled, tiled houses and the wattle-walled thatched sheds—is easily explainable by the distribution of the land. The *patel* and a few other Gonds own the land they cultivate, while the rest of the inhabitants work land owned by a Brahmin of Both, who lives

exorbitant rates. A man who cultivated with only one plough paid, for instance, Rs. 80; naturally little is left over to raise his standard of living.

Most of the women are here particularly fully tattooed with designs which extend over shoulders, arms and breasts.

There were also some Pardhans in the village, but although both of us tried independently to induce them to tell us songs or stories the results were equally negative; both said that they know nothing and do not play the *kingri*—they only play trumpets at weddings and funerals and act as assistants to other Pardhans. They apparently make the most of the large caste-villages, such as Sonala, where they seem to be taking the place of the depressed classes, who under the influence of the Mission, relinquish their traditional occupation of music makers at rural ceremonies.

In the afternoon we went to Timtipalli, a nearby village which is not marked on the map. We had heard already that it consisted of two settlements, one of which was inhabited by Christian Gonds. The first settlemeet lies about ½ mile east of Pardhi and consists of some sixteen houses, all of which are of the ordinary Gond style. The *patel* told me that his father and grand-father lived here, but that only he and two other Gonds hold *patta* land. All the remaining land is owned by the *patwari*, a Brahmin of Both. This settlement is inhabited by Gonds of the old faith and in front of the *patel's* house were the traces of a Memorial Feast (*pitri*) at which a cow had been sacrificed. The villagers said that they had little contact with the Christians of the other settlement and neither went to their feasts nor invited them to their own.

The Christian settlement lies about two furlongs away and is in no way different from any ordinary Gond village. Outside is a well which is used for watering a few small vegetable beds, and inside the village is a good new well with an English inscription according to which it was given to the village by a certain lady, evidently a missionary. The people were friendly, the women perhaps a little more forthcoming with greetings than usual, but in their dress and

bearing undiluted Gond. A young man with a strikingly bright expression told us that he had studied for three years in Lakshetipet and one year in Medak and could write both Telugu and Urdu. Now however, he cultivates his land and does not do any teaching; —he has some *patta* land in Ballanpur and goes there now and then for a few days. There is a school in the village and the schoolmaster is a Telugu *pantulu* who speaks Gondi, but who was away selling religious tracts at the Sri Cholma Jatra.

In front of one house was a marriage booth and the young man told us that the Christian Gonds celebrates their marriages exactly like all the others, including the mirror scene (in which rather obscene songs are sung) and the erection of a wedding *munda*.

These Gond Christians look altogether quite a happy community and this in spite of a rather unfavourable economic position; —only two men have *pattas*, all the others cultivate the land of the Brahmin *patwari*, who tried, as I heard from the teacher of Sonala, to prevent the Gonds from becoming Christians, threatening to expel them from his village. But he evidently thought twice before implementing the threat.

14th March. Pardhi Buzurg. Halt.

To-day we went to Karatwada, near Both. The path led over hilly country covered in scrub jungle and when we had crossed the last ride we looked into the broad valley that lies west of Both, where villages hide under large mango and tamarind trees. Passing Jidipalli, a Gond village where a few roofs of corrugated iron testify to the civilization radiating from the bus station of Both, we soon reached Karatwada, the seat of the Gond *deshmukh*, and a relation of Jagpat Rao, the Utnur Raja.

The houses built of stone and mud were not at all like the usual Gond dwellings and we soon heard that only two houses, both belonging to the *deshmukh*, were owned by Gonds, all the others belong to other castes. The *deshmukh's* house is of the same type as the smaller houses of Kapus in Nirmal and has some fine carved doors. After some time Yesund Rao appeared, dressed in a very

old and rather delapidated *shirwani* and a fez; we were at once struck to see how very closely he resembles Jagpat Rao, his brother-in-law, Bhim Rao the Kanchanpalli Raja, and a lesser degree the Ruling Chief of Sarangarh. All these rajas are of a type which one seldom finds quite so clearly expressed in ordinary Raj Gonds.

Yesund Rao speaks good Urdu, has excellent manners, is literate and still holds the police *patelgiri*. Yet he has not forgotten the old Gond traditions and told us stories of his clan and how the Durwa clan came long long ago to this part of the country.

Now most of the land round Both is owned by other castes, but the time is still remembered when both Both and Vaddurpet were inhabited only by Gonds and in Yesund Rao's grand father's time, Karatwada was still a pure Gond village. To-day, however, the *deshmukh's* family is the only Gond family in the village, and all the other inhabitants are Kapus, Munnurs, Naikpods and Madigas. The *deshmukh* has still 250 acres of land here and in other villages, but most of the land belongs to the Brahmin *patwari* and some to to individual Kapus and Munnurs. The nearby village of Jidipalli is still purely Gond, but only a few men have *pattas*, while the others cultivate the *patwari's* land, who demands a rent of up to Rs. 70 per plough.

At mid-day we rested under a tree outside the village and then had a talk with two old Naikpods who said that all their ancestors had lived here; there are still many Naikpods in the village, but except three who have some land of their own, all work the fields of the Brahmin *patwari*.

Yesund Rao confirmed that in the old times only Gonds, Kolams and Naikpods had lived in these parts.

On our return to Pardhi we found Gonds of several nearby villages, such as Pardhi Khurd, Markagondi (Mamidigudem and Gollapur, had assembled and they told about their lack of land and the high rates they have to pay to the Brahmin *patwari* who owns most of the land in their villages. Here, as elsewhere, the forest-guard collects Rs. 1 per plough and several maunds of provision as

Another difficulty is that the Brahmin *patwari* also holds in many villages such as Mamidigudem the police and revenue *patelki* and appoints clerks who collect also a great deal of provisions as *mamul.*

Pandra Malku of Nagapur near Utnur, turned up and told that once more Gulam Qadar and a Police *Dafedar* of Utnur have driven him from the field which he was allotted for cultivation and for which he paid the *chibina.* This case has been going on for the last two years and every officer, including the Taluqdar and Mr. Lillie decided in Pandera Malku's favour. But the Tahsildar seems to be powerless to enforce their decision.

15th March. Pardhi Buzurg to Ingras.

The first village we passed was inhabited by Lambaras, and after an hour or so we reached Ganpur, which consists of a Lambara and a Gond settlement, lying at a small distance from each other. Some Lambara women wore lovely cloths, evidently hand-printed, of faint pink and a brighter red. Though the Lambaras, told me that they have been here for two or three generations and many of them have *patta* lands, their houses are of the same ramshackle type as elsewhere.

In the Gond village, which comprises some ten households, the houses are also rather poor. No bamboos are to be had anywhere near here and so only a few have wattle-walls of bamboo;—the walls of most houses are of wicker-work made of the twigs of a tree called in Gondi *garela marra.*

Only three Gonds have *patta* lands, the rest cultivate land belonging to Lambaras and also some *parampok* land. Two families moved recently to Narsapur in Utnur Taluq, because here they could not find sufficient land.

From Ganpur the road led along the hillside, partly though fields and partly through jungle. Next we came to Singarwadi, which had originally a Gond population, but now no Gonds are left and the population consists of Marathas, Andhs and a few low caste

households; the Andhs, we were told, had settled only a few years ago, but are fairly numerous. Their houses are low and fairly long mud buildings, partly white-washed and with only one door opening in the long front side.

Less than a mile from Singarwadi lies Pipalbori, a Gond village of 30 houses, which had been moved from its former site. There are about 30 houses of Gonds and in the same village also some Lambara houses. Only seven of the Gonds have *patta* lands, while the rest cultivate the land of the Maratha *pattadar*, who lives in Islampur. One man who pays Rs. 50 cultivates with two ploughs. The Gonds complain that for the last two years the *patwari* has made them pay Rs. 25 for the village site and that they are short of land. There is apparently some *parampok* land available and several men have given applications, but as yet without success; one man Maravi Bhima has already spent Rs. 60 on gratifications to the *patwari* and *girdawar* but has so far not been allotted any land.

In the late afternoon we passed Thara, a Mathura village near a stream, and then moved on towards Digras. Already from a distance we saw some mud buildings occupying a hillock and below ordinary small houses; close by there was a running stream.

16th March. Halt Digras.

In the morning a delegation of Gonds from the forest village of Ajnar Wajhur came to see me. There each man has some ten acres of land and pays for that only Rs. 2; but the men complained that throughout the rains they to work in the plantations without ever getting wages. Moreover the forest-guard demands from them provisions of all sorts.

Digras lies on a longish ridge. The highest point is occupied by a building containing store-rooms and cattle-sheds, which belong to the Maratha *patel*, and beside it are the stone foundations of another house. At the foot of the hillock stand the small houses of Mahars, low, grass-thatched huts with walls of thin branches. To the other side is the house of the *patel*, a long, substantial building

with walls of stone and grey mud, unbroken by any window, and a solid tiled roof. Behind it stand in groups the houses of Andhs, mud buildings with a white-washed front and a door in the centre, but thatched with grass or covered with sheets of corrugated iron. Before each house stand grain bins plastered with grey mud and covered with conical grass roofs.

A little bit further along the ridge are the houses of Gonds, rather more orderly in arrangement than those of the Andhs, but mostly small and with walls of wattle or wicker work, only partly plastered with mud. The Gonds came some twenty years ago from various villages in the neighbourhood and found at Digras only the houses of three Marathas. Then four Gonds obtained *pattas*, but they lost them again and now there is only one Gond *pattadar* at Digras. All the others work the land belonging to the Maratha *patel* or to non-resident *patti* holders. Although there is *siwa i-jamabandi* land at Digras, no Gond holds any; eight survey numbers of *khari khata* land are all held by Marathas, Wanjaras, Mangs and Andhs. Those Gonds who have no land subsist on coolie work for villagers of various castes.

The Maratha *patel* told me that his father came here some fifty years ago, and that the Andhs came later from Parbhani.

In the afternoon we went to Dongargaon, a village inhabited almost entirely by Andhs.

17th March. Digras to Bhandarwadi.

Our way led through Chandrapur, a nearby Mathura village, where, as we had heard, a *guru* of the Mathuras lives. The village was by no means imposing and the huts and sheds were scattered in the haphazard way so typical of Lambara and Mathura settlements. Several of them were covered with corrugated iron laid flat upon the walls and weighed down by heavy stones. The dress of the inhabitants stood in curious contrast to the poor type of dwellings; several of the women were covered with valuable gold and silver ornaments and were beautiful garments of a rich wine red

Kando Sing, as the *guru* is called, told us that his forefathers had lived for a long time in these parts, but that they only kept cattle, while his generation has learnt to cultivate and has acquired land. Unlike the Lambaras, the Mathuras lived in the old days on the sale of cattle and dairy products and never engaged in transport and trade. Originally they came from the north, from Bhopal, and they still speak their own language, which is different from that of the Lambaras. All these Mathuras were fine, up-standing people with light coloured skin and fairly light eyes; at first sight they appear 'foreigners' in this part of the country.

From Chandrapur our way lead through forest, across a low ridge, and then down into the plain flanking the Penganga. Beyond the plain we saw again wooded hills that were evidently in Berar. As we came into the open country we saw a fairly large village and in front of it a curious building of corrugated iron: and a little later we recognized the levelled ground of a railway line. But there were no sleepers and no rails.

The village beyond the railroad is Dhanora, and most of its rather decrepit houses are inhabited by Andhs. After Dhanora the fields soon came to an end, and we passed over bare and stony ground with sparse tree growth and a surface of rock and rubble, difficult for horses; it reminded us of the worst part of the Chanchu country. At last the ground began to slope down and from the top of a steep *ghat* we saw into the Penganga valley: a green river lay between trees and cultivated fields and just below us was the village of Pipri. Big houses in the shape of squares with open courtyards were covered with tiles, and the other houses with the usual thatched roofs; here and there some corrugated iron was used in the construction of houses and I began to understand the presence of iron in the villages of Chandrapura and Dongargaon;—when the building of the railway was abandoned corrugated iron from labour-sheds was probably disposed of at cheap rates and so found its way into the neighbouring villages.

From Pipri, which is inhabited mainly by Wanjaris, it was not far to Chandarwadi which we had picked out for our camp. It is

a village of some 25 houses built against a hill side, and rather picturesquely situated. The individual houses are, however, poor and the thatch of most of them in a bad state. Only two houses have tiled roofs. The population consists of Naikpods (10 houses), Wanjaras (4 houses), Mangs (3 houses) and one Jangam family.

The most exciting discovery is that the Naikpods speak here their own language. In that language they call themselves Kolavar, exactly as the Kolams call themselves in their language. They know of the Naikpods in Utnur and Nirmal, who speak only Telugu, and they say that those must have forgotten their old tongue by long intercourse with Telugu populations. When I took down a short word-list it turned out that many, but by no means all words, are the same as in Kolami or similar and the Naikpods told me that they can understand a bit when Kolams speak their language, but that the two languages are definitely different and that there are many words in Kolami which they cannot understand. My informants told me that they have heard from their fathers that in the old times hoe-cultivation was practised here too, but that they themselves have never seen any and that they don't even possess hoes. They knew, however, of the Kolams and Naikpods in the hills to the west and their still persistent practice of shifting cultivation. The fact that Naikpods speaks a language so similar to Kolami throws an entirely new light on their cultural position, and it seems indeed as if the two populations were only two branches of one and the same race.

18th March. Halt Bhandarwadi.

To-day we went to see the Susarkunda Falls of the Penganga. On our way we passed the village of Paroti, which is inhabited by Marathas and shows the remains of old fortifications. The falls are a fine sight and are visited by Gonds and Naikpods at the time of festivals when they come to give a bath to their *Persa Pens* and Bhimanas.

19th March. Halt Bhandarwadi.

This morning an old Naikpod, to whom some of the land in Bhandarwadi still belongs, told me a long story of how once

Wanjaris of Pipri did him out of part of his land. The Naikpod seems indeed to have little chance of standing up against all these progressive castes which came in recent generations from such districts as Bidar and Nander. In Bhandarwadi only two of the ten Naikpods have *patta* land, but all four Wanjaris own land, and other fields belong to Wanjaris of Pipri and to Banjaras.

The Naikpods complain very much that they are no longer allowed to eat *mahua* flowers. I have been asked in many villages by aboriginals if they might not eat the *mahua* flowers; in years such as this, when the poorer folk are definitely experiencing a scarcity, *mahua* flowers, they say, would help considerably. They also say that the forest-guard collects Rs. 4 per plough as well as *mamul* in the shape of provisions.

20th March. Bhandarwadi to Kinwat.

Early this morning we passed through Pipri, which consists of 40 Wanjari houses as well as the small huts of Mahars and one Mang hut; there is also the house of a Banya. From their whole style of living it seems evident that the Wanjaris have, at least to-day, nothing in common with Banjaras, but are well established as a cultivating caste. My Wanjari informant told me that his family came in 1309 Fasli (i.e. in 1900 A.D.) from Bidar when there was a famine there, and that some Wanjaris came here already before that that time. They still keep up their connection with Bidar and go occasionally by bus and rail to the annual *jatra* at Pandrapur. He also told me that the forest-guard gives them a lot of trouble, collecting Rs. 4 per plough, but allows them to take wood for domestic purposes from the Reserved Forest; if they refuse to pay his *mamul* and appeal to the Ranger the latter would ask them to buy wood for all their requirements from the contractors of distant coupes. Consequently they fare better by giving the *chaukidar* his *mamul*.

From Pipri we rode on to Kopra. This is a very large village with some houses resembling the town-houses of Nirmal. Particularly the house of the *ratan lar patel*, a Hatkar, is very imposing, with its corner built into a kind of double-storied tower and a large

open gallery with wooden posts flanking the main gate which leads into a courtyard. All the big houses in Kopra belong to Hatkars, Wanjaris and Rohillas, who share the larger part of the land. Of the 45 Gond families who live in the rather small houses of several side streets, only six have *patta* land, while most of them make a living by coolie labour. The *watandar patel* employs, however, a Gond as *gumashta patel* and this Gond is literate in Marathi and is a somewhat superior person. He told me that he had never witnessed a Gond funeral at which the corpse was cremated; the Gonds on this side cannot afford the expense of such feasts, or fear to offend Hindu opinion by the obligatory cow-sacrifice.

In Kopra are 15 houses of Kolis; these are so-called Mahadeo Kolis who speak Marathi and have nothing to do with the Mutras Kolis of Telingana; I was told that another type of Kolis are the Guro Kolis, who also speak Marathi, but don't intermarry with Mahadeo Kolis.

Near Bodari Khurd, which is practically on the way to Kinwat, lies the sanctuary of an important deity called Rajoba who is worshipped by Gonds and occasionally also by Wanjaris and Marathas. We passed Pardi on the way; it is a big village with population of Wanjaras, Marathas, Kumhars and Nalkpods. The latter have no land of their own and the Marathas and Wanjaras told us that their forefathers came from Nander and settled here because they could get land. The next village, Bodari Khurd, was similar in character; a collapsed mud fort stood amidst large houses, some with walled—in courtyards, the gates roofed with tiles. Here too the population consists mainly of Wanjaras and Marathas, but there are also a few Lambara houses and the rather miserable and small dwellings of Muslims.

Karla, the village near the Ragoba sanctuary is a small settlement of 3 Gond houses, 2 Wanjari houses, 1 Maratha house, and the houses of one Muslim and one Mahar. Most of the land belongs to a Kachi, who lives in Ghuti north of Kinwat. The *deshmukh*, Geram Bujanga, is a pathetic little man, undistinguishable in appearance from any poor Gond; he complains that nothing but

the name is left of his family's status. Not even other Gonds listen to him and he is never called upon to function at *panchayats*. He has still some *patta* land of Rs. 20 revenue, but left Bodari Khurd after a quarrel with the Wanjara *patel* and came to live in Karla.

At about five we left Karla and rode along the half-completed railway to Kothari and then on to Kinwat. In Kothari we saw a square fort of red brick containing part of the village. Kinwat was a surprise—from a great distance we saw its white buildings between green trees.

21st March. Halt Kinwat.

At present there are about 20 Gond houses in Kinwat and Pardhan houses, but the Gonds told us that before Kinwat was made a Tahsil headquarters there were 80 Gond houses and very few people of other castes. At that time they were in possession of most of the land, but now not a single Gond in Kinwat has any *patta* land. Most of them work as labourers while others rent land from Komtis and other landowners. A man who rents land from the Komti *patel* told me that he cultivates with one plough and pays Rs. 50 rent. Others cultivate on share, giving the land-owner part of the produce. The situation is similar in the surrounding villages. In the afternoon I talked to Gonds of Sarmati and Pipalgaon. In Sarmati, a village of six Gond and ten Pardhan houses, not a single Gond or Pardhan owns land; in Nagjhari only one among 30 Gond householders has *patta* land; most of the land there belongs to a Velma of Kinwat; Salem Mara pays for one plough of land Rs. 70 rent.

In the afternoon we went to the weekly bazaar and were astonished to find masses of oranges, water-melons and such vegetables as cabbage, cauliflower, onions, *brinjals* and greens. All the fruit and most of the vegetables are grown in Kharbi, a village in Berar on the opposite side of the Penganga. Otherwise the bazaar was rather poor and there were no interesting products of village industries.

22nd March. Halt Kinwat.

Gonds from Umri and Budwarpet came to tell me some of their troubles. Marvi Ganaram, an old man of Umri, bought some

5 years ago a field of Rs. 40 revenue from the Maratha *patel* for the sum of Rs. 1,200, which he borrowed from his *s hukar*. He now complains that many teak trees are standing on his fields and that in their their shade the crops do not grow well. The Tahsildar gave him permission to fell them, but the Forest Ranger said he would first have to pay for the value of the timber. In Umri there are 30 Gond houses, two houses each of Marathas and Naikpods and four of Mahars. But only two Gonds have *patta* land; all the rest belongs to the Marathas. Gangaram's own brother emigrated two years ago to Usegaon (between Utnur and Marlavai) because here he had no land.

The Gonds from Budwarpet told me that of 80 Gond householders and five Pardhans, only four Gonds own any land; all the rest belongs to the Hatkar *patel* of Chikli.

23rd March. Kinwat to Malkapur-Khelda.

Our main object in coming to Malkapur was to meet the Geram *d shmukh*, but we found that he no longer lives in the main village, which is now mainly inhabited by Muslims and Marathas, to whom practically all the land belongs, and which contains only ten houses of Gonds. The *deshmukh* lives some furlongs away at Khelda.

Khelda is now a rather pathetic collection of huts and temporary shelters, for one month ago the village was burnt down almost completely, and the inhabitants not only lost their houses, but also most of their grain and belongings. This was 1½ months ago, and they applied to the Tahsildar for a concession of free timber, but got no reply. So they are now buying wood and grass for thatching from forest contractors. The prices do not seem excessive: for indifferent timber for a small house they have to pay some Rs. 7 to Rs. 8, and for teak between Rs. 10 to Rs. 20. In view of this the prices demanded from Gonds for building material by the forest officers in Utnur seem very high indeed. For the grass, which they have to cut themselves, the Gonds here pay to the contractors about Rs. 2 for thatching one house.

The *deshmukh* had unfortunately gone to visit another village, but after a short while of uncertainty the other villagers were quite friendly. A few remarks about Gond matters astonished them and showed them that we had 'inside knowledge' and were not ordinary travellers. Indeed I think in some respects we know more about Gond traditions than these Gonds themselves. Even their Pardhans are no longer the guardians of tradition. There is a Geram Pardhan living in the village, but he knows neither how to sing nor how to play the *kingri*. He even confessed that he could not speak Gondi properly and talked to the Gonds in Marathi. He does only field-work and does not play the trumpet. If there is a wedding, Pardhans from Ambhari are called, and at the *Persa Pen puja* a Geram Pardhan of Ippaguda near Patoda plays the *kingri* and sings. It seems that the whole Pardhan system is here definitely in a state of decline. An old man who used to live in British India north of the river admitted too that he never learnt to play the *kingri*—and with the loss of this art the old myths die too.

There can be no doubt that Gond culture is here in a fairly advanced stage of decay. Nowhere are well-kept shrines to be seen, and the tribal feasts are no longer performed with the full ritual. In Khelda, for instance, the Bhimana shrine is a miserable shed, with a small piece of wood representing the god; there are no peacock feathers and no wealth of ritual objects such as one finds in all the shrines even of the country round Dabba, not to speak of those in the Tilani area.

The Khelda Gonds told me too that for many years no cows have been sacrificed in the name of the *Persa Pen* near the Rajoba shrine, and that even at the *pitre* memorial feast a goat takes the place of the cow. "For all the Hindus tell us that if we continue to sacrifice cows they won't let us come near to them,—and we had to give it up. In the old times we were the Rajas in the land, but now we are poor and so we must comply with the ideas of the Hindus who have all the land and all the wealth."

In the evening the villagers thawed even more and told me of the difficulties of unpaid, forced labour. They say that all the

Revenue, Forest and Police officers demand their services and carts, and never pay any hire, and that the forest-guards take Rs. 4 plough tax and all sorts of provisions in kind. They also complain that no one ever talks to them in a friendly way and gives them a chance of stating their difficulties. Even the Tahsildar, when on tour, accepts only written applications and never listens to what the Gonds have to say.

In the evening the young men played *bajan*; a Mahar of a neighbouring village acted as a kind of leader of the chorus, while two of the Gonds played *parra* drums and others small brass cymbals. The songs were in Marathi and dealt with Hindu deities, and the music was very different from Gond songs and in my opinion less attractive.

24th March. Khelda Hult.

Here as in most other villages many Gonds have no land of their own and they have no other choice but renting land from *patta*-holders, entering permanently the service of a wealthy land-owner or relying on daily labour. The latter is a rather precarious existence, for only during about six months are they sure of finding employment and in these times of pressure of work men get as. 4 and women as. 2 per day. But at other time there is little work; a man is glad if he can earn as. 1½ or as. 2 a day. Sometimes they work in forest-coupes for contractors and are paid as. 4 per day.

Those who are permanently in the pay of a landlord get usually only their food and one pair of *dhoti* a year and their wives get one *sari*. Others enter into agreements providing for an annual salary of Rs. 50 to Rs. 70 without any provisions, but they seldom get all the cash, since usually they have to take some advances in kind.

To those who rent the land of *patta*-holders and cultivate it independently a new difficulty has arisen. For, owing to the general rise in prices, the *patta lars* are raising their rents, many to such an extent that the Gonds cannot carry on and the land is either taken up by other tenants or cultivated by the *pattadar* himself. In Khelda alone there are three Gonds who this year are without any

land, though they cultivated for years certain fields belonging to men of other castes residing in other villages. Thus a man who cultivated with 2 ploughs and used to pay Rs. 100 was asked to pay this year Rs. 250 for the same land, and when he refused the *patta*-holder gave the land to a Mahar of Guti.

In the afternoon the police *patel*, a Vaishi of Amraoti, acting as *gumashta* for the *watandar* Atram Yado Shah, who lives in Chanda, came to see me. He is a nice old man, who came some 20 years ago from Amraoti and owns no land, but cultivates that of a Maratha. He lives in Guti but is *patel* also of Malkapur, Khelda and Ambari. The *des'mukh* held the *patelki* until some eight years ago, but gave it up because all the officials demanded from him the supply of so much unpaid provisions that the job was too great a burden. (Atram Yado Shah is a relation of the Atram Raja of Chanda, and has inherited the old Geram *watan* through his mother.)

In the villages round Khelda and Malkapur most of the land is to-day in the hands of non-aborigines, partly Maratha cultivators and partly absentee landlords. In Kamtala, for instance, there are 70 Gond households and 9 Maratha households, but the entire land belongs to the Maratha *patel*, who owns also the villages of Ganeshpur (with 30 Gond houses), Dhamandari (with 20 Gond houses, one Kolam household and several Maratha houses, Soni (with 30 Gond houses) and Loni (with 12 Gond, 5 Pardhan 20 Maratha, and 8 Banjara houses). Ambari Buzurg, which was a *jagir* of the Geram *deshmukh*, has now a population of Gonds Marathas, Telugus and Mahars; none of the Gonds have any *patta* land.

Among those who came to see me was Pendur Ganga, the *mokashi* of Jeri near Dehgaon in Adilabad Taluq, who lives now in Girjai near Dedra. Girjai is in Both Taluq, but Kinwat Range, and four years ago Ganga and nine other Gonds received permission from the Taluqdar to reclaim the village, which lies in the Forest Reserve (Dedra S. F.). Though he is *mokashi* of Jeri

he has no land there; the Brahmin *patwari* acquired some 40 years ago 100 acres of land which had belonged to the *mokashi* as well as the whole of the Cherlapalli village, which used to belong also to the *mokashi's watan*. Therefore the *mokashi* went to live in Girjai and he and his companions cultivated there for 4 years and paid together Rs. 80 revenue. The forest officers raised no objections until one month ago, when the Forest Ranger came to Girjai and told them that they must evacuate the village. He told them that later on they might be allowed to settle as forest villagers in Dedra; but as I heard from him the other day, the Dedra scheme is not yet sanctioned.

25th March. Halt Khelda.

Late last night the *deshmukh* arrived at last. He is a small very old man, who looks like any otoer rather dignified village *patel*. The times when the Geram *Deshmukhs* and Rajas had influence in these parts are obviously long past, and since the *watan* rights of the *patelkis* of Ambari, Khelda and Malkapur as well as most as the remaining land have passed through the female line to an Atram relation of Akbar Shah of Chanda, the Geram man who carries on as *deshmukh* in tribal matters has very little importance.

26th March. Khelda to Warnula.

To avoid the heat we started late in the evening and rode all night. After we had passed Maregaon Buzurg, the road rose in a steep *ghat* and we came on to a wide high plateau. At first we passed a good deal of cultivated grouud and came to the village of Maregaon Khurd, where Pardhans and Gonds live and many Marathas have large houses with high outer walls and ostentatious high gateways protecting the courtyards. Maregaon Khurd, though lying on the plateau and comparatively difficult of access, has fallen already entirely into the hands of Marathas. Of 20 Pardhans, 6 Gond and 1 Naikpod house-holder, only 1 Pardhan, the *kotwal*, has 15 acres of *patta* land; all the rest belongs to Marathas.

After riding for many hours over open treeless heights and through patches of spars, jungle, we passed through Mungsi which contains many typically untidy Lambara houses as well as a double-storied building which looked very dark and had a tin roof. It belongs to a Kalar. Otherwise there are Wanjari, Gonds and Naikpods in the village.

The general character of the country remained the same. There was even near the villages hardly a tree in leaf, and all the way we passed no open water.

It was close to 6 A. M. when at last we saw the welcome silhouettes of houses and reached Warnula. The *patel* is a man of carpenter caste who came here some thirty years ago; then the village consisted only of 2 Gond houses and a few Banjara huts—later came immigrants from all sides. The present *patel* got the *patelki* from the landlord, the Raja Udaram, who is of Brahmin caste and lives in Mahur. The *patel* gets free land for three ploughs, and this makes it worth his while staying here. His house though not ostentatious gives the impression of a modest prosperity, and he sees that his only son, a boy of about 15, gets some education by keeping for him a Muslim teacher to whom he gives food and Rs. 12 monthly.

Besides Lambaras there are also some 15 houses of Gonds in the village; they have quite pleasant little mud-houses, some decorated by simple geometrical high reliefs, but it seems that they are already very remote from the full tribal life. One man of Sriram *pari* told me, however, that he still goes to the *Persa Pen* feast in Nokari in Adilabad Taluq. But a Maravi man said he did not even know where his *Persa Pen* was.

27th March. Warnula to Sikkar.

We got up at 4.30 A. M., and started in the light of the waning moon. The first village on our way was Ponala, inhabited by Lambaras and a very few Gonds.

√Near Vajra we met some Kolams, who, though very frightened and rather taciturn, told us that they did not speak any language of

their own, but that "they were Hindus and Marathas and took neither bread nor girls" from the Kolams in the hills of Utnur. Their clan names seem similar to those of some Marathi castes.

After passing through Vajra, a village inhabited by Muslims, Gonds and Mahars, we reached Datmanjri, a big village at the foot of the hill where Sikkar lies.

The *patel* is of Thakur caste. We also talked to some Pardhans who live here and work for the *Mahant* and the Gosains of Sikkar. They say that for generations they have done that work and do not know to play the *kingri* or trumpets or tell stories. The *Mahant* has many ponies, and it is they who look after them. We also met a Pendur Gond whose *Parsa Pen* is in one of the neighbouring villages. He told me that he worked land belonging to Sikkar and paid Rs. 12 for the land which he cultivated with one plough. This is a comparatively modest rate. We climbed the steep hill to Sikkar, which is situated on the very crown of the peak in a most lovely situation.

28th March. Halt Sikkar.

Sikkar, ruled by its *Mahant*, a rather gruff old man, is a very rich institution with a much dispersed *jagir*, and it still maintains most of its mediaeval traditions. But none of the Gosains nor the *Mahant* himself were able to give us much information as to its history etc.

It seems that Gonds and Pardhans who inhabit the villages of the Sikkar *jagir* are fairly well off and that rents are low, but whether or not the conditions are as favourable as the *Mahant* led us to believe, would have to be verified on the spot.

29th March. Sikkar to Mahur.

All the way down the hill from Sikkar we had an excellent view of Mahur fort; we visited the Renaka Devi temple and then went on to Mahur, once, it is said, a town of 80,000, now a rather shabby settlement of certainly little more than 1,000 inhabitants.

We stayed not in the town, but in the monastery of the Manbhau sect, built round a small temple at the foot of the Mahur hill

In the afternoon I went to the Kolam settlement of the town. There are 13 Kolam houses in Mahur and all of them are fairly small and rather miserable buildings. The settlement shows no signs of the remarkable neatness and tidiness of Kolam villages in the hills and might easily be taken for a hamlet of depressed castes. The economic position of the Kolams is indeed in no way better. Not one of them possesses land or even cultivates independently, but all subsist solely on coolie work, and receive at the best as. 4 per day. All the families now living here came some decades ago from across the Penganga.

In the hand of one man I saw a pellet-bow, which is used for shooting birds and protecting the crops, but he told me that they never used bows and arrows, and indeed would outcaste anyone "shooting with arrows like a Bhil."

30th March. Halt Mahur.

Early this morning we went to the Kolam settlement and there picked up an old woman and a young man to show us the Bhimana shrine in the nearby Pandrolena caves. I had heard yesterday that the Kolams performed in the caves certain important rites, and so I took them as the most useful guides.

Descending a cliff we found ourselves in a semicircle where cave-temples have been excavated from the rock Remarkable in itself, the place did not bear comparison with such sites as Ellora; it is much smaller, only two sets of roughly tunnelled caves, with some rough carvings. Behind a gallery of pillars is a shrine, guarded by two enormous door-keepers and containing a *lingam*. A passage cut into the rock leads round this shrine, and on a shelf in one of the walls we saw some carved wooden sticks as used for holders of peacock feathers in the cult of Bhimana.

At the other side of the semicircle a deep cave has been excavated and at its end is the rough relief of a human figure overshadowed by a cobra head. The figure is covered with red paint and is worshipped by the Kolams as Bhimana, though originally no doubt it represented quite a different deity.

The old woman who came with us belonged to the *pujari's* family and apparently acts herself at some *puja*; she was extraordinarily reasonable and coherent in explaining the feasts generally celebrated here in honour of Bhimana by Kolams, Gonds and Naikpods.

Later in the day we met Raja Bhausheb Udaram, who told us of a Gond schoolmaster in his village Tulsi and suggested we should camp there on our way back.

31st March. Mahur to Tulsi.

We got up at 4. 30 A. M. and started even before the grey of dawn. The first village we passed to-day was a pure Lambara settlement, which was founded only some twenty-five years ago, but has a draw-well and a garden with fruit trees.

Next we came to Metjugir, a large village belonging to the Udaram Rajas. In a fruit garden we saw oranges on the trees, but the village itself is not particularly impressive and the Gond houses rather small and poor. It seems indeed that the Raja asks fairly high rents; one man who cultivates with two ploughs told me that he pays Rs. 80 and another who has one plough, but not much land, pays Rs. 2. A big farm building belongs to the Raja, and it is probable that many of the villagers work as his farm hands.

The land between villages on this plain is almost entirely under cultivation, and it is only now and then on a stony ridge or along some streamlet that one finds some shrubby jungle. We noticed, on the other hand, that where there were *mahua* trees, children were picking the corollae and filling them into baskets and sacks and that dried *mahua* flowers were spread out before houses. As this is a *jagir* the people are free to eat the corollae, while they are forbidden to do so in *khalsa* villages.

We saw some small villages to the left and right, but did not pause before reaching Tulsi. Everywhere people were ploughing and on some fields I saw them ploughing with four bullocks, the front pair attached to the plough by a rope.

In Tu'si we saw the school accomodated in the verandah of a building belonging to the Raja; there were about 25 children at work; two of them Gonds, the majority Lambaras, a few Kalars and two Mahars. There were two masters; the Gond of whom Udaram Raje had told us, and a smart and rather townish young man who had recently been appointed as Government teacher and taught Urdu. He knows no Marathi, but most of the children learn in Marathi from the Gond.

The Gond teacher told us that he had had 43 pupils before the Government teacher's arrival, but that since then most of the Gond children had run away since they could not understand the language. How far this is exactly true, I do not know; the Gond teacher, who is from Yeotmal and of Teermaki *parr*, is evidently not very happy here, and told me that he used to get by public subscription about Rs. 11 or 12 a month and some food from the Raja, but that since the Government teacher came he gets only Rs. 6 or 7.

I tried him at once in writing sentences in Gondi and found him extremely clever. So I asked him whetoer he would like to come for some months to Marlavai and help in the making of Gondi books. He liked the idea and so I sent him to the Raja at Mahur to ask for the latter's permssion.

Soon after we arrived some old Gond men from Malkaguda, a hamlet of Tulsi, came to see me, and among them was an old Atram man with connections with Utnur and Jagpat Rao, who had heard of us. They mentioned that in the distant past there was a Kumra Raja in Mahur, but that nobody knew what had become of his descendants. For many years, they said, there had been no Gond raja or *deshmukh* in the *parganas* of Sindkher, Mahur and Korat. The latter village is on the other side of the Penganga but the old *pargana* extended apparently acrross the river. In the same way the jurisdiction of the Geram *deshmukh* of Ambhari included Takli in Pusad Taluq :—it was evidently hill ranges and not rivers that formed the boundaries of the old political units.

In the afternoon we went to Malkaguda, a village consisting of 35 Gond houses and the houses of 5 Pardhans, 15 Kalars, 2

Dangars, 2 Komtis and 2 Muslims. Except for a very few, which are partly built of bricks, the Gond houses are not very impressive, though better than those of Metjagir. They compare perhaps not unfavourably with the houses in a small hill village of Utnur, but, measured by the standards of this part of the country, they are definitely poor. This is not altogether astonishing in view of the rents the people have to pay to the Raja. An Atram man told me that he had two ploughs and paid Rs. 200 rent; another man has one plough and pays Rs. 45, while a third has 2 ploughs and pay Rs. 75. A man who works as a servant for the Raja gets Rs. 20 a year and 12 maunds of *jawari*, but no clothes.

One old man has a large brick house with a tin roof and posts and rafters evidently made by professional carpenters. But he does not seem to have the means to keep it up and the walls have large cracks and are partly verging on collapse. In none of these villages is there much room for kitchen gardens and most houses stand so near together that even beans and tobacco can hardly be grown by the house.

Some of the villagers have connections with the Gonds of Adilabad and Utnur and seem to know still a good deal of the old customs. But they themselves have given up such customs as cremation, and bury all their dead. No *sanal munda* are ever put up, but I was told that some men erect flags in memory of their dead. At the *pitre* memorial rite, cows are still sacrificed.

When I asked whether they had any *chuddur penk* in their houses, one man told me that he had an Anurani represented by a lump of *sendur* which he kept in a chest near the hearth.

Next we went to Kasarpet, another sub-village of Tulsi, consisting of 25 Gond houses. It has no other inhabitants but Gonds and looks tidy, but by no means prosperous. The rents paid to the Raja work out at about Rs. 40 per plough but are assessed on the basis of the acreage cultivated. Since there is also forest in the *jagir*, the people have no difficulty over firewood, and there are no grazing fees and plough-tax.

On our way back to Tulsi we passed through two Lambara villages. The houses are quit well built and have mud walls; there is about them none of the impression of impermanence characteristic of Lambara habitations in many other areas, even in villages quite near to Kinwat. The *patel* of Tulsi, a Maratha, whose parents had had come here from Britsh India, told me that most of these Lambara came also from across the Penganga and settled here only some 40 years ago. They used to live mainly by cattle breeding but have now completed the transition to agriculture and the majority rent land from the Raja. Only a few work as farm-hands for wages The Gonds too mentioned that the Lambaras came only recently, and that since their invasion of the country, land has beeome scarce.

1st April. Tulsi to Salaiguda.

We did not start until the late afternoon when the temperature was bearable, and rode over undulating fields to Solaiguda. One Lambara village lay on the way, in typical position on a bare hillock and without any tree to give shade to the houses arranged in regular rows.

It was getting dark when we passed Gondwara and we could hardly see the way when at last we came to Salaiguda. Among the Gonds who soon collected round us in the village was an old man who came from Dhanora near Sindkher some years ago to settle in Salaiguda. In Dhanora he had had a field of Rs. 14 revenue; but the Sikh *patel* took it away. Here he cultivates the land of the Brahmin landlord.

2nd April. Halt Salaiguda.

Salaiguda is a big village, and three Gonds know how to read and write in Marathi. In one of their houses we were offered tea in proper china cups together with *pan.* Here we saw a drum as used in *bajan* playing called *pakwas* and small cymbals; the boys told us that they had also Marathi song books. Here these *bajans* seem to replace, to a large extent, the old Gond songs which, at least to our ears, are far more attractive.

An old man, Atram Bhimji, told me about a field in Palaiguda, which his father had held for many years, but which at the settlement some 12 years ago was given to the Brahmin landlord of Salaiguda

Fourteen Gonds of Salaiguda had for many years a quarrel with this same Brahmin over 25 fields for which they hold a joint *patta*. They are the sons and descendants of the original village founders who cleared the land of jungle at a time when the fathers of the men, now well over sixty, were young. Later the Brahmin, who owns most of the remaining land, claimed these fields for himself, and the quarrel went up to the Subedari and then to the Revenue Secretariat; three of the Gonds went to Hyderabad and stayed there for a whole month. Their expenses for *vakil* and fees were then Rs. 750, but the case was decided in their favour. But now they have difficulties in getting their documents back from the *vakil*, and they have engaged another *vakil* to secure them.

Atram Bhimji said that in his youth times were much better. Then there was no one to forbid this and that, and there was more land. They also complain that they have to pay to contractors for all the *mahua* flowers eaten by their cattle, but that they themselves are not permitted to eat *mhua* flowers. I asked whether they were allowed to eat them fresh and they said: "If we are not even allowed to go near the trees and pick them up, how will we be allowed to eat them?"

In the cattle shed where we are staying is a wooden dance mask and this is worn by the *gussari* at the *dandari* time. The men said that thay no longer visit other villages at that time, "on account of the expense of entertaining visitors" but dance in their own village. But, they added in a self-satisfied manner, they have stopped all dancing of women for "people may come and see them and laugh"; the women may sing their dance songs but they may no longer dance.

The influence of the three young men who went to school in Yeotmal District is apparently not entirely beneficial and has led to a feeling of superiority *vis-a-vis* those Gonds who observe the old

customs: it is disrupting the harmony of tribal life in the village by creating sides with different social values. If education is to profit the Gonds and help them to retain a healthy self-respect it will certainly have to take a different shape.

Another development of fairly recent date is the specialization of Gonds and Pardhans in certain crafts. In Salaiguda is a Pardhan who works only as a carpenter and a Gond who makes his living by blacksmith work. All the Pardhans have given up the playing of the *kingri* and most have taken to field work. Except for the Gonds who are share-holders of the joint *patta* referred to above no others own land but have to rent that of the Brahmin landlord who lives in Karanji.

The rents seem to be not quite so high as in other villages owned by absentee landlords; and some of the houses make quite a prosperous impression; these may, however, be mainly those of men who have a share in the joint *patta*.

3rd April. Salaiguda to Jorla.

We got up soon after 4 A. M. and were able to start long before dawn. We passed Sarakini and Dahili (wrongly spelt Wahili on the map) while it was still dark, and when it was light we came to Dagar Wajhar, a Lambara settlement on raised ground. It is situtated in in a narrowing valley, and on a little hillock behind stand the ruined walls of a small fort; the men of this village believe it belonged to a Gond Raja, but cannot say to whom.

From there on the path rose gradually, with hills to both sides, until the valley broadened and sloped down towards Patoda. At approximately the highest point, near where the now deserted village of Bailur is marked on the map, we rested and found on high sloping and very stony ground an almost incredible number of palæolithic artifacts, all of the flake type and rather small. On the spot where they were most numerous we had only to sit down and could collect from the surface whole handfuls.

Raipur, though marked as deserted on the map, is now a village, and from here on we met an extraordinary traffic of bullock carts and people on ponies, generally with some packages on

either side. Before the path to Jorala branched off to the right, we found a stream with ample water for our our ponies Many people were drinking and bathing there and looked as though they had camped there.

Over a small ridge we came into another broad valley, with fields within a horseshoe of wooded ridges. The village of Jorla lay at some distance from a group of ancient tamarind and mango trees and we learnt that many years ago it had been moved from there on account of illness and scarcity of water. The present village site is not recognized as *gaothan* and the villagers consequently pay for the village site.

Until some years ago most of the village land belonged to a Brahmin of Sindkher, who is the *watandar patel* and *patwari*, but he sold it to a Teli of Digras in Yeotmal District. In the main settlement are 40 Gond houses, 16 Inkar houses, 3 Pardhan houses, 3 Rajput houses, 2 Madiga houses, and the houses of 1 Brahmin, 1 Fakir, 1 Hajam, and 1 Kathi. Moreover there is a Gond village Umri, nearby, with Gonds and Pardhans, and another settlement at the foot of the hills inhabited only by Kolams (11 houses).

The *patel* of Jorla is a young Gond, Marskola Kasiram, about 20 I should say. He can read and write, having been to school in Mandwi. Most of the Gond houses are of the usual type; not exactly bad, but in no way showing any particular signs of prosperity. Nowhere in these parts have we seen Gond houses built of stone and solid mud and roofed with tiles such as are found in some villages of Both Taluq. The comparatively modest style of houses is explained by the Gonds' economic status; of the whole community of Jorla only four men possess land of their own and all the others are tenants of the landlord, who lives in Yeotmal District.

The three Pardhans living in the village no longer play the *kingri*, but do field-work; one of them works as a carpenter. There is moreover a large colony of Inkars in the village, but none of them knows any longer how to weave; they all do agricultural work. As usual, the Inkar quarter looked much dirtier then the Gond village.

A family of *faqirs* settled here. two years ago; they live by begging and by taking contracts for tamarind and *mahua*. They are evidently not popular among the Gonds, but manage somehow to get contributions of grain from every house. Although admittedly beggars, the are wealthy enough to obtain the contracts from Government and extort the usual levies on this account from the Gonds.

Lastly there are three households of Rajputs, who are tenants, exactly like the Gonds, and who live in the same style. They even speak Gondi.

4th April. Halt Jorla.

This morning we went to the Kolam settlement which lies about a mile from the main village at the foot of the hills enclosing the valley. When we arrived a cart was just being loaded with baskets of various sizes and large bamboo mats. Muslims merchants had bought the whole output of the village and were now carrying it off to a distant market. We were told that they pay cash; about as. 1 for a small basket and as. 5 to 6 for a large bamboo mat, As we came we saw men at work on mats and women making baskets, and we were told that the whole village of 11 houses lives mainly by the manufacture of bamboo ware. They get the bamboos from a coupe near Ambari aud have a agreement with the contractors according to which members of each household pay per month Rs. 4 and for that sum may take bamboos for basket and matmaking at their discretion. But they have to fell the the bamboos and then carry them on their heads across the hills to Jorla. As a man or woman can make at the most two or three baskets or half a large mat a day, the daily income of one person is at the best as. 3; but of these about one anna has to be spent on the bamboos. Thus a couple earns, when both husband and wife are working to capacity, at the most as. 4 per day, and from this income they have to pay such unavoidable dues as grass fee, *mahua* fee, *chironji* fee etc., as well as grazing fees for their goats; *mahua patti* for instance is as. 4 for cows an das. 2 for goats. Moreover they pay rent for the *gaonthan* (village site).

Only three men in the village have any cultivation; one man owns a field and a pair of bullocks, but two others hire both fields and bullocks. While the former pays Rs. 11, each of the latter pays Rs. 25 to the Teli land lord. and 2 maunds of *jwari* per pair of bullocks yearly.

Sometimes they sell their baskets at the bazaar at Patoda, but more often they sell them to merchants who come to their village. During the rains they go sometimes to Patoda and work as agricultural labourers; there they get as. 2 to 3 per day, never as much as as. 4. They never work for the Forest Department or for forest contractors and say that they do not collect minor forest produce, either for others or for themselves.

They say that they do not dig for roots and they have no Lows of any sort. Their grandfathers still did hoe-cultivation on hill-sides, but it was stopped in their fathers' time and they have not even seen it. The Kolams as well as the Gonds complain that they may not eat the *mahua* flowers and just now masses of them perish on the ground.

The village is constructed very much in the way typical of the hill-villages of Kolams further to the east; i. e. the houses are arranged regularly round a large open square. The houses are small, with walls of plaited bamboo.

In the afternoon we went to Umri, the subsidiary settlement (*mazra*) of Jorla. In Umri there in only one Gond who has *patta* land, and the other Gonds comlained bitterly about the high rents asked by the Teli landlord who lives in Digras (Yeotmal); one man who cultivates with one plough pays Rs. 65 and another who has four plonghs pays Rs. 230. The rents are continuously raised, and one man who said that he has a bad and stony field, which he cultivates with one plough, paid till two years ago Rs 20 and is now paying Rs. 30.

They complain moreover that the Patoda *chaukidar* collects between Rs. 4 and Rs. 5 *nagar-putti*, while his *jawan* (servant) collects all sorts of provisions.

5th April. Halt Jorla.

In Kinwat we had heard of a Banjara who owns the village of Mandwi and has developed it to an extraordinary degree. We were curious to meet this man and see his village, and so we started early this morning for Mandwi which lies some 3½ miles north of Jorla. As we rode across the fields we saw innumerable chips and artifacts, but it was impossible to get off our ponies continuously to pick them up and so we added only a few to our collection. All these artifacts are evidently palaeolithic and belong to a fairly primitive flake industry.

On the way we passed another sub-settlement of Jorla different from all those we have hitherto seen on our tour; even from the distance one sees a number of fairly modern buildings and as one comes nearer one hears the unaccustomed sound of a motor.

Women in Banjara and other dress were drawing water from a large square well with a railing. Past some ordinary huts we were led to the biggest house, painted white and green and bearing the figure 1931. Although we had not announced our arrival, we were met at the gate by the owner, the Banjara *patel* Baliram Hiraman.

It seems that some 35 years ago his father, who came from Berar, obtained a *patta* of some 2,000 acres, including most of the village land of Mandwi. This was before the time of the Taluqdar Mohammed Ali, and Baliram explained with a smile, that at that time it was not necessary to buy land or take it in auction ; whoever gave an application could get as much as he wanted. Mandwi was then a deserted site, but gradually more and more people, mainly Banjaras, came to live there. Our host admitted that then anyone got land, except Gonds and Kolams, who had always been there; they did not know how to set about getting *pattas*, and the *patwaris* and others wilfully deceived them by telling a man that a certain piece of land had been given to him on *patta*, but when he had cleared the forest and made it arable, it turned out that it had been written in their own name.

Baliram's father did not introduce any innovation at Mandwi; he simply settled there. It was only Baliram who began developing it as a model village. He built a school, a dispensary, wells, a ginning factory, resthouses and even a library. In the library there are, however, no books at present, and Baliram mentioned that they had to be kept separately because Government subordinates, who sometimes use the 'library' building as a resthouse, kept on tearing pages from the books. Next we saw the school; today is the Hindu New Year and so there was a holiday, but usually some 60–70 children, both boys and girls, are attending. Baliram first founded the school and built the house some twelve years ago, but five years ago he handed it over to Government, and the teacher is now appointed and paid by Government: instruction is in Marathi and Urdu, as there are no books in the Banjara language.

The dispensary, on the other hand, is entirely independent of Government support and the Ayurvedic doctor works as a private practitioner. Up to 90% of the patients are, however, treated free, and the expense of the establishment is born by the *patel* Baliram. The doctor, who is a Maratha of Adilabad, told me that there is no definite budget, but that Baliram provides for whatever is necessary and spends annually some Rs. 500 on upkeep and medicines. I saw a large store of patent medicines, and the doctor told me that now-a-days he experienced great difficulties in getting quinine, which is apparently also in Ayurvedic medicine the main remedy for malaria. What impressed me particularly favourably are the doctor's tours to a large number of surrounding villages.

The village consists now of nearly two hundred households, and a hundred of these are Banjara. In their majority the houses do not differ very much from Banjara houses in the long-established villages of these parts, but some of them are larger and built in the style of Maratha houses.

Though the *patel's* own family has given up Banjara dress and the women wear *saris*, he does not seem to discourage the old dress among his villagers, and we saw some very fine cloths, hand-printed in Khandki, not far from here.

Before returning to his house we saw the cotton ginning factory which is working to capacity. A crude oil motor supplies the power and Banjara women in their picturesque dress most of the labour. Another machine is just being installed and Balaram will then be able to purchase even more of the local cotton. For the population of the surrounding villages this should be a boon, as cultivators will get cash for their cotton without having to cart it to distant markets. Baliram is, however, not content with ginning the cotton, but has started also the manufacture of cloth in the form of a home industry. He gives out the cotton to Inkars of Mandwi and neighbouring villages for spinning and weaving and disposes of the finished product in the village and in local bazaars. Some Banjara women have also taken to weaving, but the main work is done by Inkars, the traditional low-caste weavers.

Late in the afternoon we left Mandwi and rode to Patoda. We had heard that a Pardhan *sadhu* was living there and that he had a considerable following among the local Pardhans. The Pardhans who had come with us asked whether they should take us to the *math*, using thus the same expression as for such monasteries as Sikkar. But when we arrived in Patoda, an unattractive large village inhabited by many castes, we were taken to the Pardhan quarter and in it to a very modest mud-house. The *sadhu*, Wika Deoba, was not there but on a tour attending some feast. His *guru*, however, Mesram Madu, was in the village. He came and told us that he was a follower of a Pardhan *guru* of British India, who used to visit Patoda occasionally, and that he later became a *guru* himself. He gave up the association with Gonds and many of the old customs. He himself does not, however, do much teaching, but his disciple the *sadhu* goes from place to place and preaches. For many years he has tried to persuade the Gonds not to sacrifice cows and for this purpose went to places like the Keslapur Jatra, but without much success. Many Pardhans, on the other hand, adopted his teaching: they don't beg any more from Gonds and don't attend Gond *puja*. He and his followers pray only to one god, Bhagavan, and to none of the Gond gods, and in the name of Bhagavan he makes *puja* at the *tulsi* plant in front of his house.

Many Pardhans seem to follow his example, probably mainly in order to raise their social status. In this large village with many Hindu castes they must be conscious of their low status as long as they remain the bards of the Gonds and eaters of beef, and moreover the Gonds are probably themselves too poor to support them as of old: so the Pardhans, none of whom own land, have had to take to daily labour and some to the renting of fields, and at the same time they are trying to conform more closely to the Hindu pattern. Not all have completely given up the *kingri*, but their art is on the decline and is looked down upon by most of their local castemen.

6th April. Jorla to Parasdari.

Started early and rode in the dawn and early morning to Pipalgaon. This is a big village of mixed population and there are no Gonds in the main settlement. A fairly large fort built of red bricks standing in the centre of the village is reported to have belonged to a Gond of Pendur *pari*, but nothing is known of his descendants.

From Pipalgaon we went on to Minki, the village of a Gond *mokashi* of Verma clan. The *mokashi* had once jurisdiction over Minki, Pipalgaon, Dongargaon, Bhelgaon and Mohara, a village in the hills with a small mud fort, but now only four survey numbers of a revenue of Rs. 30 and two *inam* fields are left of his possessions. No other Gonds of Minki possess *patta* land, but some have cleared this year some *parampok* land. Other land belongs to a Kalar, who is *gumashta* police *patel* of Pipalgaon but lives in Patoda.

From Minki we went to Talaiguda, a village of 20 Gond and 2 Toti houses. Very much in contrast to most surrounding villages all Gonds have *patta* lands or cultivate *parampok* land. Thus their condition is comparatively good, but they complain very much about the continuous forced labour which they have to-day. Pipalgaon is on the main route to Mahur and whenever any Government officers or subordidates pass through, the Gonds have to act as

coolies or give carts and bullocks without receiving any payment. They say that the men of other castes, in Pipalgaon are not as frequently recruited for forced labour.

In Talaiguda is a Gond who acted for some years as teacher, but did not get sufficient contributions from the villagers and works now as servant for the Kalar police *patel* He was very keen to come to Marlavai under the education scheme and asked me to send him word when a place became vacant.[1]

It was almost mid-day when we left Talaiguda and the way to Lalgari was very hot.

Lalgari is a village of 13 Gond households and one Mali house. Some of the Gonds have still their own land, but the best fields, which used to belong to the Gond *patel's* father, are now owned by a Mali of Kuchlapur.

Late in the afternoon we reached Parasdari, a village of 40 Gond, 4 Mali and 2 Mahar houses. We had specially chosen it because we had heard that Naitam Jeitur hand sometime ago erected a *mundi* for his father. But what he actually did was to put up a flag and when I asked about the ritual he explained proudly that no animal had been killed but only vegetarian food had been served to the guests and offered to the *sanal.* This made me ask what they sacrificed to their *Persa Pen* and they said that they had given up the sacrifice of cows and now only offered goats.

7th April. Parasdari to Adilabad.

Again we started before sunrise. Talamadgu and all other villages on our way were pure Telugu settlements and contained no Gonds or Kolams; in some of them are a few Telugu-speaking Naikpods, who subsist on agricultural labour. It was a long and boring ride to Adilabad, all along the projected railway. Heat, dust and glare were almost unbearable.

1. He has since been trained at Marlavai under the Gond Education scheme and is now teacher in the Government Gond School at Talaiguda.

8th and 9th April. Halt Adilabad.

On the 9th I went to Tankoli and Ankoli, which are the seat of an old Gond Raja family. The road led mainly through low shrub and jungle until we came near Tankoli. This is a large village of about a hundred houses, and to-day the population consists mainly of Kapus and other Telugu castes. The Kapus have substantial, well-built brick houses with tiled roofs; better, indeed than one usually sees them in Telingana. I wonder whether this is due to the Maratha influence.

The Gonds live in a small quarter on the outskirts of the villages near the houses of the low castes. There are now only nine Gond and four Pardhan families; none of the Gonds possess *patta*-land; they either rent land from other castes or work as labourers. Half of the village land belongs to a Muslim of Adilabad and the rest to Kapus.

Two miles south of Tankoli is Ankoli, an an even bigger village, but nowadays with a Gond population of only 25 house holds. A ruined building, built, like an old temple, of large hewn stones, was pointed out to me as the *gadi* of the Tsakati Rajas. The Raja's family still lives in the village, but in quite an ordinary thatched Gond house; the big houses all belong to Kapus.

All that remains of the Raja's former estate is the *patelki* of three villages, namely Ankoli, Mavala, and Yapalaguda. Until some 25 years ago the Tsakati Raja had also *watan* rights in Tankoli, but he appointed a Muslim *gumashta*, and the latter soon appropriated both *watan* rights and the Raja's land, and his son is now a substantial land-owner who lives in Adilabad. The Raja family has only two fields of Rs 30 revenue in Ankoli, and these are in the name of Gauru Bai, the widow of the late Raja Hanumant Rao. The police *patelki* has gone to the late Raja's brother's son, Kasiram, who lives in the village; for three years Kasiram did the work himself, but now he has appointed a Muslim *gumashta*, probably because he cannot cope with the other castes in the village.

Apart from Gauru Bai, there is no Gond in Ankoli who owns land and the Gonds say that they have either to hire land for very high rents from Brahmins and Muslims, who live in Adilabad, or work as servants of their co-villagers of Kapu caste. There is some *kharijkhata* and *parampok* land in the village, but this is not held by Gonds, but by a Muslim of Adilabad and a Kalar who hire it out. The Gonds said that there is more vacant *parampok* land in the *berun* and that they applied several times to the Tahsildar for permission to cultivate it, but without success. They say that even if the Tahsildar gives a favourable decision, it is never carried out by the tahsil clerks, the *girdawar* and *patwari*, unless all of the are heavily bribed; and Gonds have not the cash to do this. They say that this is the reason why even the lands cultivated under *siwa-i-jamabandi* tenure are not obtained by Gonds, but by men of non-cultivating castes.

Gonds from Lokari, a near by village of 20 Gond and 2 Pardhān houses, had the same complaint. In Lokari about 200 acres are held on *patta* by Muslims, Komtis and Marwaris of Adilabad, but no Gond has a *patta*. There are some 300 acres of *parampok* land in their village, but they tried in vain to receive permission to cultivate it on *siwa-i jamabandi* tenure.

There, as in Ankoli, Gonds pay the land-lords roughly Rs 50 to Rs 70 per plough; but the rent is assessed according to the size of the fields, not the number of ploughs a man uses.

The Tsakati Raja told me that in his whole *patti*, i. e. the area which used to be under his jurisdiction, nowadays only he and two Gonds in Yapalagudem have any land of their own; all the other Gonds are landless.

11th April. Adilabad to Saidpur.

The first village we reached was Anakunta, where no Gonds live. Next we came to Yapalagudem, where, as I had heard in Ankoli, a rich Gond lived. But among the 184 houses there are only 13 Gond houses; the bulk of the population consists of Kapus Telingas, Salas and Madigas. The rich Gond is Kodappa

Bagovaji; he has seven fields of a total revenue of Rs 90; besides him only one other Gond has *patta* land. Most of the land belongs to Komtis, Brahmins and Muslims of Adilabad, and some of the local Kapus also own land. Bagovaji has two tiled houses and his son knows how to read and write in Marathi; it is noteworthy that even here in almost purely Telugu surroundings those Gonds who have learnt to write know only Marathi script.

From Yapalagudem on the road led again across wide shadeless fields and the heat was terrific. After mid-day we came to Kampa on the banks of a perennial stream, but the water consisted of nothing more than stagnant pools.

The Kampa *mokashi* turned out to be extremely nice and gave us most valuable information about the old *mokashi* organisation in these parts.

Kampa is the old seat of the Gond Rajas of the Pendur *pari* and there are still the remains of an old fort which encloses an area of several acres. This fort seems to have consisted only of roughly built stone walls and to have had none of the gateways or battlements in Muslim style such as the Manikgarh Fort. But there are still a few sculptures superior to those found in ordinary Gond villages, e. g. the large relief of Maheswara treading on a demon, now no longer understood, but reverenced as Hanumar. Several 'gates' are still pointed out and also the place where the bazar was held. Near one gate is the village *Aural* with a stone sculpture and two newly carved posts with human faces. In the old times the village extended to all sides of the fort and across the river, and seems to have had the size of a small town. This is all the more probable as the Pendur Rajas ruled over a very considerable territory in which members of their family were established as *mokashis*.

But today Kampa comprises only four houses, ordinary small Gond houses standing in the centre of the fort whose ground has been turned into a field. Not far from the village is the shrine of the Pendur *Persa Pen*, which contains also the Raja's *gadi*- rather pathetic wooden stool on which he sits at Dassera.

The Raja,—now usually referred to as *mokashi*—Pendur Bhimu, is quite as poor as any ordinary Gond, but not without dignity. In the old times the *watan* of Kara Kampa alone included twelve villages with their sub-settlements, and while the Raja ruled immediately over these, his relations managed the large *watan* of Yasapur Barisa in Rajura Taluq, Pipalgaon with its forts in Kinwat and Jari with a group of villages in Both Taluq.

Of his large estate nowadays only two inferior fields, one of them inside the fort, are left to the Pendur Raja and their revenue is altogether Rs. 12. Until a few years ago three other far better and larger fields in Kampa were held by the Raja family on *patta*, but Ijad Mohiuddin of Adilabad, the landlord of the neighbouring village of Mangorla, claimed these fields one after the other as belonging to him and took possession of them in spite of all protests and applications of the former owner. The last of these fields was appropriated by Ijad Mohiuddin only some 5 years ago.

Apart from this *patta* land there is a good deal of *kharij khata* and *parampok* land in Kampa. After the Gonds had applied for it in vain several times, three years ago the Tahsildar gave the Gonds of Kampa permission to cultivate about 100 acres and the Gonds of Mangorla a smaller portion. The Gonds filled the jungle and made the land arable, but a Rohilla of Adilabad, Mudasiri, took forcible possession of it, and all the Gonds' complaints to Tahsildar and Taluqdar were of no avail; they were told that the land had been allotted to the Rohilla, who still cultivates it on *siwa i-jamabandi* tenure.

Another plot of *parampok* land, immediately beside the fort, for which the *mokashi* had applied repeatedly, was at last acquired in auction by a Tashil *chaprassi*, Ahmad Khan, for Rs. 40.

Near Kampa is a hamlet called Metguda; though it is much bigger, it is still the *mazra*, while Kampa is the *mauza*. Kampa has only four houses, but Metguda has grown into a village of about 200 houses, of which only about 10 are of Gonds; the bulk of the population consists of Telugu castes.

The *mokashi* does not even hold the *patelki*, but a Jangam of Metguda is police *patel* for both villages. The *mokashi* complained that even the tamarind trees that grow inside the fort on his *pat'a* land are auctioned by the Tahsil authorities. Moreover the forest guards take Rs. 5 per plough, saying that Rs. 3 is for Government and Rs. 2 is their *mamul*, as well as numerous provisions. The *mokashi* tells the same tale about the oppressive attitude of the policemen of Bela, as his neighbour the Chandpalli *mokashi* (see p. 132 above). These policemen have stopped all dancing and drumming during the *dand ri* time and interfere even with the celebration of the clan god (*persapen*) feasts and Dussera *pu'a* and do not allow the customary procession. On these occasions they come and ask the Gonds whether they have permission from the D. S. P. for these celebrations, and when the Gonds have to admit that they have no such order, stop the proceedings and extort money. Even at mariages they interfere with drumming and the blowing of Pardhan trumpets. All these complaints coincide exactly with those made some eight months ago by the Gonds of other villages round Bela, and this year there was no improvement, although I had mentioned the matter to the Ta'uqdar. An additional difficulty is the police interference in cases of marriage by capture in which the captors are prosecuted, the police apparently considering it a cognizable offence.

We left Kampa in the afternoon and passed the villages of Mangorla, Toyaguda and Garkaguda, in which all the land belongs to absentee landlords or other non-aboriginals; the Gonds are there without exception tenants or labourers.

12th April. Saidpur to Chidhari.

Saidpur, like Sehaj and Sangwi, belongs to a Muslim of Korha. There are 30 Gond, 16 Kolam, 23 Banjara and 8 or 9 Kapu houses. The rents which the Gonds have to pay seem to be high; one man who cultivates with 2 ploughs pays Rs. 100. Nevertheless I found there a surprising case of a young Gond who owns land in Pamelwara, near Sirpur, but came here during the tiger scare three years ago, and works here as a servant.

At a short distance from the main village is a Kolam settlement of 16 houses called Dubbagudem. Until 3 years ago the Kolams lived on a nearby hill, but they have now settled in the valley, and half of them hire land from the landlord, while those who have no bullocks work as labourers. Only three families make bamboo baskets, and they have to pay per house and month Rs. 2 to a Rohilla of Adilabad who has taken the bamboo contract.

Soon after we had left Dubbagudem our way turned into a side valley leading southwards. We saw some fields of Sangwi on our left and a deserted hamlet with the houses still standing. The path grew atrociously bad and lost itself again in the rubble of a stream-bed where during the rains torrents seem to rush over boulders and rocks, but which lies now utterly dried up. On the slopes there was bamboo and here and there a tree with the first bright green leaves. The going was extremely difficult and slow, but we hailed the change from the tame plains scenery to this wilder and more familiar country.

It was past mid-day when at last we saw a small field carved from the forest, and soon afterwards, beyond a valley with a trickle of water between pools in its rocky bed, a village of some sixteen houses. This was Khanapur, a clean and very pleasant village, and we were once more struck by the orderliness of a Gond village compared to the villages of plainspeople.

Khanapur is an old Gond settlement, but it became deserted, and was then acquired by Hasid Khan of Adilabad. This was some ten or twelve years ago, and subsequently Gonds from various villages, as for instance Gunjala, where they had lost their land to Banjaras, came to settle. They pay the landlord Rs. 14 per plough, but do not pay the *nagar-patti*, since that is settled by the *patwdar*. The *chaukidar* collects, however, a *mamul* of Rs. 6, and they pay the ordinary grazing fees. Their main complaint is about the innumerable dues and fees which they have to pay to private contractors and their agents; thus Mudisiri, a Rohilla of Adilabad, has the contract for *mahua* flowers, bamboo and grass; last year his *jawan* collected under the first heading as. 2 per cow and goat, and in addition a

fine of Rs. 5 for the flowers eaten by the Gonds themselves. The contractor does not collect the flowers, however, and if the Gonds did not eat them they would perish on the ground. The "fee" for grass and bamboo amounts to Rs 2 per house. The *chir nji patti* is levied by Ismail Khan, a Muslim of Jainath;—last year he collected Rs. 4 from the whole village. Moreover there is the *pa ka patta* for the oil extracted from *mahua* seeds, and this too is farmed out to contractors. The Gonds also complain that the forest *chaukidar* does not allow them to gather and eat such jungle fruits as *tendu* fruits. Here in the midst of the forest, where no one else can exploit these fruits, this seems particularly senseless.

In the late afternoon we went on to Chidhari, which lies at the end of a valley in a lovely position all surrounded by hills. There is a Gond settlement of 30 houses, spread out at the foot of a hill and beyond a stream on the other side of the valley a small Kolam hamlet of six houses. Chidhari was an excellent choice for a camp, for there is a good rest shed built by its owner, the present Tahsildar of Adilabad. The Gonds told me that Chidhari too had been deserted when some 25 years ago a Komti of Adilabad acquired the land and it was resettled by Gonds from various places. Some six or seven years ago the village changed hands and was bought by Sanaulla Khan, the Adilabad Tahsildar. He collects a rent of Rs. 14 per plough, but the Gonds have not to pay any forest fees or *munul* except the normal grazing fees. They say that ever since their landlord is the Tahsildar, they are far less molested by forest and other subordinates. The houses are in exceptionally good condition and the whole village looks clean and fairly prosperous.

13th April. Halt Chidhari.

One of the main reasons for our coming to Chidhari is the presence of the Torosam *persa pen* and the Torosam *katora*, and we spent most of the morning hearing the story of this clan god.

The traditional home of the Trosam *persa pen* is Narnur, but since Lambaras acquired much of the land, the Gonds had so much trouble that they moved the god to Chidhari. The shrine containing the stones representing the clan ancestors, which may

not be moved, is, however, still in Narnur, and lies now, to the distress of the Gonds, in the *patta*-land of a Lambara. The *kamk* posts, the largest collection of *mundas* in this part of the Gond couutry, which are connected with the Torosam *persa pen* and where annually a big ceremony is held, stand in the midst of some shrub jungle nearby. A Lambara has been trying for some time to acquire the land, and the Gonds asked me if the piece of land, containing the sacred site, could not be vested in the clan-priest, as has been done in Keslapur for the Mesram clan-god.

In the afternoon I went to the Kolam settlement which lies at the foot of the opposite slope, separated from the Gond village by a stream, whose rocky bed contains now only a trickle and several pools. The Kolam settlement consists of about six houses, all quite well built and standing close together round a small square. There was no man in the village, but the women and children were not at all frightened, and a young woman sitting in front of a house, talked to me in the most self-possessed manner. She spoke in a singing voice, drawing out the words with an intonation which reminded me of Hungarian; she spoke in Gondi, and it struck me how very different her intonation was from that of Gond women and how far more attractive.

She told me there were now six families in the village while two had recently left and gone to a place near Indraveli. Now there were people of Kumra, Maravi and Siram *pari* in the village. She and her people had come some years ago from the vicinity of Sangwi because, as she said, they had heard that here they could do *podu*. However, the available area is fairly small and now only four of the six families do hoe-cultivation, while two have ploughs and bullocks. The latter pay Rs. 14 per plough, but the *podu*-cultivating Kolams pay only Rs. 3 per household. All these Kolams also dig for wild roots, using both hoe and digging stick. I was shown a hoe; it was an unworked piece of a forked branch, with an iron socket point protecting the working end. Two families make baskets and mats, and these have to pay per month Rs. 2 each for the bamboos to the contractor, a Rohilla of Adilabad.

In addition they must deliver to him baskets and mats without payment and every month one chicken.

In the evening Gonds from Khandala came to see me; they had the same complaints as the men of Khanapur and told of the trouble to which they are put by the contractors of all the various minor forest products. They say that the last harvest was very bad and so they are reduced to eating roots and *mahua* flowers; but they do it secretly, for if they are found in the possession of *mahua* flowers they are fined.

14th April. Chidhari to Gunjala.

We got up in the dark and started before sunrise. The first village on our way was Ghotpalli, which lies on the plateau amidst what seems very fertile land. It is said to belong to the daughter of a former Brahmin *patwari*, but the revenue is now paid by the Gonds direct to the Tahsil and this makes me believe that she must have relinquished her *patta* rights.

The great difficulty of the Ghotpalli Gonds is water; even now there is little water in their only well, and they fear that it will soon dry up and they will have to go as far as Khanapur, a good two miles, for water.

Some two months ago ten houses of Ghotpalli were burnt down, and the Chorgaon Forest *chaukidar* demands now Rs. 10 for each house to be rebuilt as gratification for himself; only if paid this sum by every householder is he prepared to go with the Gonds to Adilabad and help them in seeking permission to rebuild their houses. Since the Gonds are in any case very badly off this year, they cannot pay this and only one man has rebuilt his house by using old material. The same *chaukidar* has collected a great deal of provisions as *mamul* and demands from each house every six months two chickens.

A young Gond of Arteguda, a hamlet of six houses in the vicinity, also complained about the extortions of that same *chaukidar*

On the road from Ghotpalli to Gunjala through sparse, leafless jungle, we passed a deserted and dilapidated Mathura settlement.

Ghotpalli is still in Adilabad Range but already in Utnur Taluq, and with Gunjala we reached familiar country.

In Gunjala we found a Gond who teaches the *patel's* sons to read and write in Marathi, and he agreed to come to Marlavai for further training as a teacher. The *patel* himself is literate and has evolved a Gondi script, and written some stories in it. It seems to be influenced by the Marathi Modi script as well as Nagri.

The *patel* of Gunjala, Kumra Gangu, claims to be a descendant of the Gond Raja who owned the fort of Mahur. He says that when the last Raja was defeated and killed by a Moghal force, his infant son was rescued and taken to safety by the Raja's brother, who swore an oath that no member of his family would ever again visit the scene of the disaster. That is why Kumra Gangu has never gone and will never go to Mahur to see the fort of his ancestors.

15th April. Gunjala to Marlavai.

Arrived this afternoon in Marlavai. There is considerable enthusiasm for the school and part of the building materials have already been collected.

Marlavai,
April 27th 1943.

CHRISTOPH VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF.

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