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THE BHILS—A STUDY

THE BHILS

A STUDY

By

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BHARATIYA ADIMJATI SEVAK SANGH

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PREFACE

I visited the Bhils of Rajpipla and Khandesh for the first time in December 1943, when assisting Professor D. N. Majumdar of Lucknow University and Mr. P. G. Shah of the Gujarat Research Society, who were making an anthropometric survey of the tribes and castes of Gujarat. Between then and 1954, when I was appointed Director of the Tribal Research Institute, Chhindwara, Madhya Pradesh, I paid many visits to the area. During this period I toured extensively at all seasons of the year and acquired a working knowledge of the Bhili dialect.

That the Bhils, the third largest scheduled tribe in India, have not been studied in any great detail shows that even if we were to consider that the anthropologist's interest lies only with primitive tribes and their "cultures", there is still much to be done in the field of Indian anthropology. It is for this reason that I am allowing this book to appear as an ethnographic introduction to one small group of the Bhil peoples. I hope that in spite of its many imperfections, it will not only help to fill a blank on the ethnographic map, but also will prove useful to welfare workers of both State and voluntary organizations who are showing an increasing interest in tribal peoples.

I, for my part, regard the book as a preliminary to a projected work on Bhil social structure in which I hope to discuss family, kinship, clan and village organization.

I am most happy to acknowledge the assistance I have received from various friends and institutions. The study was made under the guidance of Professor D. N. Majumdar of Lucknow University, without whose unfailing help and kind supervision I would not have been able to complete this book. My interest in theoretical anthropology and my enthusiasm for field-work are largely due to Professor Majumdar, to whom on this account as well as on many others I will always remain indebted.

Mr. P. G. Shah, President of the Gujarat Research Society, first introduced me to Professor Majumdar, and I am most grateful for his kindness in this matter, and also for the material help he has been instrumental in providing which has enabled me to enjoy research facilities both in the field and at the Lucknow University. The Gujarat Research Society has generously provided a grant which covered the two and a half years' field-work among the Bhils and this book is, in fact, a humble return for the Society's help.

The Maharaja of Rajpipla, his Diwan, Mr. M. Masud, the then Collector of West Khandesh, the Chief of Sagbara, the Forest Rangers of Dediapade and Sagbara and Mr. A. V. Pandya, now of the Institute of Archaeology, Vallabh Vidya Nagar, have all earned my thanks for their help in the organization of my field-work.

This book is being published under the auspices of the Bharatiya Adim Jati Sevak Sangh, Delhi, which as the premier non-official tribal welfare organization has done so much for the tribal peoples of India. I thank the Sangh for their publication grant. Mr. L. M. Shrikant, the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Tribes, Government of India and Vice-President of the Sangh has always shown an interest in my work, and but for this interest, this publication would not have appeared. I am deeply grateful to him and to Mr. D. J. Naik of the Bhil Sewa Mandal, Dohad, and Mr. P. G. Vanikar, Honorary State Organizer, Tribal Welfare, Madhya Pradesh, who have read the manuscript and made many valuable suggestions. I am further indebted to Mr. Vanikar, for permission to incorporate in this publication a number of songs from his collection of Bhil folk-songs, and to Dr. T. N. Dave on whose learned analysis of the Bhil dialects I have drawn heavily. Dr. H. H. Presler of the Theological College, Jabalpur has earned my gratitudes for going through a part of the book. I cannot forget the kindness of my brother Mr. J. B. Naik, my brother-in-law Mr. R. B. Naik, and my wife, Urmila, who have all helped to settle difficulties which arose during my absence abroad. I am grateful to Professor C. von Fürer Haimendorf for writing a learned foreword.

And last but not the least I would like to acknowledge my sense of obligation to the Bhils, with whom I spent many happy days and with whom I shared the joys and miseries of tribal life. Here I would like to mention that wherever I have referred to a not altogether happy incident in connection with either Bhils or non-Bhils, this has been done without malice and with the best of scientific intentions. Lest the material here published should have unfavourable repercussions on either my Bhil or non-Bhil friends, I have used pseudonyms for the persons and places involved.

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20th June, 1956
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Note: The editing and printing of the manuscript have been done during my absence from India. Every attempt has been made by the publisher to produce the book in a correct form. The misprints etc. are noted in the 'Errata' given at the end of the book.—T.B.N.

FOREWORD

Twenty years ago J. H. Hutton commented in his foreword to W. V. Grigson's *The Maria Gonds of Bastar* on the remarkable fact 'that Indian administrators and British anthropologists should have had to wait a century for any detailed authoritative account of the Gonds of Central India'. It is even more surprising that two decades later ethnographic data on the Bhils, a group of tribes with a total strength of over two millions, have remained as fragmentary as our knowledge of the Gonds was in 1936. If the Bhils, like some of the tribes on India's North East Frontier, had lived in age-long isolation, this lack of knowledge on the part of anthropologists might be explicable. But the Bhils have lived in contact with advanced populations for centuries, and their resistance to the extension first of Mogul, then of Maratha and lastly of British rule over their territories has repeatedly brought them to the attention of Government officers and historians. Consequently there is no dearth of casual references to the Bhils in the literature on Western India, and a critical account of these older data on the Bhils can be found in Wilhelm Koppers' study *Die Bhil in Zentralindien*[1].

Koppers was the first professional anthropologist to undertake an intensive study of any branch of the Bhil people, and his research, regrettably cut short by the outbreak of the second world war, has served to pose many problems of more than local importance. A comprehensive work on the Bhil tribes, however, is still a *desideratum* of Indian anthropology, and Dr. Naik, the author of the present ethnographic account of the Bhils of Rajpipla and West Khandesh, does not claim to have given us more than a description of the pattern of Bhil life in a limited area. It should therefore be valued as a contribution to Bhil ethnography, which together with similar

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[1] *Wiener Beitrage zur Kulturgeschichte und Linguistik*, 1948. Vol. VII. pp. 1-21.

regional studies[1] may in time provide the raw material for a comparative analysis of the Bhil problem.

That there is a Bhil problem no one familiar with Indian anthropology will deny. The first question with which we are confronted is one of identity. Dispersed over a large area in Western India the Bhil tribes do not form a group which is linguistically, culturally or racially definable. The only criterion of their basic unity appears to be the fact that everywhere they are known by the term 'Bhil', and that Bhils from different areas recognize each other as members of one people. The dialects now spoken by Bhils all belong to the Indo-Aryan family, and are related to Rajasthani and Gujarati. But there can be no doubt that this is rather the result of linguistic extension by Indo-Aryan speaking pressure groups than indicative of the original mode of speech of the Bhil peoples. Just as the use of Hindi by certain groups of Gonds of Madhya Pradesh as well as by such diverse tribes as Pardhans, Baigas and Agarias is not proof of cultural homogeneity, so the use of a number of Gujarati and Rajasthani dialects by various tribal groups known as Bhils is in no way suggestive of a basic unity of the Bhil tribes. While there is little doubt that at one time the Gonds now speaking Chhattisgarhi Hindi spoke a Dravidian language similar to the Gondi still exclusively spoken by their fellow-tribesmen of neighbouring areas, no group of Bhils speaks any but an Aryan tongue. Attempts to isolate Dravidian or Munda elements in present day Bhili dialects have so far been unsuccessful, and it is unlikely that traces of a common non-Aryan substratum will ever be uncovered in present-day Bhili dialects.

Anthropometric evidence is equally inconclusive. While certain affinities of some Bhil groups with such Veddoids as the Gonds and even certain South Indian tribes have been established through the efforts of D. N. Majumdar, Guha and Macfarlane, there is no uniform Bhil type and many Bhils

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[1] Such studies have recently been undertaken by Uma Bose and Y. V. S. Nath, but their results, incorporated in theses submitted respectively to the Universities of Cornell and Baroda, are still unpublished.

approximate the physical type prevalent among their non-aboriginal neighbours.

The social anthropologist might dismiss the absence of linguistic and racial uniformity as irrelevant, if all Bhils were heirs to a common cultural tradition. But as far as the available ethnographic data permit us to judge, this is not the case, and the economic and cultural diversity of the various Bhil groups is so great that so far it has been impossible to establish any common denominator.

When confronted with the question of 'What is a Bhil?' we find ourselves with no other answer than 'A Bhil is the member of a group of people who consider themselves Bhils'. The ignorance revealed by this answer need not however prevent us from speculating on a situation which involves two million people who, lacking a common culture or known tribal history, regard themselves as one ethnic unit distinct from the populations with whom they share their various habitats. There is, for instance, the possibility that all groups of Bhils are the offshoots of a single tribe, and that their present diversity is the result of political pressures and historical developments which subjected the branches to diverse influences. Adjusting themselves to various regional culture-patterns they may have lost their common cultural heritage without, however, losing the consciousness of a common origin and basic unity. On the other hand, as D. N. Majumdar has suggested, it may be that when more advanced populations established their rule over the aboriginal peoples of Western India, a numbr of diffrent tribes were classed together under the generic term 'Bhil'. Out of such a common classification may gradually have grown a common tribal consciousness, in the same way, perhaps, as at present in areas such as Orissa or Bihar the various tribes of 'Adivasis' are developing a sentiment of common destiny.

A foreword to an ethnographic study is not the place to pursue the one or other of these hypotheses, but we may hope that before long Dr. Naik will return to the problem of the Bhil tribes, and present us with a comparative study of the various groups. His intimate knowledge of the Bhils of

Gujarat and his position as Director of the Tribal Research Institute of Madhya Pradesh give him an initial advantage enjoyed by few Indians and no foreign anthropologists.

My own experience of the Bhils is slight. What I have learnt about the scattered groups of Bhils in the hills round Aurangabad has been published in an appendix to Volume XXI of the Census of India 1941. But more recently I had the opportunity of spending a short time among the Bhils of the Dangs, now a district of Bombay State, but until 1947 a territory ruled by Bhil chiefs under the overall control of the Political Department of the Government of India.

When I visited the Dangs in 1953 the Bhil chiefs had been divested of all power, and they lamented a development which seemed to favour such progressive populations as the agricultural Koknis at the expense of their own tribesmen. According to an agreement concluded in 1862 between the Bhil rajas of the Dangs and the British Government, the Bhil rajas had leased to Government the right of forest exploitation, but had retained certain judicial powers, not only over their own tribesmen, but also in regard to settlers of other communities. The discrepancy between the political status and the economy of the Dang Bhils at that time is of considerable interest. Basically the Bhils were a tribe of food-gatherers and slash-and-burn cultivators. They cultivated small millets on hill-slopes, where they had burnt the forest and used no other implements than axe and sickle. Even in 1953 only a small minority of Bhils owned ploughs and bullocks, and as slash-and-burn cultivation on a substantial scale was no longer permitted, many Bhils subsisted partly on wild roots and other jungle-produce and partly on the wages earned by forest labour. Though the economic basis was narrow and many Bhils lived in small round huts far inferior to the substantial, rectangular houses of Kokni cultivators, there was no doubt that until 1947 the Bhils had been the ruling race. Some of their chiefs, such as for instance the Garvi Raja, exercised jurisdiction over up to eighty villages, and operated a feudal system whereby they delegated their authority to inferior chiefs known as *naik*.

According to local traditions the Bhil rajas had permitted Kokni immigrants from the plains to settle in their domains. While the Koknis brought bullocks and ploughs, and introduced permanent cultivation into the hills, the Bhils persisted in their forest life. They levied taxes from the Kokni settlers, and sometimes a raja would call his Kokni ryots to cultivate a field for him, expecting them to bring their own ploughs and bullocks. In this way the economies existed side by side, and though the Bhils may have benefitted from the introduction of a superior type of cultivation by their Kokni subjects, they took no steps to model their own agriculture on similar lines. The relation between the two peoples was one of rulers and ruled, and even today Koknis will tell of the past oppressiveness of Bhil rajas, who would come with their bowmen, take possession of the Koknis' crops and cattle, demand supplies of food, and on occasions even abduct Kokni girls.

The co-existence of a politically dominant but materially backward ruling tribe, and a subject, but economically progressive peasantry, is an unusual variant of the relations between aboriginals and Hindu peasant populations. While the Koknis, so long as they wished to remain in the area, had no other choice but to recognize the political authority of the Bhil chiefs, they maintained their own ritual superiority in the terms of the Hindu caste hierarchy by refusing to accept food at the hands of Bhils and of excommunicating any Kokni who had sexual relations with a Bhil, even though the Bhil rajas imposed no reciprocal rule on their tribesmen.

Despite the inequalities of ritual and political status, the Bhils and the Koknis of the Dangs share in many respects a common culture pattern. The regulation of marriage follows among both peoples along the same lines, and the same annual festivals are celebrated with similar ritual observations and connotations. Even so distinctive a custom as the erection of memorial stones for deceased kinsmen is common to both communities, and it would appear that the Bhils of the Dangs adhere to a regional culture which at the present state of

our knowledge cannot be associated with any specific ethnic group.

When I compare my recollection of the Dang Bhils with the account presented by Dr. Naik, I realize the great importance of regional variations. Interaction between Bhils and other populations, be they tribes such as the Warlis of the Dangs or Hindu castes such as Rajputs and Koknis, does not everywhere follow the same course, and seems capable of producing a number of different social configurations. It would be of great interest to examine the modifications of Bhil customs and concepts in accordance with the various regional culture patterns, and such an analysis would throw light not only on the problem of the Bhils, but also on the process whereby diverse populations are integrated into a multi-ethnic society which gives an Indian region its cultural character. In the present book Dr. Naik has given us the material for such a study. It should be read not only by anthropologists but also by all those interested in the integration of primitive groups into the rural economy of an Indian region.

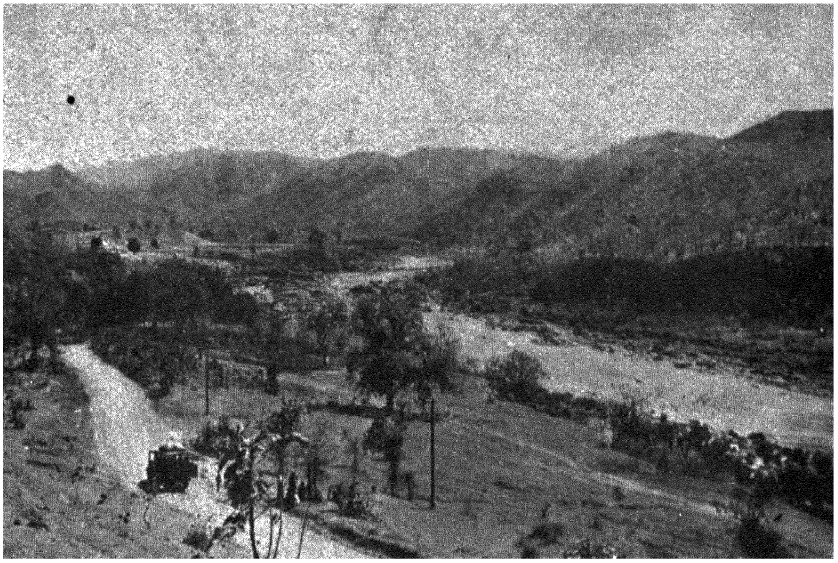
C. von Fürer-Haimendorf

London, June 1956

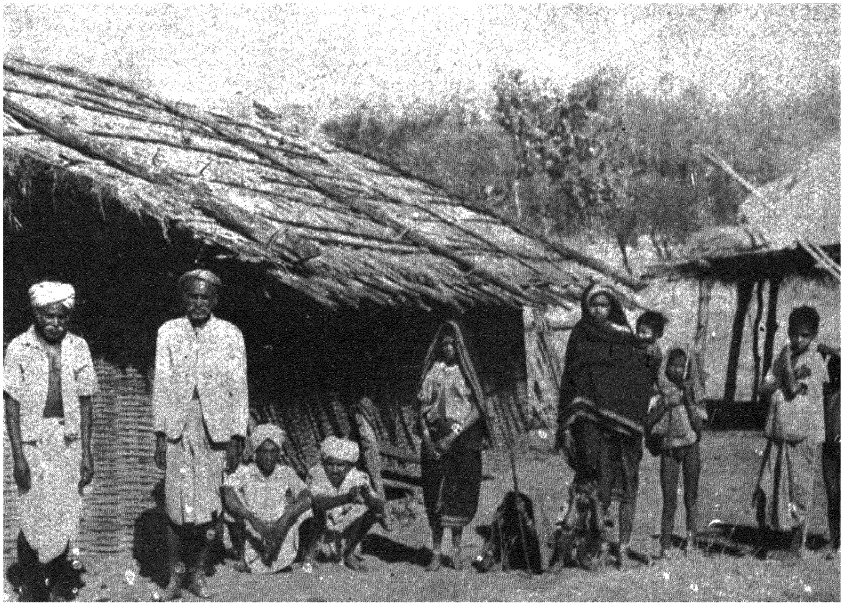
CONTENTS

Chapter		*Page*
	Preface	V
	Foreword	IX
I.	The Bhil Country	1
II.	The Bhil Settlements	25
III.	Social Structure	45
IV.	Bhil Economics	69
V.	Birth and Childhood	105
VI.	Marriage	126
VII.	Old Age and Death	152
VIII.	Religion	171
IX.	Bhil Mythology	202
X.	The Crime Pattern	215
XI.	Language of the Bhils	236
XII.	Specimens of Oral Literature ...	255
XIII.	Bhils in Transition	313
	Appendices	345

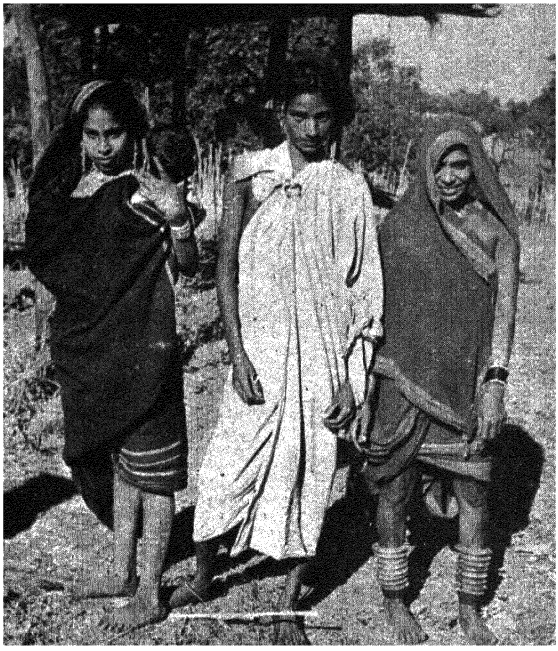
I. Genealogical Tables (Chapter III)
II. Answers to Riddles (included in Chapter XII)
III. A Glossary of Bhili and Gujarati Words Used in this Book
IV. Bibliography
V. Index of Authorities
VI. Index of Subjects



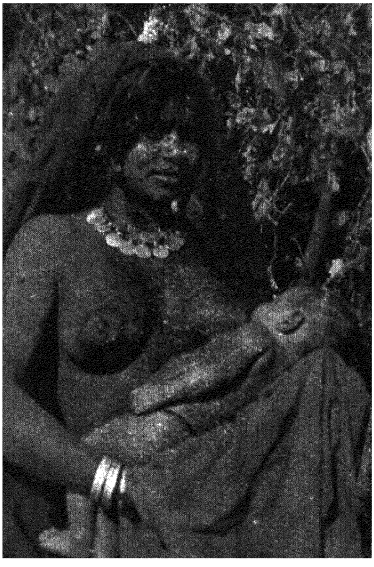
A typical scene from the Bhil habitat in the Karjan valley



A Bhil home in Dediapada



A Bhil youth with his wife and mother



A Bhil woman from Samot



Profile of a Bhil youth



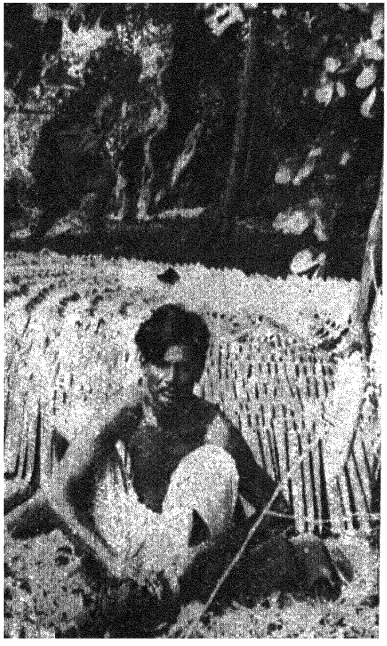
A Bhil woman with the traditional ornaments



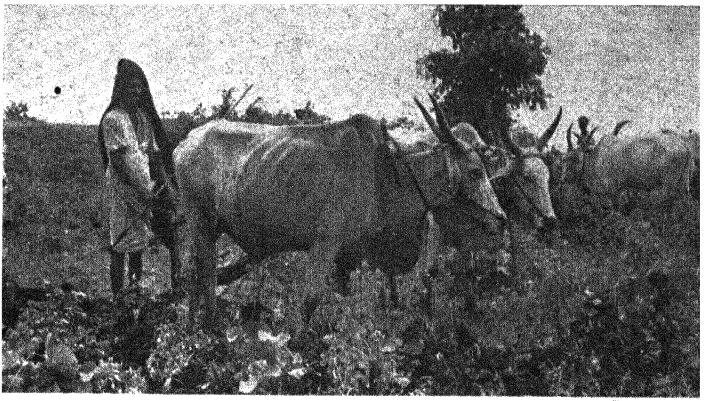
Bhil woman at the handmill



A *doyaro* group



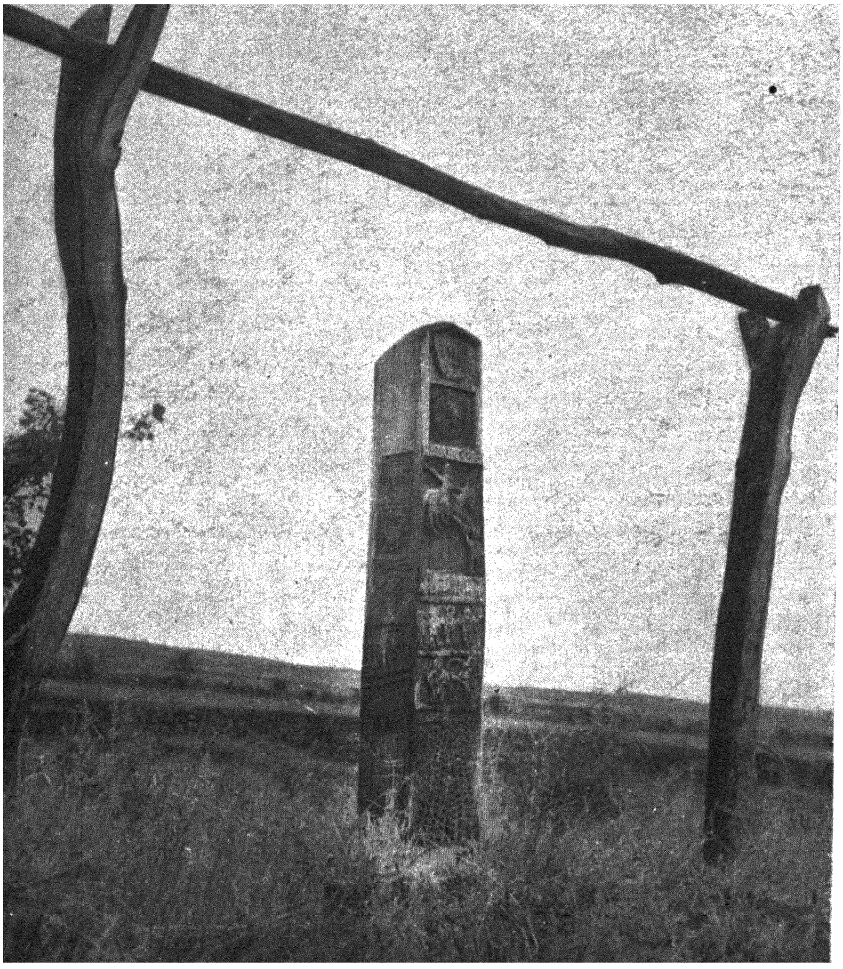
A Bhil youth making tiles



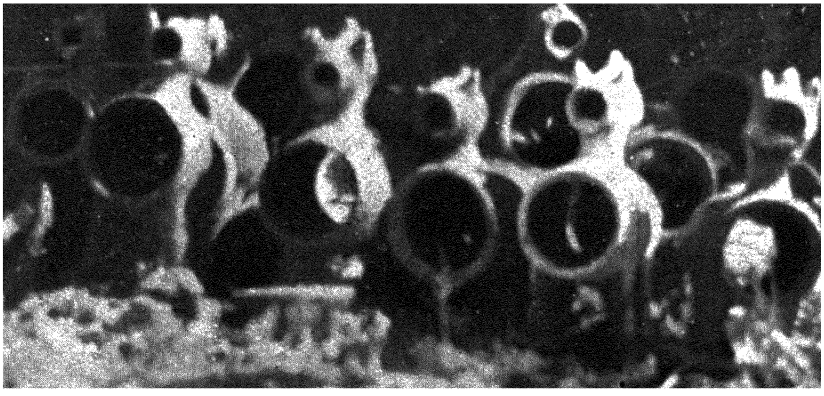




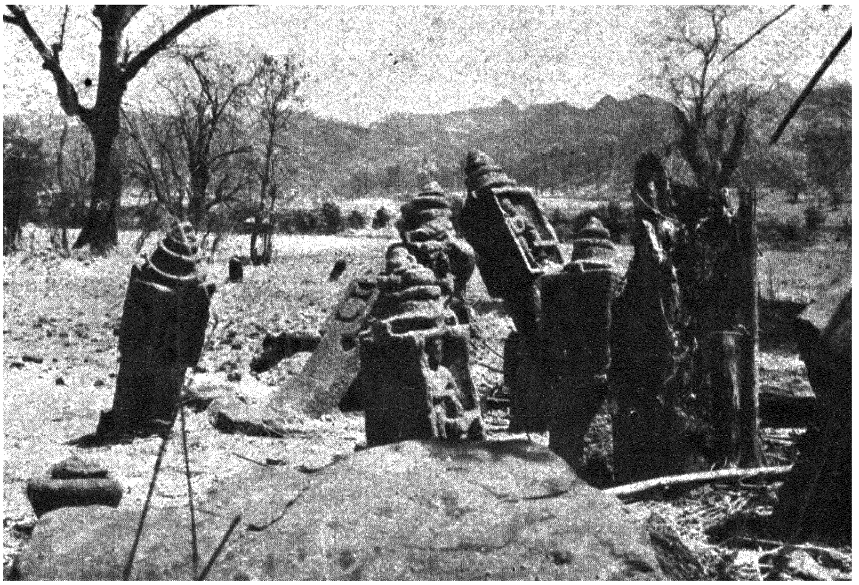
Bhils at work



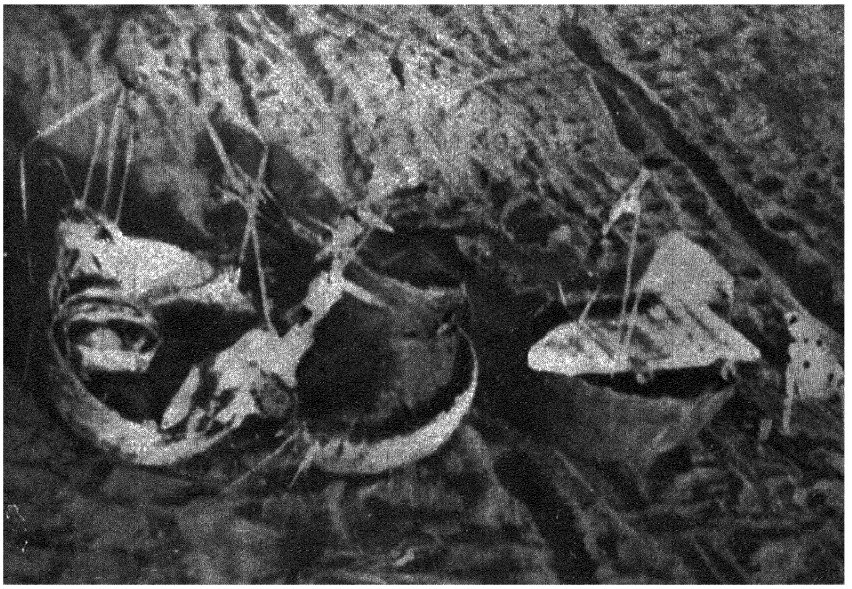
Anwat Pir — A Monument for the Dead



Ghoda Dev



Memorial Stones



Roth Kadhnu: "disease driven away"



Bamboo hut and basket weaving



Bhil women preparing for a dance

CHAPTER I

THE BHIL COUNTRY

The Bhils are a primitive people who form the third largest group of aboriginals found in India. Their population, numbering over two millions odd according to the 1941 census, is spread over the central uplands of the Indian peninsula, the bulk of it being in the region covered by the forest-clad mountain trinity of the Vindhyas, the Sahyadris and the Satpudas.

The Gujarat Bhil Area

The present work on the life of the Bhil people is based on a study of the Bhils found in the Gujarat area. Most of the material for this study was however collected from the Rajpipla and West Khandesh regions of this area. The other important region of this area is the Panch Mahals. The entire area stretches between longitudes 73° E and 75° E and lattitudes 21° N and 22° N.

Configuration

Two-thirds of the Rajpipla region is occupied by a continuation of the Satpuda range. The main rivers are the Narbada and the Karjan. The West Khandesh District is hilly; and Toranmal, the highest peak of the Satpudas, about 3,500 feet in height, is situated in it. The soil is rich in the plains. The Tapti is the principal river here.

There are two sections of the Panch Mahals which differ considerably in appearance. That to the south-west is a level tract of rich soil while the other portion is much more rugged and includes many varieties of soil, from fertile, twice-cropped valleys to barren, stony hills. Though there are many streams, the district has no large river except the Mahi in the north-west. The Anas and the Panam occasionally dry up in the hot season. Pavagarh, a mountain peak in the south-west

corner of the district, rises from the plain to 2,500 feet in sheer precipice.

Climate

In Rajpipla and West Khandesh the climate is exceedingly unhealthy, malaria being prevalent from September to February. The rainfall is below 50 inches. In the adjoining Mandavi region of the Surat District the maximum temperature is 90° and the minimum 62°, the rainfall being 45 inches annually. The climate of the Panch Mahals District varies from place to place. The well-tilled fields are free from any special diseases. Other parts, surrounded by large areas of forest and waste, even though not much affecting the residents, have a trying climate for strangers. The mean temperature is 83°. In the eastern part the monsoon is late in arrival and the average rainfall is 36 inches though it is much heavier in the proximity of the hills and forests.

Flora and Fauna

Teak, blackwood, *khair* and bamboo abound in the Rajpipla region and the West Khandesh District. In the Panch Mahals District are found, besides these, trees like the mango, *mahua*, tamarind, *rayan* (mimusops hexandra), banyan (ficus bengalensis), *pipra* (f. tsiela), the *umra* or *gular* (f. glomerata) and *khakhra* (butea frondosa) as also palmyra and other palms. Some other common trees in these areas are the *samra* (prosopsis spicigera) *karangi* (porgamia glabra) *bor* (zizyphus jujuba), *aduso* (ailanthus excelsa), *simal* (bombax malabaricum) and *shamla* (eriodandran anfranctuosum).

The commonest shrubs of Rajpipla, West Khandesh and the Panch Mahals are the *onkla* (alangium lamarckii) and *sitaphal* or custard apple (anona squamosa). Of climbing shrubs the following are met with: *kavaj* (murcuma pruriens), *gavaria* (canavalia ensiformis), ipomeo sepiaria, milk bush (euphorbia tirucalli) and prickly pear (opuntia nigricans).

Deers of many kinds and elephants were common in this part of India some two hundred years ago. But now, only tigers, jackals, panthers, rabbits and snakes of many kinds are found in all these areas.

Geology

The signs of disturbance in the lines of trap and the great number of dykes seem to show that Rajpipla and upper West Khandesh were, during the time when the trap rocks were formed, a great centre of volcanic action. In the eastern part of the Panch Mahals the earth surface is chiefly a thin layer of light red soil mixed with gravel. The rocks are believed to be metamorphic with a few trap outlines. In the western part all surface rocks are metamorphic and in other places metamorphic rocks alternate with beds of quartzite sandstone. Pavagarh is an outline of the Deccan trap. The mineral characteristics of the Pavagarh traps show ordinary besaltic lava-flows in some cases and otherwise a light purple clay rock. Besides quartzite sandstone there are other beds, mostly slates, conglomerates and limestones, with ferruginous bands occurring occasionally. Hot springs are found near Godhra in the Panch Mahals.

The Bhil Population

According to the census of 1941, out of the estimated 30 millions of aboriginals of India, the Gonds whose population

TABLE I

Province or State[1]	Population of the Bhils
Bombay	568,576
C. P. & Berar	29,570
Sind	82,118
Ajmer-Merwara	8,572
Hyderabad	18,021
Baroda	63,033
Central India	521,911
Gujarat	899
Gwalior	98,204
Rajputana	749,748
Western India	1,558
Total	2,330,270

1. The names of the various political units of the country given in this work are those at the time of study i.e., the pre-Merger days.

is 3,200,405 rank first, the Santhals with a strength of 2,732,266 stand second and the Bhils, 2,330,270 strong, rank the third. The distribution of the Bhils was as shown in Table I here. The table shows that the Bhils were mostly to be found in Bombay, C. P., Rajputana and Hyderabad. Even a casual glance at it reveals that they were not found in the Indo-Gangetic plains.

TABLE II

District or State	Population
* Broach and Panch Mahals ..	188,561
East Khandesh	49,697
West Khandesh	252,834
Nasik	77,484
* Rajpipla	144,753
* Baria	44,146
* Baroda	63,033
Total	820,508

Table II shows that in the Native States of Gujarat (i.e. in areas marked with an asterick) there are about 500,000 Bhils, the largest number being in the Panch Mahals. The present study, which fully covers the areas of Rajpipla and West Khandesh, is of a total Bhil population of 397,487—quite a significant part of the Bhil tribe.

TABLE III

Tribe	Population
Bhils	511,992
Chodhras	69,628
Dhodias	102,478
Dublas	120,265
Gamits	52,019
Naikas	66,672
Konkans	49,855

Hence by 'State' is meant a Native State of British India and the 'Provinces' do not include the States. Where a political unit of post-Independence India is however mentioned the context should make the meaning clear.

Table II gives their population in the Bombay Province.

The Bhils are the biggest of the aboriginal tribes of Gujarat as will be seen from Table III.

The Bhil population forms, in comparison to the total population of these areas, about 25% in the Panch Mahals, 50% in Rajpipla and 22% in West Khandesh. Obviously, for these areas, they are numerically a very important element of the population. The Bhils form 5% of the total population of Gujarat and are one of the four largest communities of cultural Gujarat. Thus their numerical role for the whole of Gujarat is also not insignificant.

TABLE IV

Indices	Distribution in the Subjects	
Head Indices:		
	No.	Percentage
Under 70 (hyper-dolicho-cephalic)	3	1.5
70-75 (dolicho-cephalic)	76	38
75-80 (meso-cephalic)	85	42.5
80-85 (brachy-cephalic)	36	18
Nasal Indices:		
Under 70 (leptorrhine)	5	2.5
70-85 (mesorrhine)	104	52
80-100 & over (platyrrhine)	91	45.5
Stature in cms.:		
From under 155 to 160 (short)	50	25
160-165 (below mean)	84	42
165-170	43	21.5
170 and over	23	11.5

Raciology

Herbert Risley measured 200 Bhils from Rajputana and put them as belonging to the Dravidian type.

According to him, their average cephalic index was 76.5, the maximum being 84 and the minimum 68; the nasal index was 84.1, the maximum being 105 and the minimum 63; and the average height in cms. was 162.9, the maximum being 176.4 and the minimum 147.62. Table IV gives these findings in terms of distribution.[2]

Though Risley's sample is big enough to give statistically significant results, his classification of the Bhils as 'Dravidian' cannot be accepted.

According to Haddon the Bhils of Khandesh have a nasal index of 94.8 while those of Mewar have 84.1 as the average nasal index.[3] Crooke identified them with the Dravidians.[4] We do not know the size of the samples on which these averages were based and therefore we cannot discuss them. Dr. Ghurye had taken some anthropometric measurements of

TABLE V

Reduced Coefficient of Racial Likeness

	Bhil	Chenchu
Bhil		6.11 ± 0.59
Chenchu	6.11 ± 0.59	

Crude Coefficient of Racial Likeness

	Bhil	Chenchu
	± 0.19	± 0.19
Bhil		1.94
Chenchu	1.94	

2. H. S. Risley, *The People of India*, p. 370.
3. A. C. Haddon, *Races of Man*, p. 107.
4. W. Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the N. W. Provinces and Oudh*, p. 207.

several people for his *Caste and Race in India* but he has not dealt with this important aboriginal tribe. In 1931 Dr. Guha visited several Bhil settlements in the Western Vindhyas and 'took measurements on 50 adults belonging to the Tarvi division and as far as could be ascertained of pure blood.' Table V gives the comparison between the Bhils and the Chenchus according to him.

Thus, between the Chenchus and the Bhils, the coefficient is small (6.11 ± 0.59). The racial strain represented by the Bhils is found among the Chenchus of the Nallaimalais Hills and seems to form a constituent of the Kadars who contain, in addition, a definite 'Negrito strain'. Dr. Guha comes to the conclusion that 'the aboriginal population of India shows a short, long and moderately high headed strain with often strongly marked brow-ridges, broad short faces, the mouth slightly inclined forward and small flat nose with the alae extended. The hair varies from wavy to curliness and the skin colour is a shade of dark chocolate-brown approaching black. This type is predominant among the aboriginal tribes of Central and Southern India. The Bhils of the Vindhyas and the Cenchus of the Farhabad hills may be regarded as representatives of this type.'[5]

Apart from other reasons than the unsatisfactory value of this coefficient, the number measured by Dr. Guha must be considered statistically insignificant. Just 50 individuals of a particular sub-section of a tribe cannot tell what it has been made to. Says Mahalanobis: 'Recent statistical analysis of anthropometric data has shown how unsafe it is to draw general conclusions from data based on a small number of individuals. Small samples may not represent the group.'[6] The sample chosen must be big enough to make allowances for all possible vagaries in the choosing of it: 'It is hence necessary to choose samples which are to be used in racial comparisons in such a way that each represents a number of different families and with no single family represented by an appreciably larger proportion of individuals than any other.

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5. B. S. Guha, *Census of India* 1931, Vol. I., Part 3, p. LXII.
6. *Sankhya*, March 1949, Vol. 9, Parts 2 and 3, p. 99.

This condition is necessarily fulfilled if the sample is a large one drawn from a contemporaneous population.'[7] And 'the anthropologist who deduces theories of racial mixture or relationship from the peaks of small distributions is deceiving himself by building on a statistical foundation which is unsound owing to the inadequacy of the evidence. He is trying to get more information from his material than he possibly can.'[8]

Thus we have to accept Dr. Guha's findings with caution. Another unsatisfactory characteristic of his data is that the Tarvis are not a pure-blood group of the Bhils. Because there are Hindu Tarvis and Muslim Tarvis who are of mixed blood, besides the pure Tarvis; and we don't know which group he measured.

Stephen Fuchs measured 86 Bhils in 1944 from the then Jhabua State, Central India. Here is found one of the most primitive groups of the whole Bhil tribe. He found that:

> "The average Bhil is of medium height. Of 86 Bhils measured, only 7 were above 270 cms. in stature, while 27 were below 160 cms. Of them 36% were found to be dolicho-cephalic, 59.3% meso-cephalic, 3.5% brachy-cephalic and 1.2% hyper-brachy-cephalic. As for the face, most of them have round or oval faces. The chin is usually round or oval and slightly receding. The forehead is straight or somewhat retreating; super-orbital ridges are generally well-developed. As for the nose: 1.2% were leptorrhnie, 39.5% mesorrhine, 53.5% platyrrhine and 5.8% hyper-platyrrhine. The nasal root is often depressed. The complexion of the Bhils is of a dark-brown colour generally while black or pale individuals are rare. The eye-colour is brown or dark-brown; a few also have light brown eyes. They have no epicanthric fold. Nobody had wavy or curly hair; and most of them had sparse beard hair and no or little body hair.'[9]

Dr. D. N. Majumdar measured in 1944, 187 Bhils from the Panch Mahals District. The mean measurements of the Bhil given by him are shown in Table VI.

7. G. M. Morant, 'Biometrician's view of Race in Man', *Man*, July 1934, Art. 126, p. 99.

8. Morant, 'The use of statistical methods in investigation of problems of classification in Anthropology', *Biometrica*, Vol. 31, Parts 1 and 2, July 1939.

9. Stephen Fuchs, *Census of India* 1941, Vol. XVI, Holkar State. Part I, pp. 300-303.

TABLE VI

Characters	Mean Values
Stature	162.67 ± .499
Max. head breadth ..	137.48 ± .339
Max. head length ..	181.87 ± .430
Bizygomatic breadth ..	131.32 ± .335
Nasal length ..	48.60 ± .241
Nasal breadth ..	37.49 ± .176
Total facial length ..	112.22 ± .486
C. I.	75.65 ± .206
N. I.	77.19 ± .593
T. F. I.	85.64 ± .362

Besides this, Majumdar has worked out the significant ratios for the Bhils of the Panch Mahals and other groups like the Korwas, the Majhis, the Oraons and the U. P. Brahmins. From these he comes to the conclusion that the Bhils have longer noses than the pre-Dravidian tribes; because the ratio with regard to this character is very high between the Bhils and the pre-Dravidian tribes (above 10.0) while between the Bhils and the Chhatris it is 3.75. The Bhils show significant differences from the high caste people of North India, the Brahmins of the eastern districts of the U. P. (and those of western districts as well) and also from the Chhatris of the U. P. who are long-headed and leptorrhine.

Of the eleven absolute characters, in only three, viz., bizygomatic breadth, bigonial breadth and total facial length do the Bhils show no significant differences with the Korwas, an aboriginal tribe living near the Kaimur range in the U. P. In the remaining eight, the ratios are above 6, showing real divergences. Similarly they are also proved different from the Majhis and the Kharwars, two other tribal people. 'The more we analyse the data' says Majumdar, 'the more it transpires that the Bhils are racially more distant from the so-called pre-Dravidian groups, while they approach nearer to the higher castes.'[10]

10.. Dr. D. N. Majumdar, 'Racial Affiliation of the Bhils of Gujarat,'

In a more recent anthropometric survey of the West Khandesh Bhils, Majumdar finds them to be somatologically different from the Panch Mahals Bhils though both are racially quite distant from the pre-Dravidian and the so-called Negrito races. It seems, he says, 'Bhil' is a generic name given to the various older and simpler peoples of the land by other invading peoples. The same is the case with the Rajputs who do not represent a racially homogeneous type. [11] This seems to be a balanced view.

Blood-Groups

Blood-group evidence has proved useful in the study of races, especially when it finds support in anthropometry. It is no doubt true that the blood group is only one of several genetic characters and as such no significant analysis is possible on the basis of such a character; but it is a very valuable one in combination with other measurements. It will be of interest hence to know something about the Bhil blood-groups.

Macfarlane tested 44 blood samples from Bhils of both the sexes from the Kaninad Taluk of the Aurangabad District and found in them 31.8% O, 13.6% A, 52.3% B and 2.3% AB; and from this she concludes that in the Bhils we have one of the reservoirs of group B in India, which has percolated from them to higher social castes.[12] In another paper she has recorded the blood-groups of 140 Bhils as 18% O, 23.6% A, 41.4% B and 16.4% AB.[13]

Dr. D. N. Majumdar blood-grouped 369 Bhils of the Panch Mahals District and it gave him the following percentage distribution:—37% O, 27.5% A, 26.5% B and 9% AB. The blood-groups of 150 Rajpipla Bhils according to him were 38.4% O, 24.3% A, 28.8% B and 8.5% AB.[14]

Journal of the Gujarat Research Society, Vol. 6 (1944), No. 4.

11. Cf. references in old literature, p. 11.

12. E. W. E. Macfarlane, 'Blood-grouping in the Deccan and Eastern Ghats', *J. R. A. S. B.*, Vol. 6, 40, No. 5.

13. Macfarlane, 'Blood-groups in India,' *American Journal of Physical Anthropology,* Vol. 38, No. 4.

14. D. N. Majumdar 'The Bhils of Gujarat,' *Journal of the Gujarat Research Society,* Vol. 4, 1942, No. 4.

Macfarlane's Bhil blood-groups show a very high incidence of B which Majumdar's samples do not corroborate. It may be that the number tested by her was relatively small and the Bhils she measured belonged to a closed kinship group. As the Bhils of the Panch Mahals and Rajpipla surveyed by Majumdar agree with respect to their blood-groups, it is doubtful if the Bhils can be taken, as suggested by Macfarlane, to be a source of B Mutation. Majumdar does not find much affinity between the Bhils and the other aboriginal people either in anthropometric characters or in blood-groups; and he thinks that the Bhils do not probably belong to the same aboriginal strains as the Chenchus or the Munda tribes do.[15] Even if the Bhils were originally of the same racial stock, the indications are that they have been thoroughly hybridised by contacts with alien races. Uma Bose, in a paper read before the Indian Science Congress (1950) on the blood-groups of the Bhils, supports this view of Majumdar.

Bhils in Old Literature

The Bhils are referred to in ancient Sanskrit, and later Apabhramsa, literature, which throw light on their history and also on the attitudes of other peoples towards these forest-dwellers. But here it should be noted that the word 'Bhil' and some similar terms used by ancient writers include almost any forest people and one has therefore to be on one's guard while generalising about the Bhils from these references.

For the first time Nishadas are referred to in the later Samhitas and the Brahmanas. Nishada is a word referred to therein 'which seems to denote not so much a particular tribe but to be the general term for the non-Aryan tribes who were not under Aryan control as the Shudras were.[16] In Yaska's *Nirukta* the Nishadas have been distinguished from the four Varnas. The word 'Nishada' of the *Vajsaneyi Samhita,* according to Law, is explained by the commentator Mahindra to mean a Bhil or Bhilla.[17] According to the writers of the *Vedic Index* a village of Nishada's is mentioned in the *Latyana*

15. From a personal talk with him.
16. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index,* Vol. I, p. 453.
17. B. C. Law, *Ancient Indian Tribes,* Vol. II, p. 61.

Srauta Sutra (VIII. 2, 8) and a Nishada *sthapati* is referred to in the *Katyayana Srauta Sutra* (I, I, 12). According to Weber, the Nishadas were settled aborigines.

Manu, the famous legist, explains the origin of the Nishada as the offspring of a Brahmin father and a Shudra mother. The social duty enjoined on the Nishadas was to kill and provide fish for consumption by the people.[18] According to Enthoven, the earliest mention of the word 'Bhil' occurs in Gunadhya's famous *Katha-Sarit-Sagara* wherein mention is made of a Bhil chief opposing the progress of another king through the Vindhyas.[19]

During the period represented by the Pauranic traditions, the Nishadas seem to have their habitat among the mountains that form the boundaries between Jhalwa and Khandesh—the Vindhya and Satpuda ranges. This is proved by the reference to a *Nishada rastra* in the *Mahabharata* in the region of the Saraswati and the Western Vindhyas, not far from Paripatra.[20]

The Pauranic account of the Bhils traces their descent from the thigh of Vena, son of Anga, a descendant of Manu Swayambhu. Vena was childless and the sage therefore rubbed his thigh and produced 'a man like a charred log with a flat face and extremely short.' He was told to sit down (*ni shad*) and was so known as Nishada, 'from whom sprang the Nishadas dwelling on the Vindhya Mountains, distinguished by their wicked deeds.'[21]

There is another version of the Vena episode, which specifically mentions the descent of the Bhils. Vena was tainted with sin and so the Rishis went to him; but he signalled them to depart by a wave of his hand. At this one of them, named Angira, cursed him. Due to this curse, the offending hand was turned into a churning stick, from which sprang Nishada. When the Rishis began to churn with the left hand three more men came out, Mushahantara, Kolla and Villa, the first ancestors of the Mushahars, Kols and Bhils.[22]

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18. Manu, *Sanscrit Texts*, Vol. I, p. 481.
19. Enthoven, *Tribes and Castes of Bombay*, Vol. I, article on 'Bhil'.
20. Law, op. cit., p. 62.
21. See *Mahabharata*, *Vishnu Purana*, *Hari Vamsa*, etc.
22. S. C. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country*, p. 34.

A tradition ascribes the origin of the Bhils to Mahadeva, who was said to have fallen in love with a forest girl. He had numerous progeny by her. One of them was ugly and vicious, and he distinguished himself finally by slaying his father's favourite bull, and for this he was expelled from the habitation of men. From this son descended the Bhils.[23] In the *Parashara Sahmita* it is stated that the Bhils were born of a Brahmin woman to a Tivara father.

The *Mahabharata* also refers to God Shankara, who was bewitched by the beauty of a Bhil girl, who in fact was Parwati who wanted to marry the god. At another place, there is a very long description of the fight between the renowned Arjuna and the same God Shankara who was disguised as a Bhil or Kirata. The Sanskrit poem, *Kiratarjuniyam,* was written by Bharavi on this fight.

Lord Krishna was said to have been killed by a Bhil's arrow. It was on account of this that it was ordained that the Bhil should never again be able to draw the bow with the forefinger of the right hand. 'Times have changed since then, but I noticed in examining their hands that few could move the forefinger without the second finger; indeed the fingers appeared useless as independent members of the hands.'[24]

There are many references to the Bhils in the *Ramayana.* Valmiki, from whose pen this great epic had its birth, was himself a Bhil named Valia, according to the traditional accounts of his life. He was a highway robber. One day a sage prevailed upon him to repeat "Mārā", the reverse of Shree Rama's name; he did it with so much devotion that the gods were pleased with him. He thus became a great sage whose sorrow *(shokah)* turned afterwards into poetry *(shlokah)*—on seeing a *krauncha* couple being shot by a fowler.[25]

There again is the reference to King Guhaka of the Nishadas, who are described as a wild band. This King Guhaka ferried Shree Rama across the Sarayu. He wanted to wash Rama's feet lest Rama's touch should turn his boat

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23. H. B. Rowney, *The Wild Tribes of India,* p. 23.
24. Major Hendley, *An account of the Bhils,* p. 369.
25. Bhavabhuti, *Uttara Ramacharitam.*

into a lady. Because once before, his touch had turned a stone into the woman Ahalya.

Shabari, who is also referred to in the *Ramayana,* is known to the Hindus as one of Rama's greatest devotees. She was a Bhil woman. Rama was to visit her *ashram* en route to his destination in the forest. She wanted to give him the best and the sweetest of her collection of fruits. The best way to find these out was to taste a little of each one of them, she thought and accordingly did so. Rama was much pleased with the Bhil woman's devotion and did not mind eating the *uchchishtha* (left over after eating).

The famous *Kadambari* of Bana Bhatta has a reference to a Shabara lieutenant who is described as being very strong, wide-shouldered and as black as soot. According to Pali texts the Shabaras were wild hunters and fishermen.[26] Last but not the least important reference to the Khandesh Bhils is by Abul Fazal in the famous *Ain-i-Akbari.* He has nothing but praise for the Bhils' obedience to law and preseverance in day-to-day affairs of life.[27]

Here is what the Dravidian literature has to say on the Bhils: 'It is commonly held that the word 'Bhil' is derived from a Dravidian word for a bow—*'bil'*—which is the characteristic weapon of the tribe. The ancient Tamil poets termed certain savages of the pre-Dravidian blood as Villawar (bowmen) who may possibly be identified with the modern Munda tribes such as the Kols, the Santals etc. The tribal name is not used by the members of the Bhil tribe among themselves; they employ the usual titles of relationship or position such as *bap,* father; *tarwi,* headman; or *nahal* or *naik,* a person of honorofic title.'[28]

This is important because it gives us an idea of the antiquity of the Bhils. 'The oldest tribes who lived in Tamilakam were the Villawar and Minawar. The two tribes were evidently a primitive race which was spread over the whole of India as they are still found in large numbers in Rajputana

26. Law, op. cit., p. 62.

27. *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency* (*GBP*), Vol. IX, Part I, p. 295.

28. C. S. Venkatachar, *Census of India* 1931, Vol. I, Part III.

and Gujarat where they are known as Bhils and Minas and in the Kanarese country where they are called Villawar and Minawar.'[29]

Traditional Accounts

Traditional accounts about a people are not merely interesting but sometimes have very great historical value. There are several such accounts about the Bhils. Two are recorded by Venkatachar.[30]

One of these traditional accounts relates that a dhobi who used to wash his clothes in a river was one day warned by a fish of the approach of a great deluge. The fish was obliged to him because he had always fed it and others of its kins. It asked him to prepare a large box which would enable him to escape. The dhobi prepared the box and got into it with his sister and a cock. When the deluge came, King Shree Rama sent out his emissaries to inquire into the state of affairs. One of these heard the crowing of the cock and so discovered the box. Rama had the box brought before him and asked the man who he was and how he had escaped. The dhobi told his story. Rama made him face in turn north, east and west and swear that the woman with him was his sister. Rama then turned him towards the south, upon which the dhobi contradicted his previous statement and said she was his wife.

Rama asked him as to who had advised him how to escape. On hearing that it was the fish he at once had its tongue cut and since then that kind of fish has been tongueless. Rama then asked the dhobi to get about re-populating the world. The dhobi thus married his sister, by whom he had seven sons and seven daughters. Rama presented the first-born son with a horse, but the recipient of this gift, being unable to ride, left the horse on the plain and went into the forest to cut wood. He and his descendants became foresters and thus began the Bhil tribe.

Another tale relates how after their creation, five Bhil

29. V. Kanakasabhai, *Tamils 1800 Years Ago*, p. 99, quoted by S.C. Roy in *Caste, Race & Religion in India*, Vol. 17, No. 4.

30. C. S. Venkatachar, *Census of India* 1931, Vol. 1, Part II, p. 52.

men went to see Mahadeva. Parwati, seeing them approach, said to her spouse: 'Here come five of my brothers to ask for *dej* (bride-price) from you consequent on my marriage with you.' Mahadeva gave them a feast and then explained that except for his bull Nandi and his *Kamandulu* he had nothing to give. They, therefore, started for home with the Nandi. In order to give them something, however, Mahadeva placed a silver stool in their way, but they were incapable of seeing this. Parwati, noticing how they had missed the gift, sent for them and told them what had happened, pointing out that as they were not able to see the stool, there was little hope of their prospering. But she would do what she could, and so informed them that they must be very careful of the Nandi, whose hump was full of wealth untold.

On reaching home, one of the five suggested slaying the Nandi and obtaining the wealth. The others demurred, but he prevailed over them. No wealth was found in the hump and the five were dismayed. Parwati now appeared and told them that they should have yoked the bull to the plough and thus gained wealth from Mother Earth; but as they were so foolish as to slay the sacred animal instead, she would never look at their faces again. So she left them in displeasure. Thus for killing the sacred animal the Bhil has had to lead a miserable existence and be an outcaste ever after.

The following account, which was heard by me from the Patil of Toranmal, shows how the Bhils like to connect themselves with, or believe themselves to be the descendants of, the Rajputs:

When Dhar was ruled by the Solanki kings, once it so happened that the three princes of a ruling king sat down to supper. Times were not good and food was scarce in the country. Even then as they were princes they got something to eat. While they were taking their food, a hungry dog came into the room. The two elder brothers did not mind it but the youngest ordered it in angry words to get out. The hungry dog would not go without a crumb of bread. The prince lost his temper, took a stick and began to hit the dog; at the third stroke the dog fell down dead.

The elder brothers did not like it. They upbraided him

and said they could not live with him, a sinner. Either he should go away or he would be dealt with severely. He went out of the royal house and joined the services of the Barwani State as its Diwan. He prospered there.

Mulgam, a place near Barwani, was the stronghold of the Mawchis whose only profession was burglary and thieving. They heard of the prosperity and goodness of the Barwani Diwan and invited him to their place. The leader of the Mawchis had a beautiful daughter. The Diwan was placed in charge of this girl when they went out on their daily business. Love was the result of these two young persons' association. This went on for days and the Mawchi girl conceived. As soon as the people came to know of it, they asked her about the man. She would not tell at first; but at the point of the sword, she held the hand of the Diwan. The people married them both and the Diwan remained with the Mawchis. From this couple descended the Bhils, who still like to call themselves Bhil Naiks.

Another story of the origin of the tribe is given elsewhere in the book. In it the main idea is this: A fish which knew of a deluge which was coming told a good Bhil woman about it and advised her to hide in a water-tight chest with her brother. The Bhil brother and sister did so and after the deluge had subsided, the gods gave them help and they lived happily and bore many children who became the forefathers of the tribe.

A story (not of the origin of the Bhils but relating to Bhil history) is also told of King Ahmed Shah of Gujarat. The King fell in love with the dauhgter of Asha Bhil of Ashwal near Ahmedabad. After her death he built a beautiful tomb over her, as beautiful as the woman was in life, and it can be seen even today on the Astodia Road of that city.

History of the Bhils

Thus according to these many references and traditions the Bhils seem to be the oldest inhabitants of Rajputana and Gujarat. They are historically referred to for the first time about 600 A.D. It may be that they are the Pygmies referred to by Ktesias (400 B.C.) and the Phyllitae of Ptolemy (150 A.D.).

The Bhils are usually spoken of in conjunction with the Kolis, who inhabit the adjoining tracts of Gujarat. The most probable hypothesis of the origin of the Kolis is that they are a western branch of the Kol or Munda tribe who have spread from Chhota Nagpur through Mandla and Jubbulpore in Central India to Rajputana and further on to Gujarat as far as the sea. If this is correct, the Kolis would be a Kolarian tribe. The Bhils have lost their language so that it cannot be ascertained whether it was Kolarian or Dravidian. But there is nothing against the Bhils being Kolarian, in Grierson's opinion. The tribes speaking Dravidian languages have not penetrated so far west as Central India and Gujarat in any appreciable numbers.

The Rajputs still recognise the Bhils as the original inhabitants and occupiers of the land, which is shown by the fact that some Rajput chiefs had to be marked on the brow with Bhil's blood on accession to the gadi. The same custom is prevalent in Rajpipla where the headman, *Vasawo,* of Juna Rajpipla marks the forehead of the new king of the State with a *tika.* Tod relates how Goha, the aponymous ancestor of the Sisodia Rajputs, took the State of Idar in Gujarat from a Bhil: 'At this period Idar was governed by a chief of the savage race of the Bhils. The young Goha frequented the forests in company with the Bhils whose habits were better assimilated with his daring nature than those of the Brahmins. He became a favourite with these *Vana-putras,* or forest-sons, who assigned to him Idar with its woods and mountains. The Bhils determined in sport to elect a king; their choice fell on Goha and one of the young savages, cutting his finger applied the blood as the mark of sovereignty to his forehead. What was done in sport was confirmed by the old forest chief. The sequent fixed on Goha the stain of ingratitude for he slew his benefactor and no motive is assigned in the legend for the deed.[31]

The legend is of course a euphemism for the fact that the Rajputs conquered and dispossessed the Bhils of Idar (as of other places). But it is interesting as an indicator that they

31. Col. Tod, *Annals of Rajasthan,* I, p. 184.

did not consider themselves to derive the proper title to the land merely from the conquest but wished also to show that it passed to them by the free consent of the Bhils. The explanation may be that they considered the gods of the Bhils to be the tutelary guardians and owners of the land whom they must conciliate before they could hope to enjoy it in quiet and prosperity. This token of devolution of land from its previous holders, the Bhils, was till recently repeated on the occasion of each succession of a Sisodia chief. The Bhil land-holders of Oguna and Undri still claim the privilege of performing the *tika* for them. The former makes the mark of sovereignty on the chief's head with blood drawn from his own thumb and then takes the chief by the arm and seats him on the throne; the latter holds the salver of spices and sacred grains of rice used in making the mark.[32]

The position of the Bhils as the oldest inhabitants of the country was also recognised by their employment in the capacity of village watchmen. A watchman must know the village boundaries and keep watch and ward over them and it was supposed that the oldest class of residents would know them best.[33] They worked in the office of Manker, the superior village watchman in Nimar and also in Berar. Grant Duff states that the Ramosi and Bhil people were employed as village guards by the Marathas.[34]

The Rajputs at first seem to have treated the Bhils leniently. Inter-marriages were frequent, especially with the families of Bhil chiefs. A new caste called Bhilala had thus arisen composed of the descendants of mixed Rajput and Bhil marriages. Instances occasionally occurred in which the children of a Rajput by a Bhil wife were recognised as Rajputs. When Col. Tod wrote, Rajputs would still take food with the Ujale Bhils or those of pure aboriginal descent and all other castes also would take water from them. But as Hinduism became more orthodox in Rajputana, the Bhils sank to the position of outcastes.

When the Marathas began to occupy Central India they

32. Ibid., p. 185.
33. Russell & Hiralal, *Tribes and Castes of C. P.*, Vol. II, p. 281.
34. Grant Duff, *History of the Marathas*, Vol. I, p. 28.

treated the Bhils with great cruelty. A Bhil caught in a disturbed part of the country was without inquiry flogged and hanged. Hundreds were thrown over high cliffs and large bodies of them, assembled under promise of pardon, were beheaded or blown with guns. Their women were mutilated or smothered by smoke and their children smashed to death against stones.[35] The treatment may to some extent have been deserved owing to the predatory habits and cruelty of the Bhils, but its result was to make them utter savages, with their hand against everyone as they believed everybody to be against them. From their strongholds in the hills they laid waste the plain country, holding villages and towns to ransom and driving off cattle. No traveller passed with impunity through the hills except in convoys too large to be attacked.

In Khandesh during the disturbed period of the wars of the Sindhia and the Holkar about 1800 A.D., the Bhils betook themselves to highway robbery and lived in bands either in mountains or in villages close to them. The revenue contractors were unable or unwilling to spend money in the maintenance of soldiers to protect the country and the Bhils in a very short time became so bold as to appear in bands of hundreds and attack towns, carrying off either cattle or hostages for whom they demanded handsome ransoms.

In Gujarat too they were hereditary and professional plunderers—'soldiers of the night', as they themselves said they were.[36] Malcolm said of them after peace had been restored to Central India: 'Measures are in progress that will, it is expected, soon complete the reformation of a class of men who, believing themselves doomed to be thieves and plunderers, have been confirmed in their destiny by the oppressions and cruelty of neighbouring governments, increased by an avowed contempt for them as outcastes.'[37]

The reclamation and pacification of the Bhils is inseparably associated with the name of Lt., afterwards Sir, James Outram. The Khandesh Bhil Corps was first raised by him in 1825 when Bhil robber bands were hunted down by small

35. Duff, op. cit., p. 28.
36. Forbes, *Rasmala*, Vol. I, p. 104
37. Malcolm, *Memoirs of Central India*, Vol. I, pp. 525 and 526.

parties of troops and those who were willing to surrender were granted a free pardon for past offences and offered grants of land for cultivation with advances for the purchase of seeds and bullocks. When the first attempts to raise the corps were made the Bhils believed that the object was to link them in line like galley-slaves with a view to extirpate the race and that blood was in high demand as a medicine in the foreigners' country. Due to his matchless urbanity Outram drew at first 9 men as his bodyguards, one of whom was a notorious robber. This infant corps soon became strongly attached to the person of their new chief and entirely devoted to his wishes. His kind and conciliatory manners won their goodwill, his prowess and valour in chase their admiration. With the assistance of the corps the marauding tendencies of the Bhils were suppressed and tranquility restored to Khandesh.

During the 1857 Mutiny the Bhil Corps remained on the side of the Government and did good service in checking local outbursts which occurred in Khandesh. A second battalion was raised at this time, but was disbanded three years afterwards. After this the corps had little or nothing to do and the absence of fighting and higher wages, which could be obtained by ordinary labour, ceased to render it attractive to the Bhils; it was finally converted into a police unit in 1891.[38]

After this the subsequent history of the Bhils is one of undisturbed peace but isolation and poverty.

Personal Appearance and Physical Endurance

Most of the Bhils have a stature ranging from 5 ft. 4 inches to 5 ft. 6 inches. The ordinary Bhil is distinguished from other Hindus in the bazars of Rajpipla or Nandurbar by his head-dress down which flows his long hair, his torn clothes or short *dhoti*, his ear-ornaments and his sensitive and yet unsophisticated eyes.

The skin colour of the Bhils is generally brown and rarely dark, while people with fair colour are also seen among the

38. A. H. A. Simcox, *The Khandesh Bhil Corps*, p. 71.

Ujale Bhils in Rajputana. Exposure to sun and rain make many appear dark-skinned. Some may be very fair like the *Dajio* of Besna or the Patil of Toranmal whom I met. The Bhils of Mal Samot (Rajpipla State) are popularly believed to be very fair, locally known as Dhola—white—Bhils. Though they are not so fair as popularly described, they certainly possess a lighter complexion than their brethren elsewhere and other tribes.

The Bhil has an attractive face; broad massive jaws, broad forehead, fine or leptorrhine nose, nicely-cut chin and thin lips. He generally grows moustaches and shaves his beard. When bearded the Bhil looks like a Rajput warrior, though today some of his kind look emaciated and dwarfed due to chronic starvation. Though resembling the Rajput in his physical features, close observation may find out a Bhil here or there with a flat nose or a prognathous jaw. Small faces, though with leptorrhine noses, are also common among the Bhils.

Bhil women are fair and gracefully built. The two daughters of the *Vasawo* of Dhirkhadi have full and graceful faces, impressive eyes and smoothly rounded mouths with thin lips and light wheat complexion. Bhil women are seldom fat or plumpy. Agile in their movements and sweet in their talk, they are a pleasant lot wherever they are found, at work or in leisure. It is no wonder that God Shiva is said to have fallen in love with a Bhil woman. Old Bhil women are kindly and ready to help and answer questions. They appear haggard and worn out, with skin loose and the body bent.

Small Bhil children are a delight to see. I could not believe that it was a Bhil child when I saw Sonu's (Toranmal) son, a veritable lump of gold or butter. When the children grow up they develop slovenly habits and, with unkempt hair and dirty faces, they lose their looks. Girls, even if they are fair and tidy in their young age, soon loose their charm due to indifference to make-up and neglect of hygiene.

The Bhil has a fairly well-developed body. The carriage is straight; slender and lean, he owns a good appearance with proportioned limbs and fairly developed chest, buttocks and calves. He carries any weight generally at his back, tying it

over his shoulders, and crossing at the chest if it is his own kit. He may carry the load on his head also, if distance and weight so demand. Women and young girls also carry bundles of chopped wood from the forest on their heads. But most of the arduous work on the hills and in the plains is done by the Bhil himself.

Like the Nagas of the Assam Hills and the Hill Marias of M.P. the Bhils like to walk over hilly land. The Mathwari Bhils come to the bazar of Akkalkuva to sell their agricultural produce, travelling on foot thirty or forty miles over rugged country. They are excellent climbers. I have seen the Bhils of Toranmal climbing with ease and confidence an ascent where at every step one has to take care lest a little slip should prove fatal. Though excellent in field work, they are not adepts at household work. I often heard my cook complaining that the Bhils at my various camps did not wash the dishes properly. 'They don't care to.' But they are good labourers and can work when need arises for twelve to thirteen hours at a stretch. After the rainy season one year I saw the Bhils of Juna Rajpipla repairing the forest road of a length of two miles exactly in two days! As a rule, they generally prefer intermittent work.

A Bhil is accustomed to heat and cold. Toranmal reaches a temperature of 36° in winter, yet the Bhils appear to pull on well in their cotton rags. They carry fire with them when they go out or coil round it at night.

While talking to one another or to an outsider the Bhil will squat on the ground with his knees drawn up and hands resting on them. He will never sit in the usual Indian fashion with crossed legs. While eating he sits in the same position and when on a cot, he will lean a little forward, and will sit loose. Bhil women also sit in the same fashion. When standing a Bhil will usually stand on one foot, the other resting on something with one of the arms extended to support. Or he will stand on both feet, arms dangling loose. He squats to urinate. He may sleep on the ground on hay, or at times use a cot. He likes to sleep on his side with legs stretched a little towards the trunk and in sleep he turns from one side to another.

Character

About the Dangi Bhils, Wilson says: 'The most savage of the Bhil class are the Dangis, the Bhils of Dang.'[39] Rowney also says that the Dangis represent an unadulterated race.[40] Captain Graham says of them: 'The Bhils are the most uncivilized of all the wild tribes, with intellect barely sufficient to understand and totally unequal to comprehend anything beyond the most simple communication and with forms stunted by hardships, the bad climate and the bitter poverty in which they are steeped.'[41] Dr. Khanapurkar says of them that their bravery and faithfulness have given rise to many proverbs. They are filthy eaters and eat all things, are superstitious in the extreme, never enthusiastic about religion or gods but believe in magic and witchcraft.[42]

According to current proverbs 'the Bhil is the King of the Jungle; his arrows fly straight. He is always ready for a fight but he is also a man of his word and so is a safe escort. If you manage to please him he is a Bhil; if you rub him the wrong way up he is the son of a dog. He has a large number of children and in his household there is no dawdling as the family is always on the move.'

Though the above is true in some way, it does not do full justice to the Bhil. He is honest but if he does not want to care for you, he will not, try however you may. He is outspoken. Though he is filthy in his ways of living, he is very scrupulous about eating things. More of him will be said in the following chapters.

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39. Wilson, *Aboriginal Tribes of the Bombay Presidency*, p. 7.
40. Rowney, *The Wild Tribes of India*, p. 4.
41. Graham, *The Bhil Tribes of Khandesh*, p. 3.
42. D. P. Khanapurkar, 'Aboriginal tribes of South Gujarat', An unpublished thesis in the School of Economics and Sociology, Bombay.

CHAPTER II

THE BHIL SETTLEMENTS

The landscape in which this book is set is one of grandeur and poise. The new-comer to this land of the Bhils may be bored by the hazard of the journey—so rocky and dusty is the region, but the background against which the Bhil social economy is set will amply repay his trouble. It is a series of hills covered with low shrubs and saplings of various shades of green. They are decorated in summer either by the richly red *palash* blossoms, when the whole forest looks as if on fire, or by the bluish flowers of *tanach* or by the intoxicatingly sweet-smelling *mahuda*. Here and there between one hill and another are ever-green luxuriant bamboo-growths by which small streams wind their way; the whole forest otherwise abounds in teak or other timber trees. Nearer the villages, the land is often cultivated: there are *bajra* fields here, and wheat fields there. Scattered among the prevailing greens may be seen a mango tree in blossom, standing by a low thatched roof of a Bhil house.

For the Rajpipla Bhils, to the east rises the stupendous mass of the unbroken Satpuda range and its neighbouring peaks—their gods as also the homes of the gods; to the west is the plain country, where 'if they go the sea-winds would sweep them away'; to the north is the capital of the King under whom they lived until recently, and to the south flows the Tapti, the birth place of their god and 'the boundary beyond which different people live'.

The Satpudas are not remembered by the Bhils except when referring to them as the home of their High God. They do not lift their eyes; they look to the soil on which they live. Every piece of it is valuable to them, in fact they are hard-pressed for it. They speak of their country as a poor country where you have to labour with your blood and tears and yet starve. But even then the place is very dear to them. 'To you it is stones and hills, to us it is heaven,' a Bhil of Nivalda told me. Every piece of land and every tree and bush re-

minds them of their past—the houses and the hedges they have helped to build, the land they have cleared, the days when they had played as children while grazing cattle, and later on, had met for amorous encounters; so also the bitter memories of terrible pestilences that had come or of envious witches that haunted them.

This is the environment of a Bhil village. On the approach to the village, tied to the trees on the roadside are grass bundles showing the boundary of the village. This boundary is demarcated by the forest guards in order to enable the hired wood-cutters or *kabadis* to know if they are out of bounds. On the outskirts of the village will be shrines of two or three of the gods Gopehohan, Himaryo and Hanuman. Gopehohan is a snake god and his hut may be under a tree on which are fixed a dozen or more white flags. Himaryo has no particular place and Hanuman's shrine will consist of a stone smeared with oil and red-ochre. On the outskirts of some villages we find commemoration stones raised in memory of Bhil *Vasawos* of yore. By-ways, generally beaten footpaths or cart tracks, lead us to different houses in the village. Generally the houses are neither in groups nor in rows but are scattered. Thus a village sometimes occupies an area of two or three square miles. The fear of a neighbour being a witch, the dread of some potential infection and the requirements of safety against fire make the Bhil families usually live apart from one another. A cluster of houses is not, however, infrequent. Though this grouping does not necessarily correspond to any emotional or kinship ties among near neighbours, if they live in a group they prefer to live with members of their own family. The daughter and her husband or the son and his wife are the most common neighbours of a Bhil, as was in the case of the *Vasawo* of Mal whose residence is one of a closed group of houses in which the families of his two sons and his two daughters live separately.

Metaphysical desiderata and reasons of expediency play the most important part in the choice of a village site and also in its abandonment. Nowadays new villages are populated very rarely. Whenever the inhabitants of a particular village feel that their animals are dying out there or the

members of any family falling ill, they decide to leave their mooring and settle on a new site. Before settling down at a place they will see if there is any stream nearby; if there is, they will then put some grain there on a small platform made of *juwar* flour. The leader will cover it with a basket and put a stone on it so that birds or small animals may not displace it or get into it. He will join his hands in supplication to the Village Deity and ask for blessings so that he can settle there in peace. If the grain remains undisturbed till next day, they will take it as permission for habitation; if not, they will not settle there for fear of divine displeasure.

If the former, for a whole night they will dance to the tune of the tom-tom and the worshipper will offer milk to the gods: to Hanuman, the god who looks after the four-footed; to Himaryo, who is the god of the village boundaries; to Jaldevati, the water-goddess, to Khetarpal, the lord of the fields; and to Pandhar, the Highest Goddess, their Mother—Yah, as they call her. Then they will build improvised huts and when time and money permit, construct permanent houses.

The leader of the settlement is a socio-political authority. After several generations some of these leaders, distinguished for their service to the village, may be deified. On occasions of feast, such deified heroes are given votive food by the people. 'He also may eat who populated this village years back when cane grew as thick and tall as the teak tree,' they say.

The usual procedure followed in choosing a village-site is also adopted for building a house. Care in the selection of a house-site and divination are necessary to know the will of the gods. Before erecting the other pillars, the middle one is ceremoniously erected, a pice being dropped in the pit in which it is erected. On its upper end *kumkum* marks are made and to it are tied one rupee and four annas, a cocoanut, a betelnut, a red thread, some bamboo leaves and some *gulal.* The people of the village are given some *gur* in honour and joy of building the new house.

The Bhil houses, *koo,* are rectangular buildings, raised above two to three feet off the ground on a layer of earth

and stones, with walls, *khappedo,* rising upto four to six feet from the ground. The roof, *chhevaju,* rises at an inclination of 45 degrees from the two length sides, a house at its highest point being not more than fifteen to twenty feet. The houses are made up of bamboo thatch, mud and cow-dung plaster. The first portions of a house to be erected (after the middle pillar) are five or seven or any other uneven number of upright supports, *belu,* on both the length sides. Other higher supports in the middle come next; these consist of roughly-shaped teak branches or trunks. Rafters passing on these two side rows and the middle row of supports make up the skeleton of the house, after which it only remains to put split bamboos on these rafters both lengthwise and breadthwise. Over the bamboos some layers of teak leaves are laid and over the teak leaves a thatching of *vijal,* a specie of forest grass, is spread.[1]

The floor, usually cow-dung-covered, is often uneven. Some of the more careful Bhils beat it to evenness. The walls are of bamboo, sometimes woven to give a nice design, generally plastered with mud and cow-dung. All the walls are blind except the front one, which has a small door for the entrance of the inmates, both human and animal. In some villages the huts have entrances by the back side also though these are strictly private, leading to the kitchen-cum-sleeping rooms; no person not intimate with the household may go into a house through such rear door. The proper entrance is the front door, which generally remains open but is closed from inside by an obstructing bamboo at night and padlocked from outside when the inmates all go out.[2]

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1. The central pole is called a *dharon* on Toranmal side and *khamb* in Rajpipla. On this stands the central rafter which is called *modh.* The side pole is called *bea* and the rafter passing over it *valvo.* The roof-bamboos which are placed length and breadthwise are called *ari* and *padgai.* If there are tiles, these are called *nalva,* the wooden strips on which they rest are *khambhi* and *hidya.*

The length etc. are measured in arm-lengths, *hatha,* the length of a Bhil house being twenty to twenty-five *hathas* and width about fifteen to twenty.

2. The Rewakantha Bhil also builds his house in more or less the same way. It is built of two forked upright poles of *kher* wood, (acacia

The Bhil has a bamboo stand, *mali,* for water, just adjacent to the hut, generally to its back. On this is kept water for cooking and drinking purposes and anybody can take it out by means of a wooden cup, *dovi,* and drink with his palms, the cup not being allowed to be defiled by touching the mouth. He has in front of the house an improvised shed for cattle. A wooden cot or two also are kept there, whereon anybody can have his afternoon nap. In the dry season hay and grass are stacked over this shed. This is an infallible sign of a Bhil house; other tribes like the Goris and the Kotwals who live in some Bhil villages do not have this *mandavo,* which is a sign of an agricultural people.

In the front or at the back of each Bhil hut is a field fenced on one side with bamboo. It is called the garden, *yadu,*[3] and in it are raised chillies, brinjals, tomatoes and *valor* which are used as vegetables. Sometimes tobacoo and gram are also grown in it. The cattle-shed being near, cow-dung is thrown here. Sometimes a few fruit trees are grown, like the mango or the lime. Occasionally one or two flower shrubs are planted or they spring up themselves.

The rest of the Bhils land-holdings are scattered all over the village, the fields being often very far from the homestead. Sometimes field-houses have to be built when there is heavy work to be done in the fields, generally when the *juwar* is ripening. At that time the whole family shifts to the field-house, leaving the village house. These field-houses may at best be called improvised huts. They are built from bamboo mattings without any ceremony. Closely akin to the field-houses are *malis* in the field, where the men or women pro-

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katechu), with a beam of teak laid across, upon which are fastened bamboos or teak rafters. The rafters are fastened to the ridge pole by boring holes through four rafters at a time, two going on one side, two on the other. If bamboo poles are used as rafters, they are chosen long enough to form both sides of the roof. On the rafters, some layers of teak leaves are laid and over the teak leaves is a thatching of some forest grass. The walls of the hut are made either of brush wood or of opened bamboos plastered inside with mud and cow-dung.

3. The Panch Mahals Bhils are said to live in their fields. But the Gujarati accounts of those Bhils do not tell us if it is a regular field or just a garden like this.

tecting the crop go only during the day-time and return home for the night. The *mali* is a raised bamboo platform some twelve to thirteen feet high and with steps leading to it, such that the whole field can be watched from it.

Minor repairs or slight alterations to the house are carried out at any convenient time, generally before the advent of the monsoon, and without any ceremony. The most frequent (generally annual) of such repairs is the re-thatching of the roof. Teak leaves and bamboos used for thatching are collected well in advance, and certain creepers (whose bark is used for fastening, *bandh*) are brought from the forest. When the material has thus been collected, the house-owner decides a day for the re-thatching and informs all his friends and neighbours. First of all the thatch and rotten bamboo are stripped off, the family often living outside in a temporary shade for the duration of the repairs. The renovation takes about three days' time. The members of the household are in duty bound to help their helpers in their repairs . It is exchange labour and very few people accept money as wages for this.

Quite a majority of the Bhil houses consist of three rooms, *orvis* and an attic. The richer Bhils have sometimes five or six rooms in their houses, which are bigger and better. The rooms, which are partitioned from one another by bamboo bars raised from the ground or by grain-containers, are at times rooms in name only as one room may extend into another. The kitchen, *randhkhanyo,* is generally in the rear part of the house where all culinary articles lie helterskelter. Suspended in the kitchen may be seen ears of maize or bundles of tobacco. There is no escape vent for the smoke. It has generally two hearths which may face any direction but the south. The hearth occupies a very important place in the house. The newly-wed bride coming to a house is ceremonially shown this hearth, which represents the centre of the home and its economic life. During Diwali they draw some pictures on the hearth and also on the kitchen wall. The kitchen is also used as a sleeping room but in the day-time the mats or mattresses are rolled up and kept elsewhere.

The cattle-shed, *ukhdo,* is a room near the kitchen.

Cattle are herded near human dwellings for fear of wild animals attacking them and on an emotional count. The manger, *gaman,* is deified and it is believed that the High Celestial Queen, Pandhar, shepherds it. This is also worshipped once a year as it is supposed to bring prosperity through the animals.

The other room is a retiring room used for a number of purposes. Hand-grinding, hand-pounding and such other work is done there. It is used also as a sleeping apartment and a store-room with a couple of wooden chests, two or three grain-containers, and some bamboo baskets.

The attic, which is a bamboo ledge supported by the rafters, is entered by a staircase, *nihno,* and is generally used as a store-house. Things which are not of immediate use as well as large-sized store are kept there. It is best to describe it as the place for the left-overs.

Sometimes in the front there is another room used as a drawing room, being separated from the inner portion by a blind and closely-woven bamboo curtain so that the interior cannot be seen from it. A guest is given his bed here. The petty officer, the Patwari or the forest guard on his rounds may also be conveniently accommodated here. There is no hard and fast rule, however, as to the things or people to be kept in any particular room of a Bhil house.

The Bhils are an agricultural people, though their technique of farming is crude and clumsy compared to that of the civilised world. A description of the agrarian economy of the Bhils will follow later on, but suffice it to note here that they carry on their farming with a plough and a pair of bullocks, which are highly valuable assets for them. Other implements that are found with them are weeders, axes, sickles, goads (made from a bamboo stick in which a sharpened iron pin is thrust), crow-bars *(pari),* rakes *(dharias),* hoes etc. as well as ropes.

They also have a large number of musical instruments: tom-toms, *ton;* cymbals, *kartanas;* a bamboo flute, *yabli;* a still bigger flute, *pavho;* a palm-leaf flute, *piyari;* a whistle, *piyho;* clarinets, *sanai; tamburs;* musical pipes, *tur;* a mouthpiece string which is held tight and vibrated with the nails,

tingari; a small *tambur* made from a cocoanut shell and horse's hair attached to a small stick, *mandol;* a small tom-tom; and a bronze *thali* beaten with a stick.

Their weapons are bows and arrows. The bow is made of bamboo, *tuu.* The string, *hite,* is either of a thin and long bamboo strip tied at both the ends with threads, *nands,* made from the *movasyo* plant or a strong rope, the groves in which it is strung in the *tuu* being called the *korpi.* Of the arrow the pointed part, *binkhi,* is of steel and is very neatly tied to a bamboo stick, and, at the other end of which feathers are tied and glued to guide the arrow's flight correctly. To kill small game birds they also use arrows without the steel point, making the end of the bamboo stick quite rounded so that it strikes with a strong bump. This is called *dosnu.*

The Bhils are experts in the use of arrows; the very name Bhil is said to mean, as said earlier, 'a bowman'. The story of the Bhil boy Ekalavya, who studied archery himself practising before the image of Drona when the latter refused to teach him, and who, after cutting out his right hand thumb as a present to the teacher could still shoot arrows excellently with his left hand, is well-known in Hindu mythology. In 1600 in a local fight between the Suba of Baroda and the King of Rajpipla, it is said in a Bhil folk-song:

> 'The Bhils flung their arrows far and wide;
> They were so brave that even dead they shot their arrows!'

Some of the Bhils have swords and I saw a gun also in the house of Bondo at Besna. Some of the Bhil chiefs are believed to have used cannons and known the art of making gun-powder. *Dharias* are also used at times as weapons of offence or defence. Big knives, *kayta,* are also used. Some of the Bhils are experts in throwing stones or missiles from slings and there are stories wherein the Bhils are depicted as routing their enemies just by the sling and stones.

For shooting birds, besides the *dosnu,* boys use *galols,* which is made up of two rubber strips joined to a small thin leather seat tied to a forked piece of wood so that pebbles can be shot with it very far. For snaring birds, they have

a device, *joado,* a frame-work of bamboo strips in which the bird gets stuck to one of the strips because of a gluey substance spread over it.

They also have traps for catching pigs and other small jungle game. I saw at Jharwani in Rajpipla a tiger-trap made of wooden blocks interspersed with iron bars and a door poised to close as soon as the tiger goes to taste the meat kept as a bait inside the trap. For catching fish they have small nets called *achh* tied to bamboo poles, big nets called *surpal,* and traps (made from bamboo sticks) of a conical shape.

The Bhils consider fire, *agi,* to be sacred. They never spit or urinate in a burning fire. Formerly they produced fire by striking flint against flint; today it is used only for lighting *biris* except when other agencies are not available, for safety matches are well known. Generally they maintain a fire at home; they put grass or wooden chips on the live cinders and easily get a flame whenever required.

The Bhils use a large variety of earthenware. Their cooking, drinking and eating vessels are all earthen. They do not make these themselves—they have not tried this; 'It is not our business' a Bhil from Navapur told me. These are bought from the local markets.

By far the most important single material for the Bhils is the bamboo, numerous varieties of which they grow and recognise; 'A single man has twelve names' as they suggest in a riddle and mean thereby the dozens of things in the house made from bamboo. In the hut, as already mentioned, bamboo is used for the walls, roofs and doors; the cart cannot do without it; a large number of baskets are also made from it; a kind of pickle is made from its shoots and its seeds are also sometimes eaten. In fact without the bamboo the Bhils cannot pull on.

They use the bamboo bark for a number of purposes. They weave mats, baskets and grain-containers out of it. They distinguish a score of bamboo baskets by the shape and size: A big basket will be called a *motho* or a *podulo,* a smaller one is a *chhibno,, poduli* or *chhapri.* A basket for bread will be called by a different name than that for grain. Then there

is the *godvi* for bottles; the *kondvo* for stocking extra clothes; and the *foari* for carrying grains. There is a large variety of graneries, some of which are: a *pandado,* a *kangho* and a *motho* or *mothi,* each larger than the one following it. Except for the bigger and unusual bamboo works like the big grain-jars, these articles are supplied to the Bhils by a caste of hereditary basket-makers called Kotwals.

It will be of interest at this place to see the household articles of a Bhil. Accounts of the Bhil as early as 1876 give a number of interesting articles used by his people. The cooking and drinking vessels were: an earthen curry-pot, *toladu;* a flat earthen dish for baking cakes, *kuladu;* a bamboo cup to sip from, *asan;* an earthen water-pot, *thandu;* an earthen bowl, *ram patra;* a brass bowl, *vati;* a wide-mouthed tin, *kansa;* drinking cup, *tasli;* a bronze plate, *thali* and an earthen jar for storing corn, *matlu.* Some of the other things used in those times were: One or two bullocks, a buffalo, some sheep and goats, a number of fowls, a cart and field tools including a plough, a weeder called *karpi,* a hoe known as *kodali,* a sleeping mat, a hand-grinding stone, a roll of blanket or a torn coverlet.

There is little change in the household articles used by the Bhil now after so many years. The same earthenware vessels and the same agricultural implements are to be found today. The following list shows the number of articles in the house of the headman of Besna, in Rajpipla:

In the kitchen: 2 cooking vessels, *toani;* 3 lids for these, *topani;* 2 earthen dishes for baking cakes, *khapatu;* 1 earthen vessel for kneading flour, *thoblu;* 1 string-support, *hiku;* 2 winnows, *hupe;* 4 baskets, *chhibno* and *chhapri;* 1 flat spoon, *chato;* 1 wooden laddle, *olaki;* 1 iron laddle, *karchi;* 1 iron flat-spoon, *theato;* 1 bamboo bottle-container, *godvi;* 1 churning instrument, *ruvi;* and 2 sickles, *dahlo.*

In the attic: 2 bamboo grain-containers; 2 grain-containers of another size, *foari;* 1 big granary; 2 wooden chests, *patya;* 1 earthen jar for water, *golo;* and 1 whole coconut-shell, *dungo.*

In the cattle-shed: 2 bullocks, 2 brooms called *halato* and 1 buffalo.

In the store-room: 1 grain-store, *pendado;* 2 pestles,

muhalo; 1 mortar, *ukhado;* 2 hand-mills, *koati;* 1 flute, *piyari;* 1 chicken-trap; 2 hens and 3 cots.

Hanging from the roof: 1 bundle of maize sheaves, *gumbu;* 1 string for hanging clothes; 2 fishing nets; 1 bigger net; 1 small net; 1 small fish-trap, 1 bamboo measure, *payo;* 1 ghee-container, *pashero;* and 2 bigger fish-traps.

The foregoing account will give the reader an idea as to the contents and the economic position of an average Bhil house and also testify as to the level of the material culture of this people.[4]

Weaving of cloth is almost unknown among the Bhils. Throughout my tour of the Bhil areas I did not find anybody weaving either for use or for wage. The Bhil's clothes are imported today from outside as ready-made wear. Some of the women's garments woven in Khandesh, having attracted the Bhil sense of colour, find ready custom here. Due to poverty they wear cheap and coarse clothes, the men's outfit consisting of a waist-cloth, *falu,* which does not go below the knee, a shirt or a *bandi* which is just a collarless coat, and a turban, a *paghadi.* When they are at home they work with the loin-cloth, *khoytu,* and the turban only. Modern sartorial fashions are also penetrating to these places and we find some of them wearing a waist-coat or a pyjama. Poverty is the cause, it seems, of their shabbiness as we find the well-to-do Bhils quite neatly dressed.

The Bhil way of tying the *falu,* which is a short *dhoti,* is not intricate: they wrap it lengthwise round the waist with one end—generally the one on the right-hand side—shorter than the other and the upper ends near the navel being tucked each to the other side in what is called an *oti.* The shorter end is taken back from below the lower side and folded in a four-finger-wide strip called *chhedu* and the upper end tucked there in the fastened *falu* itself. The same thing

4. The Bhils of Toranmal, who have the same material culture as the Bhils of Rajpipla possess the same worldly goods, the only difference in them being in the local shape and nomenclature. They call a plough *el,* the earthen curry-pot *handi* and the brass frying pan *tavlo.* The grain-container is called a *kangho,* the earthen plates *dumno* and bowls *watkis.* A comparative study of these dialects will be interesting.

is done for the front end which is tucked here and this is known as a *kachhadi.* Though the turban is no indication of the social status of the wearer it has become an inseparable part of the Bhil dress. Children are asked not to go bare-headed. A bare-headed person becomes the target of elderly ridicule and reproach; he does not indicate a good omen also. Every morning the Bhils have to tie their turban first; so they have a riddle for this: 'Which child plays with the hands as soon as it gets up?' The turban plays a still more important part in the Bhil customs: Whenever a man divorces his wife, he tears off the turban-end and gives it to her. Another kind of social responsibility rests on the end of the *dhoti.* It is never to be kept loose for fear of censure as a fashionable man; a man of easy morals is called one with a 'loose end', *chhedu-chhuta.*

The dress of a Bhil woman is made up of a *falu* either in red or black colour, both the waist cloth and the head-dress going by the same name, and a bodice. The female way of wearing a *falu* is to keep the left-hand side shorter than the other, the ends being tucked in an *oti* as in the male *falu.* The longer end is taken to the back from between the legs and is tucked up there in such a way that the lower side is once more stretched and tucked at the front known as *kachhado.*[5] The socially decent standard in wearing this cloth is that the shorter side must cover the whole thigh. Whoever keeps the thigh open is called a mischievous, *rangali,* woman or a woman running after many persons, *chhinwali.* The bodice, *angruthi,* is a recent addition to the Bhil sartorial outfit; otherwise they used to wear a *kachawo* which was broad enough to cover the breasts only, and it had to be tied at the back with two silken strings, *kot.* Even today some Bhil wo-

5. This gives a Bhil woman security; nobody can force himself on her against her will. The Bhil mythology gives a story where their High God had to use his teeth to untie this *kachhado* of his wife before cohabiting with her. Whoever keeps this loose is known as a woman of doubtful character. The wife's sister is always known as a woman with a loose *kachhado* because the man can enjoy joking relations with her.

men wear this *kachawo.*[6]

Among the Bhils, those who can afford wear shoes or *chappals;* generally women do not put on footwear. The Toranmal Bhils use rubber-soled simple-strapped *chappals,* which are very good for a hilly country.

For festive occasions like marriage a Bhil woman wears a waist-cloth, *moto-potado,* a silken blouse and a speckled and coloured cloth, *bangali,* over her head. In the marriage gifts the bride is given a *falu, kachawo* and a silken string, *doru,* by her father-in-law; the groom is given a silken turban, a shirt, a coat and a pair of shoes by his father-in-law. In the Nawaratra festival men wear the female *falu* as they do their *dhoti* and also a bodice. But this attitude towards the clothes of woman has to change at the time of Holi in the case of those Bhils who become *gosains* of the goddess; then the man cannot even touch a woman's clothes.

The Bhils are fond of personal adornment and both men and women invariably wear silver ear-rings and silver or golden finger rings. The ornaments on the arm are of various types, ranging from a mere silver bangle to a heavy, solid *kambiu kadu.* Women are very fond of ornaments and sometimes we can see them heavily decorated from head to toe. Ear-rings in their lobes and *balia* in the helices, a stud in their noses, a collar of glass beads round their necks, armlets, bangles, rings—the list is very long, and so a complete inventory will be given later. Of course, all these cannot be bought by a single individual for they will be worth a thousand

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6. A century and a quarter ago some Bhils went almost naked while others had a coarse cotton cloth wrapped round the head and shoulders and a sort of plaited petticoat of the same material round their loins.

Seventy years afterwards the same Bhils were said to wear *potadi* or a waist-cloth, *langoti* or a loin-cloth, angruthi or a short coat, *paghadi* or a turban and short drawers reaching to the knee. The dress of a Bhil woman was: a coarse *sadi,* a large petticoat, *gaghro,* and a cheap bodice. On holidays, she was said to put on a silk *sadi* and a petticoat, *masru,* half silk and half cotton. In those days the men wore turbans, red or white and round their shoulders pieces of white or red cloth.

Today the Panch Mahals Bhils wear a *langoti,* a *chadar* round their body, a *dhotia* or a *kamal* and a *falu* on their head.

rupees; and they all cannot be worn also by a single man or woman because all of them would weigh more than twenty pounds![7]

Two more points of personal beauty enhancement are worth noting: Bhil women do their hair by parting it in the middle, after washing it weekly or fortnightly with milk or curd. Sometimes they tie it into a bun at the back with flowers to decorate it, and sometimes leave the pigtails dangling down at the back with a silken tassel to each of these, giving the wearer colour and beauty. The Bhilnis of Mal Samot crop their hair short at the back of the neck, and they look quite beautiful in this. Then there are tattoo marks also, generally done by a people of the Gondhari tribe whose business is tattooing. Those marks are in the form of a crescent moon, a cluster of points, two parallel arcs, stars or flowers. The Bhils believe the marks remain even after the death of the person.

Ornaments are considered to enhance the beauty of the wearer; they are also a sign of wealth. Young persons occasionally display a certain amount of coquetry in their dress, especially women. Men are slowly giving up the custom of wearing ornaments.

The Bhil society has established very intimate relation-

7. It will interest some to know the names of the various Bhil ornaments, though the list would be long and boring. The Toranmal Bhils wear the following:—A man has *mundiu* and *hakel* in his ears, *topo* in helices, *mundi* or rings in the finger and *sankali* round the waist. A woman has in her ears *tanodas* and *jhulakhya*, in her nose a *fuli*, round her neck *gathala*, (rupee collars) and *tagali*, and on her feet, *mundi*, *pinjanyo* and *toda*.

Among the Bhils of Rajpipla and Sagbara, the males wear either nothing on the head or a comb in the hair; on the ear they have: a silver *vitni*, *kukdya* and a *sankol;* and on the hands: *kambalyu kadu* and *kandiu* and a ring in the fingers.

The Bhil woman wears in her ears: *tanoda*, *balia*, *yitni* and *sankol;* on her head: *chaptya*, and hair pins; round her neck: red or black *chire*, *ansani*, rupee collar, *kule*, *motya* and *chhapro;* in her nose: *kanto;* on her hands: *vank*, *ambalya*, *kadu*, *velia*, bangles, *kakani*, *kangol* and rings; round her waist: *doro* and/or *hankol;* on her feet: *dhanakya*, *chhinkya*, *korne*, *todo* and *sankala;* and in the fingers: *jodva*, *tona* and rings.

ships with their material possessions, so much so they have four riddles on the hand-mill and many songs on household things. Nothing is redundant, nothing obsolete—like the minutest rite in their ceremonies—not even the smallest article in the house. They would preserve even a piece of thread or a chip of wood that it might be useful some day.

Nevertheless, the Bhils do not very much care for these precious material goods in view of their metaphysical outlook. To prove this proposition only two examples will suffice: First, whenever there are successive untoward happenings in the house as a child dying one day and shortly after a buffalo being eaten away by a tiger in the forest, or the wife expiring in child-bed and a sister being a victim of small-pox, the Bhil will forsake the house. Taking with him only a few valuables, he will leave the house intact and will settle elsewhere. Second, when somebody dies in the family, all his beongings such as his ornaments, cothes and mattress, 'are given away to him' as they say, meaning, these things are burried or burnt with him. Such gold ornaments are not taken away by any Bhil from the cemetery for fear of some unhappiness descending on him.

Food and Drinks

As a pre-emiently agricultural people the main diet of the Bhils is what they produce in their fields: *banti, kodra, mor, nagli, juwar* and *makka* and pulses like *adad, tuvar* or grams. The morning meal consists mainly of boiled *kodri.* The preparation of this is a long and elaborate process. *Kodra* has to be husked and cleaned (the husk being given as food to the fowls), once more to be beaten (*chaadi takvu*) in a mortar and then washed with hot water and again with cold water thrice or four times. The washing of *kodri* is an important routine in the daily life of the Bhil women and if we go to a Bhil house at about 9 o'clock in the morning we will invariably find the Bhil woman absent and the reason given will be that she has gone to the river to wash *kodri: 'kodri tuva goi hai.'* After it is thus washed, it is boiled till cooked and allowed to season. The water in which it is boiled, called *pej,* is separated and given as soup to children. A nursing mother is also given

this soup so that she can get sufficient milk in her breasts for the baby. To make it tasty it is soured with the flowers of *bhindi* or with *imli*. *Khichdi* (*kodra* and *dal* mixed together and cooked) is also eaten; so also is rice.

Kodri and rice are eaten with *tur dal*, grams, or *adad*. *Dal* is prepared and cooked in the same way as other Hindus do, though it is not spiced and fried in oil as much; for the Bhils cannot afford to do so. When *dal* is not available, leaves of edible plants are cooked as vegetables and eaten with *kodri*.

The evening menu consists of *manda* and a vegetable or *dal*. *Manda* is what is known as *rotla* in Gujarati, round cakes made from the flour, *not*, of *morya*, *banti*, *nagli* or *juwar*. This flour is kneaded with water and then a small portion of it is taken on one hand and shaped to a round cake with the help of the other hand. This is baked in an earthen plate, *tavo*, over a fire. An average Bhil will eat two or three *mandas* at a time.

Eggs of fowls are also eaten and they are cooked in three different ways: They are hard-boiled in curry and are eaten with *mandas* or *khichdi*; a sort of omlette called *tanki* is prepared; or a dry vegetable dish with minced onions is made.

Fowls are costly and cannot be had every day. A fowl is cooked only when an important guest comes to the house or on a festival day. They cook it very nicely. I can still recall the taste of a fowl cooked by my Bhil *chaprasi* at Besna. The fowl may also be roasted on fire and eaten with salt. But the more common method is to cook it in salt water. To make it more tasty it is cooked in oil and, when available, spices are added to it. It is sometimes cooked in milk also.

Meat, like fowls, is costly and is eaten only on festivals. It is cooked in the same fashion as a fowl; to make it more tasty they add milk or curds to it. Fish also is eaten, whenever caught. It is cut into pieces and cooked.

Milk, *moro gulio*, and curds, *khato gulio*, are consumed though the elders mostly do without them. Ghee is prepared if milk is in plenty. Milk and ghee are supposed to give potency to man.

On festivals, besides fowl or mutton curry they eat a special variety of *manda* prepared from rice flour. It is given

different shapes according to which it is called *huna manda, vankdva manda* or *thokalya tanakya.* On such days *nadva* are also eaten: after boiling a pumpkin, its pulp is mixed with rice flour; the mixture is then salted and shaped into balls which are cooked by steaming. These are eaten with *dal.*

Bhils used to drink liquor—sold at the licencee's shop—and *tadi* whenever possible. Liquor is also used in religious ceremonies. Illicit distillation from *mahuwa* is also known but I have not been able to gauge its extent. Tea as a beverage has found some place in the Bhil society. They do not add sugar to it but jaggery, and drink it generally in the morning. When anybody is ill, *pej* is given to him. They smoke tobacco, and some of them eat opium also. The use *ganja* too is known.

Thus, though a poor people, the Bhils eat a variety of things, know many preparations and employ most of the known methods of culinary art.

The Bhil Calendar

The Bhil seasons are *hiyalu* (the winter), *panud* (the spring), *unalu* (the summer) and *chomasu* (the monsoon). Their months are twelve, all of thirty days. They are as follows (the corresponding Hindu and English months being given in brackets): *Kachki Divali* (Kartik, November-December), *Utran* (Magsar, December-January), *Poho* or *Pankhokhdyo* (Posh, January-February), *Gimb* (Maha, February-March), *Holi* (Falgun, March-April), *Jat* (Chaitra, April-May), *Akhatrij* (Vaishakh, May-June), *Jeth* or *Dukyo* (Jeth, June-July), *Akhad* (Ashadh, July-August), *Mojar* (Shrawan, August-September) *Atham* (Bhadrapad, September-October) and *Dahra Divali* (Aswin, October-November). Thus some names are the same as of Hindu months while other months are named after the festivals or the fairs that fall within them. The bright half of the month is *navo ajwalio* (the 'new light half') and the dark half is *khutato andhario* (the 'lessening and darkening half').

Some of the Bhils do not know the names of the days of the week; time is an undifferentiated and undivided whole

for them, as it were. Nevertheless they do have the names: Sunday is *Ditwar;* Monday, *Somwar;* Tuesday, *Mangalwar;* Wednesday, *Budhwar;* Thursday, *Bordyo;* Friday, *Mahsavadyo* and Saturday, *Sanwar.* It can be seen that some of these names are adopted from the Hindus. Others are of days named after weekly markets held in particular villages in rotation so that the day is known after the village, e.g., Friday, on which the weekly market is held at Mahsavad, is known as *Mahsavadyo.* The names of the days will be therefore different in different Bhil regions. Thus, Friday is both *Mahsavadyo* and *Umadyo,* markets being held on this day both at Mahsavad and Umad, two places that lie in different and far off geographical regions.

They count the time of the day by some socially recognised natural phenomena. Thus among the Bhils of Rajpipla and Khandesh, the early morning 4 o'clock is *kukad vasyo* (the cock-crow), 5 A.M. is *bhal bhankhru* (the morning dusk); 6 to 7 A.M. is *din ugyo* (the day-break); 7 to 8 A.M. is *rohni lagi* (the mild sunrise); 8 to 9 A.M. is *khano vakhat* (the breakfast time); 11-30 to 1 P.M. is *manjan alo* (the midday); 3 to 4 P.M. is *manjan namyo* (the afternoon); 4 to 5 P.M. is *nod vakhat* (the later afternoon); 5 to 6 P.M. is *hol vakhat* (the plough time, that is, when the husbandmen plod their weary way home); 6 to 6-30 P.M. is *majur vakhat* (the labour time, when the labourers leave for home); 6-30 to 7 P.M. is *dih budyo* (the sunset); 7 to 8 P.M. is *rat lagi* (night beginning) and 11 P.M. is *modh rat* (midnight).

Daily Life

This division of time will also give an inkling into the daily life of the Bhils. The day-to-day life of a Bhil village is very striking to one coming from a city though not so much to one used to Indian rural life. In the morning both men and women get up by 6 o'clock. Women-folk sit down at the hand-mill to grind *kodra* or *banti* or they work at the mortar and husk *kodra* or rice. Men go to the cattle-shed and see if everything is alright there. Then they brush their teeth with *datans,* ease themselves (for which water is not used), wash their faces, and have breakfast. Women then

go for fetching water, to the river or streamlet nearby, carrying earthen pots on their heads or bronze pots under their arms. There they take their bath, washing all parts of the body profusely and for long, then squeeze water from their clothes, fill their pots and return home. Bhil women going to the river, their *vinchhias* tinkling and their blue and red robes standing out against the background of the morning sky, make a familiar picture to any one who has visited the Bhil villages. Some of the women first clean their cattle-shed of cow-dung, throwing it into the manure-pit, and then go for bath.

Children by this time get up, gather round the hearth or take whatever comes to them—a stick, a bow or an arrow, and play outside the hut, naked and unwashed, but joyous and smiling. Then the grown-up among them get their breakfast. The smaller ones do not wait for the women serving them food, but help themselves and run out with pieces of bread in their hands. The grown-up children, from seven to thirteen, then go with their cattle to the forest and return at about midday. The men-folk, after their breakfast is over, go for their work either in the field or the forest and return when it is *manjan dihi,* when the sun is in the mid-sky. (When they go out carrying a supply contractor's timber to some railway station they return home after three to six days). After the women return from the river they mind their cooking, which easily takes two to three hours. By the time they finish, the men-folk return, the children also come back with the cattle and they are given their midday meal. Men and children eat first and women afterwards.

The noon hours are almost noiseless, not a leaf moving, not a child stirring out. Men, women and children rest for an hour or two (a good time to talk to them). Then once more the cycle of work starts. There is no 2 o'clock tea (a habit common with the neighbouring plains-people). Men go as in the morning to their fields or to the forest; women work in the homes; their older children go to the pasture with the cattle, or to the forest to bring wild fruits or to gather firewood. At about 5 or 6 in the evening, men can be seen taking their bath in the stream, or washing their

hands and the upper part of the body. This is a rest-giving bath after the day's work. At this time some women go to collect firewood, and if you are on your evening walk you may wonder as to what makes the crackling sound at a little distance from you; it is a woman breaking the dried branch of a tree for firewood. Some of the others go for fetching water once more at this time. Then they milk their cattle.

Next, the night scene: A fire is slowly burning in the front room; on the *chula* something is being cooked; the children and the elder members have gathered round the fire while the women cook. After their meal they sleep round the fire. Cattle and poultry also rest and by about 9 P.M. the whole village is listless unless of course there is a festival like Holi, when the later the hour the more they sing and dance. On pre-marriage ceremony days also they dance and sing till very late in the night.

Table I gives an idea of the daily routine of the Bhils.—

TABLE I

Time	Men	Women	Children
5.30 to 6 A.M.	Getting up.	Getting up.	Sleeping.
6 to 7 A.M.	In the cattle-shed; washing.	Grinding and husking.	Sleeping.
7 to 8 A.M.	Breakfast	In the cattle-shed, or to the the river.	Getting up.
8 to 12 A.M.	Work in the fields or the forest.	Cooking and cleaning, etc.	Breakfast; to the forest with their cattle.
12 to 1 P.M.	Midday meal.	Midday meal.	Midday meal.
1 to 2.30 P.M.	Rest and talk.	Rest and talk.	Rest and talk
2 to 6 P.M.	Work in the field, forest or at home.	2 to 4 P.M. — outside work like *hot* or work at home. 4 to 6 P.M.—work in the forest; cattle return.	2 to 3 P.M.—eating; 3 to 6 P..M. —go to forest or wander about or do some work.
6 to 8 P.M.	Bath; return home	Milking the cattle; cooking.	Playing about.
8 to 9 P.M.	Dinner.	Dinner	Dinner.
9 P.M.	Gossip and sleep.	Gossip and sleep.	Sleep.

CHAPTER III

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

I

Village Organisation

The Village

The Village, *gam,* is a unit in the Bhil social structure, next in importance perhaps only to the family. The village consists of a number of Bhil families—anything between three or four and forty or more. As stated in the chapter on their material culture, these families live in houses which are strewn here and there, far apart from one another. Sometimes a cluster of houses forms one street, *foli,* belonging to the same village. A second cluster may be a little farther away—across the stream or on the opposite side of the hill, forming another street with a different name. The village Khudadi has three streets, the Gamari Foli, Dogo Foli and Khudadi.

The *gam* acts as a unit in many activities of the Bhils. It will be shown in the next chapter how it serves as a corporate body for many economic functions. In production and labour, for instance, each family in turn is helped by others of the village as in house-repairs or harvesting. The village goes as a whole for fish-catching in summer or for works of the Government on public roads. When there is any ceremonial feast at a Bhil's house, Bhils of the whole village have to be invited, care being taken not to leave out any one. The village as a whole has certain common rights over the village pasture. Official guests are the guests of the whole village so that one and all are bound to contribute something for entertaining them.

In social and religious matters too the village is important. Though the Bhils living in the same village do not necessarily belong to the same clan, they say they are all 'brothers',

because they belong to the same village. Generally they observe village exogamy and have all the emotional attitudes connected with it. If a marriage is to be celebrated or a death to be mourned the whole village gathers together. Each takes interest in the ceremony as if it were his kinsman's. Gods are worshipped, festivals observed or *dakans* exorcised by the *gam* as a unit. Poor families are helped, widows and orphans are looked after, or somebody in trouble rescued, by the whole *gam* together.

A man is known by the village he comes from. If a stranger, a Bhil is first asked about his *gam*. Then, there are 'good' villages and 'bad' villages. Thus a village gives status to the *gamia* or *goanwalla* (resident of the village) who tries his best to keep up the honour of the village. To be boycotted by his village is a great misery that can befall a Bhil. The village is really a strong in-group among them. The *foli*, wherever it is existent, brings greater brotherliness among its inhabitants.

Village Officials

An outsider gets acquainted with the Bhil life and culture through the village headman, the *Vasawo*. He is himself a Bhil and is an important element in their social structure. The *Vasawo's* is a hereditary office and for generations it may be held by a particular family. When the headman dies his son gets this Vasawoship even though he be a minor. I stayed for two or three days with the very young *Vasawo* of Limadi and enjoyed his hospitality.

The *Vasawo* holds an enviable position in the village His advice is sought by other villagers in times of need. Even non-Bhils may go to him for advice or assistance. Even gods, they say, go to the headman for help. Today a traveller in the Bhil land can go to him if he wants help. The *Vasawo* by his prestige can silence dissidents, override a drunkard, or control a stubborn husband. He can settle quarrels between two *gamias*, ask debts to be paid off or postponed, or intervene in the unhappy marital life of any one of his villagers. He takes the initiative for appeasing the angry gods who visit upon their villages small-pox or cattle disease. In festivals

the *Vasawo* holds a key position. When Holi comes, she visits first his house:

Holi Bai has come,
Crossing the big mountain,
She has come
And asks for the house of the *Vasawo.*

It is his privilege to light the Holi fire. At the end of the Diwali festival the Bhils have a custom of bidding good-bye to Diwali by throwing burning sticks at the trees. It is the *Vasawo* who does this first, others following.

The *Vasawo* is not only a member of the village but he is also a representative of the Government in the village. He looks after the guests of the Government, supplies provisions for them; mostly the Talati's *khichdi* is got from him (though not as a matter of right but of courtesy). Whenever the Government wants certain things to be done by the village, he conveys the Governmental mandates to his people. Whenever the forest roads are to be built or grass is to be cut, it is the *Vasawo* who is asked to get them done. He gathers together the villagers as and when required for these and similar purposes. (When I wanted some old men from Juna Rajpipla for certain information, I told the *Vasawo* there, who collected them for me). He can speak to the Government on behalf of his villagers on all matters of public concern. Thus because his high status enables him to wield great influence on the *gamias* an enlightened and enthusiastic *Vasawo* can do much for his people.

In return for his services to the Government, the latter pays him either a lump sum of Rs. 15/- to Rs. 18/- per annum, or grants him some free land for cultivation. The economic condition of the *Vasawo's* household is not quite unsatisfactory. The *Vasawo* is above the ordinary; he is a man generally beyond competition. Consequently one of the best houses in the village is his: he may have a pair of bullocks or some pieces of furniture or a few clothes more than the average *gamia.*

That is why the daughter of the *Vasawo, vahkapoyri,* has always been panegyrically mentioned in the Bhil folklore. She is generally a beautiful girl, who dresses in a red and tight-

fitting upper garment 'as red as fire on the hills', and who has numberless ornaments on her person; and her anklets 'run-zun' as she treads her path showing her person to advantage. The son of the *Pardhan* falls in love with her. She cannot be just anybody's; not all can look at her—she will not care for the attentions paid by other youths. Proud of her position and conscious of her beauty, she is the beloved of the son of the second highest person of the village, the *Pardhan.*

Vasavi, the wife of the *Vasawo,* is not as important as her husband in the community life. Her position is derivative; all her awe and personality are derived from her husband. But even then she has her unique share in the socio-religious life of the village. She has always to worry for the provisions of the *sipai-sokaras.* She has to prepare *khichdi* if a forest guard comes to the village. But her position is not wholly without glamour. Even though burdened with many responsibilities her status brings in its wake many sweet experiences. In the marriage ceremony of any girl from the village she has a right to one bottle of liquor and an eight-anna piece and it is entirely her privilege to dress the bride and lead her to the marriage pandal.

The Brahmin as a priest and religious authority is totally absent from the Bhil socio-religious life. While among Hindus and some other tribes like the Dublas and the Gamits a Brahmin is called to conduct marriage, death or birth rites and on other occasions, for which he gets some *dakshina,* among the Bhils he is not called for any of these purposes and his work is done by one of the Bhils themselves.

There is an interesting story which accounts for the absence of the Brahmin from the Bhil social structure: Two Bhils went to a Brahmin to call him to conduct a marriage ceremony at their place. Before going with them the Brahmin took some time to search for his turban and then to prepare a garland to wear round his neck. This caused delay and enraged the Bhils, who shouted, *'Sala,* you are delaying!' and killed him with their arrows! They then posed themselves as Brahmins and conducted the ceremony. Since then the Bhils have no Brahmins to perform these functions.

Instead of the Brahmin there is the *Punjaro,* another pillar of the village social life. His is not a hereditary office nor is he an official of the Government. His wife, like all other Bhil women is just an ordinary woman with no distinguishing social position. The *Punjaro* is called when some *puja* has to be offered to the gods, both on holy days and in abnormal circumstances. He alone knows how to perform the *puja* and recite the prayers. He takes some *juwar* grains in his hands, the villagers sitting in a semi-circle on his right and left; he then bends forward from his waist, mutters some incantations and puts the grains on the ground. He is an intermediary between the gods and the Bhils and as such is much respected by the community.

The *Punjaro* is also known as an expert medicine-man, well-versed in the indigenous pharmacopoeia. If the disease is known, or can be known, and is not serious, he gives roots, leaves or some decoction. His house is a veritable museum of these as well as objects of theological importance. More important than the *Punjaro* is the *Madvi* or the *Badvo* who is the priest of the village. He is a treasure-house of Bhil theology and mythology and a witch-doctor too. He has been described in the chapter on religion.

The *Pardhan,* that is *Pradhan,* meaning a minister, is the second official in the village appointed by the Government. His office too is hereditary. In the absence of the *Vasawo* he has to attend to Government business. Even when the *Vasawo* is present he can be asked to attend to certain minor matters. Still however his office can be dispensed with. Only big villages have them: Limadi had a *Pardhan,* Kakdi-Amba had none.

The *Vartanio* or *Kotwal* is the man who carries out the commands of the *Vasawo.* His office is also hereditary and he is remunerated for his services by some tax-free land or an annual salary. The *Vartanio* is the man who actually attends to the touring officer or other Government servant visiting the village: he fetches water for him, prepares his *chula,* gathers fire-sticks and helps the cook; in many ways he is the real attendant. Another duty of the *Vartanio* is to convey Governmental messages, if any, to the people of the

village. Other members of his family have no special importance.

The *Gori* has a very important place in the Bhil social structure. All the above-mentioned props of the Bhil social structure belong to the Bhil community, but the *Gori* does not belong to it. His is a separate caste called the *Gori.*

In physical appearance the *Gori* is easily differentiated from the Bhil by his flat nose and wooly hair. Very dirty in his appearance and ways of life, he puts on a *dhoti* and a head-dress called *falu,* but no upper garment. His wife is also very dirty. She puts on some ornaments in her nose and on her arms. Their children too are ill-clad and dirty.

Every village has one or more *Gori* families. Their huts are at one end of the village. Small in size, neither properly constructed nor well looked after, they can be easily known to belong to the *Goris.* In a *Gori's* hut, besides the articles of daily use (which are fewer in number and cheapter in quality than those of the Bhils), a bow and arrows are invariably found.

The work of grazing cattle is assigned to the *Gori.* At about 9 A.M., the *Gori* starts with the cattle of the village for the nearby forest, grazes them there till about 3 P.M. and then brings them back home. It is a very fine sight to see the *Gori* calling in his peculiar voice the cows to the desired spot. He is seen watching large herds with a thick stick or a bow and arrows in his bands.

In return for his services to the village each Bhil house gives him one *mando* per head of cattle every day. In the evening he goes to every house and calls out, *'Paniwali'* or *'Koowali'* meaning 'O woman of the house'. At this she comes out to give him his daily share.

The *Gori* is an untouchable. The Bhils say his touch pollutes them. At the river from which the village fetches water a separate place is reserved for him; it is tabooed for the Bhils to fetch water from there.

The *Kotwals* are also found in some Bhil villages. Their huts also can be distinguished from the Bhil huts. They look dilapidated, without properly plastered walls or covered roofs. Small in size, these two or three huts lie at one end

of the village. The *Kotwals* do not keep any cattle; only some fowls, a few household utensils, a tom-tom and a pair of cymbals or a *tur* are all their material possessions.

The *Kotwals* seem to be a different people, darker than the Bhils in complexion, shorter in stature and more platyrrhine. They usually keep long flowing hair, seldom oiled or parted. They put on a shirt or a *bandi* and wear a short *dhoti* round their waist; and a *phenta* is their usual headdress. Men have no or very few ornaments; women are mostly very slovenly. They put on a *choli,* a *falu* and an *odhni. Chire* and rupee necklaces adorn their necks, their other ornaments being the same as those of the Bhils.

Most of their marriage customs are borrowed from the Bhils. Bride-price is very low among them (anything between twenty and thirty rupees) as compared with Bhils. They put some drops of liquor in the mouth of the dead and burn the dead body. Their gods are taken from the Bhil pantheon. 'We look up to the Bhil gods, and don't worry about ours', said Bamanio, one of the *Kotwals* of Khudadi to me.

The *Kotwals* perform two functions in the Bhil social life. As we have seen, the Bhils are a jungle-folk living away from market places and for most of their household requirements they have to tap their environment: Their material civilisation thus depends to a large extent on the bamboo. It is the *Kotwals* who prepare the baskets, *mothas,* mats and winnows from bamboo. They barter them with the Bhils at about the rates mentioned below as sanctioned by custom:

1 Winnow: 4 *champa moryu* or 4 *champa banti* or 3 *champa juwar* or 3 *champa* rice.

1 Basket: 1/2 full of the same basket either *juwar* or rice.

1 Mat (6 ft. x 3 ft.): 8 Annas or 5 *champa moryu* or 5 *champa banti* or 3½ *champa juwar* or 3½ *champa* rice.

'Our gods determined this payment for our goods and both parties have to obey this,' they tell us.

Whenever a Bhil dies a *Kotwal* is sent for and as the bier is carried to the burning place he precedes the mourners

beating a special type of tom-tom which is to be used only on such days. (The tom-tom used during festivals is different). Without him, the mourners will not proceed further. For his services, he is paid a rupee and a bottle of liquor.

'We all live a happy life; the Bhils have to depend on us for their baskets and winnows and we have nothing else to eat than what they give us and they do not trouble us,' my informant, Bamanio, expressed himself to me as regards their position in the Bhil villages.

Besides these personalities, two more officers worth mention are found in some Bhil villages. One is the *Deshmukh,* the mouth-piece of the country, literally. Before the settlement of land he used to provide food, shelter and protection to the plains-people who went to the Bhil country in connection with timber collection. He levied a tax per cart for this service on the immigrants. Another and a more important duty of his consists, now as it did then, of looking after a group of ten to twelve villages, touring through them at least once a year to see if all is well and collecting taxes. He also settles quarrels which do not go to law courts. After the settlement of land by Government the tax collection (known as *annawari* — 'an anna per cent') was shifted on to the Government. But in recognition of his former services and because of his general duties as a guardian of the Bhil villages he has been given in some cases a piece of rent-free land and an annual lump-sum allowance. I met three Bhil *Deshmukhs* in my tour.

The other person is the *Dumaldar,* a sort of a zamindar of the village. A *Dumaldar* is given a village by the Government for any service rendered by him to the Government. (The service may be a help in some war, the killing of a dangerous tiger, or an act of bravery in shikar). He has absolute rights over the village land not occupied by anybody when given to him in *dumala,* the rights of those who were occupants of the land before it changed hands being in no way affected. The only difference is that the rent is now collected by the *Dumaldar* on a Governmental basis with the help of a Government Talati. I have been to Jhargram which is a *dumala* village.

The Bhils have a village Panchayat which is not a formal institution. Nevertheless, it is an inevitable part of their social organisation. All the old men of the village meet for all important matters and confer among themselves. The matters about which they meet are varied, as somebody's love affairs with a married woman, a married woman's *dawa,* a *dakan,* a cattle disease, a *veth*[1] of some Government officer or some other matter of public importance They sit on their feet in a semi-circle or a circle and the eldest or the wisest or the *Vasawo* takes the initiative in starting the discussion. They try to persuade the dissenting or the half-willing and take a unanimous decision. Once the decision is reached, all obey it. Rarely is there any disobedience though the sanction behind it is not what the Germans call 'faust-recht' alone. As Tylor put it: 'The controlling forces of society are at work even among these savages, only in more rudimentary ways than among ourselves. Public opinion is already a great power.'[2] Thus the *Panch* is a very important social institution among the Bhils. It is not found among those villages which have come in contact with the civilised Hindus.

This sort of settling of quarrels is called *jhaghdo bhangvo;* and it takes place as far as the institution of marriage is concerned, firstly, when unmarried people run away; secondly, when through pre-marital sex relations a woman becomes pregnant and the case goes to the *Panch;* and thirdly, when a married woman of one village goes away to another man in a different village. In cases where only one man is concerned, Bhils of the girl's village may gather and decide themselves the fine and the bride-price. Where two men are concerned, as in the third case, a real *jhaghdo bhangvo* takes place. Elderly Bhils from both the villages gather together. Both parties sit apart at about a distance of fifty feet. 'We are in great anger and we don't know when we might begin *maramari;* so it is better to sit apart,' a Bhil told me. A mediator, *bhanjgadio,* goes from the second man's party to the aggrieved side. This party tells him that his friend has

1. Forced labour, known as *begar* elsewhere.

2. E. D. Tylor, *Anthropology,* Vol. II (Thinker's Library, Watts & Co. London, 1946), p. 136.

committed a crime because he took away their 'brother's' wife. 'We have paid ten thousand rupees to the girl's father in *dej*. Other incidental charges were also enormous. You will have to pay us fifteen thousand rupees, or give the girl back: otherwise he should be prepared to be beaten severely.' The *bhanjgadio* puts his case before them: 'He is very poor. The girl wants to stay with him. He will pay you seventy-five rupees.' The losing side curses him and calls him names. After some time they reach a compromise figure to be paid by the second man. The man pays it cash down or in instalments. He stands liquor to all those gathered for the *jhaghdo bhangvo*. Before drinking, an old man or the headman of the village puts a straw between the two parties, then takes it and addresses both the rivals: 'Now you need not quarrel any further. You will drink together; and from now on you are friends.' So saying he breaks the straw into two, signifying that the quarrel is also broken or ended. He then throws away the two pieces, one on each side. The other expression used by them to denote an ended quarrel is to inflict five sword strokes on the branches of a tree, after which they will not fight or quarrel any more.

Besides the village headman and the *Panch*, the Bhils respect their chief, *Raja*. The institution of chiefship seems to have been known to them for a very long time. It was said while relating their history that many Rajput rulers ascended the thrones of the Bhil chiefs, whose descendants even today have the privilege of leading a new king to the gadi in places like Idar or Rajpipla. The chiefs of Bhilsa and Bhillamal (in Madhya Bharat), which were thriving cities in olden days, must have been very powerful and rich as can be seen from the archaeological remains of these cities today.[3] The Bhil chief Asha of Ashawal, near Ahmedabad, is also well-known in the history of Gujarat and it was from him that the present site of the city of Ahmedabad was taken away by Ahmedshah in about 1442 A.D.

Today there are some petty Bhil chiefs like those of Sagbara, Kathi and Gangtha near Rajpipla. A little further

3. P. G. Shah, 'The Oldest Inhabitants of Gujarat,' A lecture before the Gyan Prasarak Mandali (Bombay) on November 21, 1941.

the country between the Sahyadris and the Surat District was parcelled out among fourteen petty chiefs. Of these thirteen were Bhils and one a Konkani. Of the chiefs four were called Rajas, eight Naiks, one a Pardhan and one a Powar. The revenue of the chiefs consisted chiefly of (1) an annual subsidy of about Rs. 27,000 granted for their forest and abkari rights, (2) land revenue at Rs. 6/8/- per plough, (3) a fee of annas eight per head on all cattle entering their territory and on cattle of non-Dangi residents, and (4) various *giras* allowances from the surrounding territory. The population of these petty States which, according to the census of 1931 was 33,800, consists chiefly of Konkanis, Bhils and Warlis.[4]

According to the Gazetteer,[5] the Bhil chiefs were left almost free to manage their own affairs and where quarrels between neighbours were not uncommon, the right of the head of the tribe to his clansmen's services was fully admitted. When he heard the shrill, long-drawn tom-tom that the men of the village were required, a Bhil left any work he might be doing and attended to the summons. On the other hand, if the chief used his power in a way they disliked, the Bhils joined together to resist him.

II

Clans and Kins

Haga and Hagwadia

The Bhils divide the Bhil world into two big sections—the *haga* and the *hagwadia*. The *hagas* include brothers, cousins, clansmen and a still wider circle of the *hagas* of *hagas* on the paternal side. Marriage between two *hagas* is not allowed. The other division, viz. the *hagwadia* is made up of the 'marriageable' relatives, relatives-in-law and their *hagas*. In settling a marriage, the Bhils first find out whether the prospective relation is a *hago* or a *hagwadio*: they ask him his relation with somebody whom both of the parties know,

4. *Memoranda on Indian States* (1937) pp. 16, 17. After 1947 there have been some changes in their rights.

5. *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. IX Part I, pp. 311-12.

either in his own village or elsewhere. From this they settle the kinship position with each other and see whether the alliance is permissible.

Though there is no customary rivalry between the *haga* and the *hagwadia* some songs sung at the time of marriage do show that even while joking there is a keen desire of denouncing the opposite party:

There is a theft in the *mandap*,
You lost your wife,
Don't you know this, *vewai?*
On the village gate, she tied a cradle
And sent a message through the cow-boy.
Vewai, you lost your wife—
She eloped with Dajio,
Vewai, you lost your wife!

Apart from this, the division of the Bhil society does not at all resemble the Australian dual organization in which the moiety division is a most fundamental category of the native mind, and where the division is not merely for marriage but for religious, economic and political purposes also and where the whole nature also is divided into two. This dichotomy of the Bhil society, not very clear and rigid, is useful for marital settlement.[1]

Exogamous Clans

Of the Bhil sub-divisions Sir J. Malcolm wrote in 1824: 'In every province I found the names of tribes or rather of families increase in the ratio the inquiry was pursued. The slightest circumstances, the name of an ancestor, a dispute in the tribe, a favourite spot of residence gives rise to a name and forms a tie of brotherhood.'[2] Forbes mentions ten tribes among the Gujarat Bhils. Mr. Prescott gives twenty-seven sub-divisions of the Panch Mahals Bhils;[3] Mr. Nandshankar,

1. 'Dual Organization in India', *Journal of the Anthropology Society, Bombay,* 1950.

2. J. Malcolm, *Transactions of R. A. Society,* I., p. 81.

3. Of the Panch Mahals tribes, the large clans of Damor Bhils are said to have come during a famine from Dholka in the Ahmedabad District under a chief named Kilraj, the father of god Kachumbar,

forty-two for Rewakantha; Major Le Geyt, one for Mahi Kantha; Mr. Fakir Bhai, twelve for southern Gujarat; and Dr. Khanapurkar, forty for the Dangs Bhils. And Mr. Vanikar has given us as many as one hundred and sixty-two subdivisions or exogamous *gotras* for the Panch Mahals Bhils. But nobody has given a satisfactory account of the exogamous clans of the Rajpipla Bhils.

For some months I could find no trace of exogamous clans in the Bhils of the area I studied, but by following the genealogical method I was successful to some extent in finding them out. The idea is indefinite so far as terminology is concerned, but as regards the divisions, every grown-up boy knows the clan he belongs to. The clan is paternal. They call it *jat* or *vans* i.e. tribal clan or family. These are the divisions:

Ambuda, Arthi, Chopadsa, Dedria, Dendia, Dogaria, Godsa, Hembalkhodya, Henglya, Hogaisa, Jamansa, Janglu, Kathisa, Khorgya, Koanji, Kotin, Malsa, Mathwadia, Moakhya, Mokhdya, Nalwasa, Olnibar, Padvi, Pankholya, Rajbarya, Rawot, Soksa, Tankhodya, Tanvasa, Tirya, Vadsa, Vavsa, Vandariwala, Vegusa, Vodgamia and Volvi.

Out of these thirty-six Bhil clans—the list may not be complete—some are territorial clans, named after a particular village or a place to which the group originally belonged, though today the Bhils do not know how the name was acquired. The Malsas are from Mal, the Rajbaryas from Rajbar, the Mokhdyas from near the Mokhdi Falls, the Sagaises from Sagai and the Hulpayas from Hulpan or Sulpaneshwar. Some are names of other tribes taken by them as clan names. For exmple, the Rawot is a Rajput clan; the Padvis and Valwis are two other forest tribes, but these names have now been adopted by the Bhils, and they distinguish them very well from the former groups. The others seem to have a totemistic origin, e.g. the Henglya from the *bidi* leaf tree, the Dogrya from a mountain and the Wanariwala from a

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according to local tradition. The Bhabhor Bhils, who are very influential and numerous, are said to have come from Kadchi Barda in the Satpuda Hills in company with the Rana of South Rampur in Rewakantha.

monkey. But today the sacredness of these and the totem significance have gone; the *jats* are purely secular, these words being remembered only as names for clan reference just as the Hindus remember their *gotras* and others their surnames.

In the Panch Mahals and Sabarkantha, the Bhils are organised into a number of large patrilineal descent groups known as *atak*. An *atak* is a clan consisting of a number of lineages, each bearing the same name and claiming descent from the same mythical ancestor and hence assuming kinship with each other. This kinship group includes all those women who marry into the lineages of the clan. The clan is an exogamous group. The principle of exogamy is sought to be extended among these Bhils to all such persons as are the personal affines, affines of the clan or members of those clans that have given their daughters in marriage to this clan in the past. But since a strict enforcement of this principle reduces the field of choice to a very great extent, exogamous restrictions are applied only within a span of five or six generations. Actually, however, the Bhils do not remember their affines generally beyond the second or the third generation.

Kinship

The kins are called *haga* and the following are some kinship terms:

Father	*Bahko*
Mother	*Yahki*
Son	*Poyro*
Daughter	*Poyri*
Brother	*Pavo*
Sister	*Baya*
Paternal grandfather	*Dohno bahko* or *Ghordo bap*
Maternal grandfather	*Dohno bahko* or *Ghordo bap*
Paternal grandmother	*Dohni yahki* or *Modi yahki*
Maternal grandmother	*Dohni yahki* or *Modi yahki*
Paternal uncle	*Kako*
Father's elder brother	*Wado*
Father's younger brother	*Kaki*
Paternal uncle's wife	*Kaku*
Father's elder brother's wife	*Wadi*

Father's younger brother's wife	*Kaki*
Mother's sister	*Jiji*
Mother's sister's husband	*Wado*
Father's sister	*Fuisi*
Father's sister's husband	*Mamo*
Mother's brother	*Mamo* or *Hahroho*
Mother's brother's wife	*Mami* or *Fuisi* or *Hahu*
Paternal nephew	*Dikoho*
Paternal niece	*Dikihi*
Paternal cousin	*Kaka* or *Wadihi Baya*
Maternal cousin	*Vewai, Hejo*
Maternal cousin sister	*Vewan, Heji*
Sister's son	*Paanjo*
Sister's daughter	*Paanji*
Father-in-law	*Hahroho* or *Mamo*
Mother-in-law	*Hahudi* or *Fuisi*
The male in-laws	*Vewai*
The female in-laws	*Vewan*
Son-in-law	*Jamah*
Daughter-in-law	*Nadi*
Wife's elder brother	*Memo*
Wife's younger brother	*Hala*
Wife's younger sister	*Hali*
Wife's elder sister	*Patla hahu* or *Vovos*
Wife's maternal uncle	*Mamo*
Wife's paternal uncle	*Mamo*
Grandson	*Poyra poyro*
Granddaughter	*Pora poyri*
Daughter's son	*Poyri poyro*
Daughter's daughter	*Poyri poyri*
Husband	*Mati*
Wife	*Theye*
Stepfather	*Kako*
Stepmother	*Jiji*
Sister's husband	*Pavadyoho*
Younger sister's husband	*Jamah*
Husband's sister	*Nondho*
Husband's elder brother	*Jethoho*

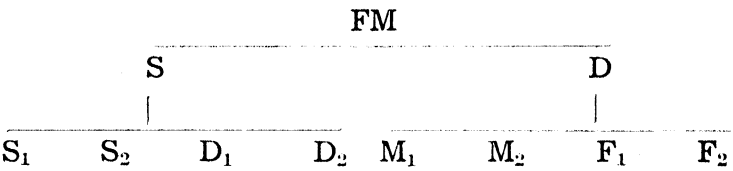
Husband's elder brother's wife	*Jethani*
Husband's younger brother	*Dev* or *Dero*
Husband's younger brother's wife	*Derani*
	Pojaha
Younger brother's wife	*Vovdihi*

The Bhil kinship terms cannot be put into hard and fast categories. Some of the terms are classificatory; for example, all persons of his father's age are addressed by a Bhil by the honorific term *kaka,* and all the women of his mother's age by *jiji.* To an old man all the persons of his son's age are his sons, *dikaha,* and his daughter's age his daughters, *dikihi,* and he will generally address them as such. The maternal as well as the paternal grandfathers are classified as 'old fathers' there being no distinction between the two as among some Gujarat Hindus.

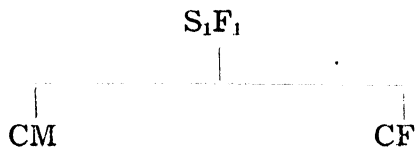
There are descriptive kinship terms also. The grandfather has no particular word for him. He is described as 'the older father' or 'the aged father'. The grandmother similarly is *dohwi yahki* or the older or aged mother. The paternal male cousins are described as 'the sons of *kaka*' and the females as 'the daughters of *kaka*', *kakawadiho pavo,* and *kakawadihi baya* respectively. Even the grandson is termed simply *poyra poyro,* the son's son; similarly the daughter's daughter.

The customary rules of marriage have influenced the Bhil terminology. Thus on account of their custom of cross cousin marriages (the ego marrying his father's sister's daughter) the same term *mama* is used for the father's sister's husband and the mother's brother; the father-in-law is also called *mama.* The father's sister, the mother's brother's wife and the mother-in-law are described by the same term *mami* for the same reason. The stepfather is called *kaka* because according to their custom of levirate when a man marries the widow of his elder brother he is both stepfather and uncle to her former children; similarly the stepmother is called *jiji,* because by the custom of sororate when a man marries the sister of his wife his children by the first wife have to accept her

both as their stepmother—the new relation—and as their mother's sister *jiji*—the old relation. The father's brother and the mother's sister's husband are both called *wado*. This also can be explained on the basis of cross cousin marriage. The diagram below would explain how certain terms are due to cross cousin marriage:



FM represents the father and mother. Their son is S and daughter D; then son S_1 of S can marry daughter F_1 of D because they are cross cousins and Bhil custom approves a cross cousin marriage. So the maternal uncle has become the father-in-law. If they have a son CM and a daughter CF, then:



S_2 is the uncle of CM. F_2 is the maternal aunt of CM. But S_2 is a potential husband of F_2. So S_2 who is an uncle of CM is at the same time the husband—at least theoretically —of his mother's sister; hence the same terms for these two.

The relationship between the in-laws *(vevais)* i.e. the bride's and the bridegroom's parties is very important. Thus, if a man marries off his son, the following persons from his daughter-in-law's family will be his *vevais*: His son's wife's father, the latter's brothers and other relatives; the women of the *vewai's* family will be his *vewans*.

The duties of the *vewais* are varied. On occasions of joy and sorrow they are the first to increase and share them. Whenever there is a marriage ceremony at one of these people's places, the other party is invited with very great respect.

They exchange presents at these times and in hours of need they help each other. In spite of such customary good relations between *vewais* I have seen instances where the parties have become each other's enemies. Such bitterness may start for very trivial (*tous*) reasons like the bride-price being paid less than promised, liquor having been served less than expected or the daughter-in-law being treated with scant respect.

There are a large number of joking relations among the Bhils. The following can joke with each other:

(1) the *dev* with *pojaha*
(2) the *nondho* with *pojaha*
(3) the cross cousins with each other
(4) the *vewais* with each other
(5) the *sala* with *pavadyoho*
(6) the *sali* with *pavadyoho*
(7) the *jamah* with young girls on his wife's side.

The relation between the *dev* and the *pojaha* is very pleasing. He is her confidant and affectionate friend in the otherwise too-serious atmosphere of her father-in-law's house. She loves him like her own brother and attends to him when ill. He on his part cuts all sorts of jokes with her; plays mischief with her and may also indulge in broad jokes which may mean an invitation to her to sleep with him. The following is a talk I heard between a Bhil and his *pojaha:*

The Bhil:	What's the news, *bhabhi?*
Pojaha:	Nothing very bad.
B.:	Why, you look so very nice today!
P.:	You were always telling me that.
B.:	Why not come to the solitary forest and enjoy yourself tonight?
P.:	You have no power, man!
B.:	Do you want to see?

A man can similarly joke with his wife's younger sister. In fact he can also enjoy an intrigue with her. There is a Bhil proverb which says that her *kachhdo,* the tucked-up end at the back of the *sadi,* is loose; you can enter in it at will is the implied meaning. The relation between the *nandho* and the *pojaha* is also a joking one and they are very happy with each other; they work, eat and sleep together. But some-

times the *nandho* is very bitter against the *pojaha* and tries to bully her or to get rid of her anyhow. She may at times poison the ears of her brother against the *pojaha.* A Bhil has the right, as it were, to exasperate his *sala* with jokes. He will generally bully the *sala* in jest, but their relation throughout life is one of mutual goodwill, help and confidence. The cross cousins, because they are potential mates, take physical and verbal liberties with each other. I have seen a Bhil *sawang* in which a Bhil boy goes out to the bazar with his cross cousin sister and on his way he gets excited and runs after her with his penis in hand, she laughing at all this! They reach a tavern, get dead drunk and the boy goes to her father, his *mama,* saying:

Come, *mama,* come,
Your daughter is drunk
And is lying on the road
Leading to Korai.

Young girls (in his *sasra*) of the age of a Bhil's wife joke with him. There are many songs in which they call him a fool, mad-cap and miser.

The Bhils also observe a code of some quite strict rules of avoidances though their breach may not entail penalisation. The most important rule of avoidance separates a girl from her husband's elder brother, her *jethoho.* She should not speak to him, nor can she utter his name. Even looking at him is not allowed, and when serving she must serve his meal from a distance. She should not touch him, much less sit with him on the same cot. A girl and her husband's father, *hahroho,* also do not talk to each other. If there is nobody else elderly through whom she can communicate to him in case of need, she will talk to him through her young son or via a third person.

A similar but less rigorous rule governs a man's relations with his *hahudi.* They of course talk to each other but cannot be very free in their talks. The *hahudi* has to be respected and obeyed. Whatever she may say cannot be challenged and has to be obeyed by the son-in-law. A Bhil behaves better than usual in the presence of his parents-in-law. He does not joke with or talk to his wife in their presence; and

he must not tell a dirty story or use abusive words before them, especially before the mother-in-law. If his father-in-law arrives when a Bhil is smoking he has at once to offer him the smoke. The mother-in-law has to be requested to stay as a guest for a number of days if she happens to come to his place.

But in the presence of the father or grandfather the Bhil is very unusually free; in fact, he can smoke with them, can call names to a third party in their presence; and I have seen Bhils, old and young, fathers and sons, laughing together after some one from the party cut a very obscene joke. The Bhil's relation with his grandmother is also very good. They joke with each other. There is, it seems, no custom behind this as among the Baigas and the Oraons; it is the freedom of a child before an old and kind-hearted woman.

With reference to these kins as well as other acquaintances they have definite modes of greeting and reception. If two Bhils known to each other meet, they will smile, take both their hands to their forehead and say: 'Ram Ram'. Some would clasp each other's hand saying the same words. I have also seen a few Bhils saluting officers and outsiders from the plains. After this preliminary *Ram-Ram*, one would begin the talk with 'Are all well? (*Hajaj ka?*)' A youngster meeting an old Bhil will bend low and touch his feet.

When a guest comes to a Bhil house, whoever is present welcomes him with the words 'Come! seen after so many days ' and then takes him into the house and asks if all are well at his place. By this time, a cot, *khatno,* is brought for him to sit on and he is given some *bidi* leaves and tobacco. The guest asks after the health of all the members in the family and inquires about their cattle and crops. If the elderly member of the family is out in the field, a child runs up to call him home. Somebody in the meantime engages the guest in conversation. Food is cooked for him; when it is ready, he is given water to wash his hands and feet and then the guest and the elderly host eat together. Guests may also stay for a day or more. When a guest starts to go home he says, 'Now come to my place.' If it is a youngster, the host asks him to be careful on the way.

A passer-by, an acquaintence or a stranger may stop at a Bhil house to drink water. He is given water kept on the *mali* in the same utensil the house drinks from. He does not touch this utensil with his lips but pours water from it with one of his hands into the other resting at his lips. If he is a 'clean' man, *sokaro,* they will not give him the water from the *mali* but bring it fresh from the stream and serve it in a well-cleaned brass utensil or a leaf cup.

Acquaintances are usually given *bidis,* or a *dongo* (the hukkah of the Bhils) is moved round them. They all smoke together irrespective of age. I saw a group of Dumkhal Bhils of ages ranging from 13 to 36—fathers, sons, uncles, and cousins, all smoking from the same *dongo.*

Genealogies

To make the pattern of kinship more vivid I have appended in Appendix I a few genealogies of some Bhils with annotative remarks to clarify certain positions. As the notes are given in the tables themselves, skipping over them will not do, even though following them may mean some trouble. The notes are to be read according to numbers given below the names.

Family Life

The Bhils call their family *vasilu* which is a unilaterally related group of persons, connected through the father only. Ordinarily the Bhil *vasilu* is a small group consisting of a Bhil, his wife and their children. Grown-up sons may or may not separate. But if a married sister or daughter of a Bhill dies leaving children behind, they are looked after and brought up at his place till they reach the age of eight or ten. On the other hand sometimes if the grandfather is living, he, his son and grandsons will all live together; that is why it is very difficult to pigeon-hole the Bhil family into any particular group.

The father is the master of the household. Whatever income the members of the family have is pooled with him and he directs the expenditure, though with the advice of his wife and grown-up sons, if any. This 'old man in the house',

koowalu dohu, is the sole authority over the other members in social duties and religious ceremonies. If he says 'no' to anything, it will not be done. I wanted a young Bhil boy from Kakdi-Amba to go with me to a fair; he went home, came back and told me that he was sorry he could not go with me because 'the old man in the house says, no.' The head of the household distributes the daily work among the members and if it is not properly done rebukes the defaulter. And when any religious ceremony has to be performed, he takes the leading part.

The mother also has great importance. She is the soul and back-bone of the family. Though not holding the keys of power, she can by her tact, wisdom and experience get things done according to usage and custom, or control expenditure as thrift demands. It may be said that the man depends on her not only for his meals but also for the peace of his mind; and the children depend on her for their food and up-bringing. She combines in herself the roles of both a wife and a mother. She is the guide of the head of the family who may not at times understand many things. She is the encouraging spirit behind all the activities of the household. She distributes the feminine work among her daughters and daughters-in-law and supervises it. In all serious matters the initiative generally comes from her. In case the man is not living, the economics of the family are also managed by her.

The place of children in the family is important. Their birth is anxiously awaited, the son's because he will become the economic supporter of the family, the daughter's because she can help the family in its daily activities and fetch a good bride-price even when going to another house for good. Small children are often seen playing about in the Bhil courtyard or going with their elders to the field. Till they are ten or twelve no outside or field labour is given to them; only very light work is taken from these kids. They live happily together; they play, laugh, graze the cattle, occasionally quarrel—and grow up.

The use of proper names in the family is controlled by certain rules. A husband must not speak the name of his

wife. I tried very hard to learn from Sonji, the Bhil headman of Ruswad, the name of his wife, but he would not utter it. He smiled and was pink with shame, but try as I might, he did not give in. Apart from this, a Bhil is also expected not to use his *sasu's* name. A wife will never address her husband, his elder brother and his father with their names.

Another rule of etiquette in the family is regarding the use of *enthu,* or food left over on the plate. A wife (and the children) may eat the husband's leavings, but he does not eat others'. Younger brothers may eat the *enthu* of elder brothers and younger sisters, of elder ones. All children before they grow up may eat anybody's leavings; they generally eat with their parents from their plates. Once they are grown-up or married, they do not do this.

The sons of the house are not expected to leave the famliy while the father is alive. The father gets them married and then if they so wish they can separate. If one of them is not obedient, the father can rebuke him and ask him to go away: *'Ahi dokhe kalo ko'* will be the general term, meaning 'Hide away from here'. He has to go at once; he cannot demand any share from the family property then. After the death of the father, the other brothers may ask him to return.

Property is divided among the brothers in the house (if there are no uncles) not equally, but in increasing proportion according to seniority. The eldest son gets the largest share and the youngest gets the smallest. Sometimes the brothers other than the eldest divide the remaining property equally. If the father dies when all are staying together, the mortuary expenses are incurred by all. If they were separate at the time of his death, that son alone incurs the post-mortem expenses with whom he (the father) was staying at the time of death.

Brothers also divide the debts of the father among themselves, the eldest shouldering the largest share. The *Dumaldar* of Jhargam told me that he undertook to pay a debt of Rs. 775/- out of a total debt of Rs. 1,000/- after the death of his father, because he was the eldest of his father's three sons.

The brothers live peacefully together if nothing Satanic stirs them to quarrel. They are each others' help and confi-

dant. Even when they separate, they go to each other's place in times of need and of joy. There are many Bhil stories where one Bhil brother is shown as sacrificing his life for another.

The daughters of the house, until they get married, stay under the shadow of the paternal family roof, doing odd jobs in the cow-shed or in the field, helping the mother to cook, or fetching water from the well with the *bhabhi.* It is a pleasant sight to see them working together, smiling and singing and happy. When any of them gets married, all the members of the family regret her departure very much. They weep and sing:

A happy bird is flying to foreign lands!
How shall we bear her departure?

Even after marriage, the daughter occasionally visits the family, stays as a guest for a day or two and then there is joy once more in the house. The father receives the bride-price and she is given by him a pair of clothes and some ornaments and sometimes a cow also. She has no right to a share in the property. Only when he has no brothers does she inherit her father's property.

The daughter-in-law of the house as she comes from another family feels at first a little uncomfortable in her new family. But slowly she mixes with it like sugar in milk; she helps the mother-in-law and her *nondohos* in their work; happy sometimes, bullied at others, by and by she becomes the head of the family.

CHAPTER IV

BHIL ECONOMICS

I

The title of this chapter may lead some to think that the theory of Bhil economics must be different from modern economic theory, more so becaues the Bhils are known to be almost primitive. Raymond Firth was once very emphatic about this 'different' theory of primitive economics and he derided those for whom the term 'primitive' or 'savage' conveyed the idea of simplicity and, hence, who assumed the institutions of natives to be the proto-type of our own, but less developed, less complicated, stripped of all trappings and presenting the motive or activity in clear, bare outlines. According to him a primitive was not a being created to order who would balance the relative utilities of arrow and spears or wines and cattle if need be, reason out the comparative satisfaction of work and sleep and exchange nuts, venison or cow-hides according to the strictest Ricardian principles.[1]

But today after the science of economics has been shown by Robbins and others to cover even those fields where there are limited means to satisfy numberless ends, and when Wicksteed has clearly demonstrated that the rationality of economic behaviour is almost instinctive with all, we need not departmentalise economics into industrial and primitive economics. In fact there is no difference between the economic life of civilised people and that of a primitive people. Horskovitz says, 'Except for the business cycle itself, practically every economic mechanism and institution known to us is found somewhere in the primitive world.'[2] Firth also accepted the same view later on and defended it in his book on the primitive Polynesians. The difference made by cul-

1. R. Firth, *Primitive Economics of New Zealand Masri*, p. 2.

2. M. J. Herskovitz, *The Economic Life of the Primitive People*, p. 447.

tural primitiveness is only this: as there is less of contact with other peoples of the civilised world, the culture pattern is well-preserved and economics have their roots and ramifications in their social life—in other words, economic relationships are social relationships as well. We have to view the economic life of primitive people as a complex set of activities rooted in human instincts but moulded according to the organisations and incentives, traditional rules and religious beliefs current in the society, utilising a body of material culture and a system of technique to control environment and put it to man's account. As Malinowsky says of the Argonauts of the Western Pacific, it is an error to think that the primitive man lives at least in economic matters untrammelled by conventions and social restrictions.[3]

At any rate, Bhil economics are not of a primitive character. There is an unlimited number of ends to be satisfied with a limited number of means in the Bhil society; there is also the consumers' preference scale and they show rationality in their choice for the disposal of scarce means over numberless requirements. Division of labour, co-operation and skilled labour play their part in the production of goods. Capital in the form of money at a rate of interest and also as produced means of production is known. The Bhils do shift from the marginal land to the next best if the former is not paying or do service instead of farming, thereby showing their concept of the margin and its utility. Property is

3. B. Malinowsky, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, p. 96.

But Herskovtiz wants us to study primitive economics in a different way altogether. 'It must be made clear' he says, 'that economic problems may be studied without the need to give a complete account of the inter-relations between an economic system and other aspects of social life so as to consider all the sanctions on which a given body of economic custom rests. In other words it is important that anthropologists desist themselves from a sociological bias when studying economic phenomena;' and that 'it is becoming imperative that anthropologists employ the quantitative approach to studies of economic life' though he does make allowance for the fact that measurement and counting are not possible in such societies. I have tried to describe the Bhil economic life from both the viewpoints and therefore my account may have, I am afraid, the defects of both with the advantages of neither.

known; market and market values are very familiar, and they use the same currency which the rest of India uses. All these facts show that Bhil economics are not much different from the general Indian rural economics. The only difference is that their economic ends, activities and incentives are rooted in their cultural institutions and are guided by many societary considerations. Even here the difference from the general Indian rural agricultural peoples is not qualitative but just quantitative; for even today in many advanced communities compulsions dictate certain economic activities.

Thus, more emphasis is laid in Bhil economics on the organisaton of the methods of production, distribution and exchange as on certain other factors; for instance, how production is determined over a period for an individual or the group, what part the traditional background plays in consumption, what principles are involved in the choice of occupation, or what are the mythological sanctions for a particular type of expenditure. A reference to Bhil technology has also been made in the previous chapter so that their methods of the production of goods may be known.

The value of such a study will be readily admitted; because such a study would be of distinct assistance in understanding these primitive but better, though illiterate, societies to secure their co-operation and also in preserving them from the unwanted effects of civilisation. A study of the complex institutions of primitive economics can help avert or remedy the decay of such systems. Further, without such a study social and economic equity cannot be maintained. For example, the extent of the pressure on land in the Bhil areas must be studied if we are to ameliorate the lot of these primitive people. Moreover, a knowledge of the economic psychology of the primitives, of the general regulation of their industrial life, of their system of transfer of goods, and of their system of land tenure would be of practical utility to the trader, settler and the administrator, as all of them are confronted by problems arising out of their direct economic relations with the Bhils. Such a study would also help to preserve the Bhil and guide his emergence from primitiveness to a full-statured national life.

Environment and Economics

Though environmental determination of the economic life of a people is not perfectly verified, we know that the influence of environment on a people varies directly with the primitiveness of their society. The more primitive they are (that is, the more distant they are from civilisation), the more does environment shape their economic activities. The climate, the flora and fauna, and the geology are the controlling factors of their economic activities, which they use according to their cultural light.

As far as the climate is concerned (as stated in chapter I) in the forests of Rajpipla it is exceedingly unhealthy, malarial fever being prevalent from September to February. The climate is stigmatised as *'Kala Pani'* (Black Water) by the local officials. The Khandesh region has also extremes of temperature. The flora presents a great diversity both in the number of species and the variety of plant associations. The main species of trees found in Rajpipla and Khandesh are so many that 'it would take three nights in giving you the list,' as a Bhil from Chikda told me. All the creepers and trees that grow there are known, some with their properties and uses too.

Apart from the rich system of nomenclature which the Bhil employs to show the features of his natural environment, he also possesses a very detailed knowledge of its relevent properties. The workable quality, hardness and durability of many kinds of wood as well as their colour; the nature of rocks, stone and earth; the positions of stars; and the signs of rain—these are also known by him. In all these, practical experience and mythical belief are often mixed up with the Bhil.

The Bhil believes that if there is an aura round the moon it is going to rain. So also if salt becomes dehydrated or smoke burns the eyes more accutely than is usual, if *sinkaris* hum more furiously than usual, if the sun's rays look like fishes from behind the evening clouds, if flies 'lay something like eggs on dung', or if two bullocks urinate simultaneously in the field, the rains will surely pour down. The Bhils also say that it rains in 'the Forest' (their region) after fifteen

days of the first rains in Bombay, or twenty-seven days after the setting of the *Mrigashirsha* (The Hunter) constellation.[4]

They display some knowledge of celestial phenomena. They definitely know the Pole Star, the *Menio Taro,* and the Great Bear which according to them is a golden cot with three silver legs, borne by a chief who is being pursued by three dogs. They also recognise the *Kalthyo* or the *Krittika,* the *Tin Perio* or the *Mrigashirsha* and the Venus. The Venus is according to them a very auspicious star that will give plenty of grain if the crops, after being harvested, are brought to the threshing floor when it is rising. They also know the *Punarvasu,* which they call 'the eggs of the *oni* bird'; near them is another cluster of stars which, they say, is a cowherd (with his cows) who wants to steal away these eggs. *Falguni* is the *toran* of their Great God, Raja Pantha. The Sun and the Moon have three wives each, in the east, west and mid-sky. Rain is controlled by the Black Wind, Kalo Waro, who is the son-in-law of God Pantha. The Black Wind has many issues: the Twelve Rains, the Thunder House, and the Black and the Limping Lightnings.

They know the properties of many berries, barks, fungi, flowers, grasses and roots; they can differentiate between a large number of fishes by their habits and habitations: the *moto machho, khowalo, dhokali, kanawo, motkyu, chiknu, muro, king,* and *tapari* fishes; they told me that the *moto* fish can be found in abundance in the Tapti river and the *king* every where.

Their knowledge of plants is put to many economic ends. Forest trees are tapped either for their edible flowers and fruits or for their gum. They eat the flowers and fruits of the *almo, akano, amra,* banana, *charoli, dhaman, guler, gharmel, gundi, gopal, jambu, kado, khatamana, mahua, clan, sita-*

4. Vaden W. Miles of Wayne University wanted to know to what extent folklore of this kind about the weather was just superstition and to what extent it was borne out by modern meteorology. He seletced 153 such accounts and requested a panel of three physical science teachers including a licensed matereologist to rate their accuracy. The panel decided that 56.9 per cent of them were sound and only 15 per cent clearly false! (*Scientific American,* March 1950).

phal, timro and *umro.* They get gum from the *babul, gund, kher, kadoi,* and the neem trees. The same economic outlook can be discerned in the conversion of poisonous roots and tubers like the *suvari* and *vaj* into edible stuffs either by boiling them or by continuously washing them. Their resourcefulness is again seen in the large number of herbal medicines they use. These medicines, in fact the whole pharmacology of the Bhils, is an interesting instance of environment being put to maximum economic use.

II

Organisation of Production

Land, labour, capital and enterprise, the four factors of production, are important in the Bhil economy as elsewhere. The Bhils say, 'Cultivation, land and rain bring the goods home.' The last factor is not remarkable here, for this is a non-machine, agricultural society where each is both his labourer and enterpreneur. At best, in community work or some co-operative enterprise can we take the leader of the party as an entrepreneur in his function of 'a captain of industry' and not a risk-bearer. But I will first consider in this section the land problems of the Bhils—the productivity or efficiency, the tenure system and in general the necessity of land to the Bhil culture; then labour will be considered in its various aspects such as the psychology of work, the division of labour, and co-operation. I will pass on to capital and enterprise after this.

(A) *Land*

Every Bhil is a land-holder, big or small. In Table I here I give the distribution of land among the Bhils of Juna Rajpipla which has 37 Bhil families, or more properly, *asamis* (house-holders).

Table II is another one on the same lines giving the land-holdings among the Bhils of Jharwani, which has 60 *asamis.*

These two tables show the distribution of land among some Bhils and the two villages fairly represent the Bhils of Raj-

TABLE I

Land in Acres	No. of *Asamis.*	Approximate %
Below 1	4	11
Between 1 & 2	4	11
Between 2 & 3	9	25
Between 3 & 4	9	25
Between 4 & 5	3	8
Between 5 & 6	6	15
Between 6 & 7	1	2.5
More than 7	1	2.5

TABLE II

Land in Acres	No. of *Asamis*	Approximate %
Below 1	3	5.0
Between 1 & 2	4	6.6
Between 2 & 3	10	16.6
Between 3 & 4	10	16.6
Between 4 & 5	8	13.2
Between 5 & 6	8	13.2
Between 6 & 7	3	5.0
Between 7 & 8	3	5.0
More than 8	11	18.3

pipla. In the village of Juna Rajpipla about 11% of the *asamis* have less than 2 acres of land; about 50% of them possess 2 to 4 acres; only 2.5% of the Bhils have more than 7 acres to their lot. Jharwani is a little better in this respect. Here only 5% have less than 1 acre of land; about 33% possess 2 to 4 acres; but as many as 18.3% have more than 8 acres.

I take two more villages in order to show the average land-holding among the Bhils. Table III gives their figures along with those of the two already considered.

The table shows that even allowing for exceptionally rich villages like Ghatoli, though the Bhils are a land-holding community the per capita share of land is as little as 6.2 acres.

TABLE III

Village	Total land in acres	Number of *Asamis*	Average per head
Juna Rajpipla	138	37	3.7
Jharwani	343	60	5.6
Dhirkhadi	70	19	3.6
Ghatoli	306	22	13.8
Total	857	138	6.2

This average cannot however give us a correct idea of the real position. We have, therefore, also to refer to the two previous tables in full. It can thus be realised that the piece that every Bhil has got is not sufficient for his maintenance. According to Keatinge a holding which can allow a man to produce sufficient for supporting himself and his family in reasonable comfort (after meeting his necessary expenses) in the Deccan is 40 acres, and in U.P. 30 acres.[5] Comparing the Bhil's holding and the nature of his land with this standard we can get an idea of the nature of land distribution and level of wealth among them.

Land Tenure

As regards land, what Herskovitz says of other peoples is true of the Bhils also: 'The most important form of land tenure, if only because it is the most common, is private ownership.' In many villages, there is scarcely any land available except State property which is not held by any individual. The acquisition of land in a Bhil village is possible from two types of State land. The first is the State-owned uncultivated land, the *padtar jamin,* where sizable plots of eight, ten or twelve acres have already been marked out and their annual rent fixed. The other is the *kharabo,* which is a very big, continuous plot of land, about 350 to 1,500 acres in area, where no plots are demarcated and no rent fixed.

The buying of land in both the cases involves an elaborate

5. G. Keatinge, *Rural Economy in the Bombay Deccan,* pp. 52-53.

routine procedure. The Bhil has to apply for some land. When there are many such applicants, there is an auction of the land plots. He has to offer a price. If the offer is acceptable the State permits the revenue official to collect the price and the rent and the Bhil becomes the rightful owner of the plot in the records of the State. Regarding the second type, only after the price of the land is collected are the plots from the *kharabo* assigned and the rent fixed by the Government. Only then he becomes the rightful owner.

In the Rajpipla State, since 1939 there were two kinds of offers that could be made for a plot of land by a Bhil who wanted to buy it. The one was of Rs. 5 per acre and the other of Rs. 5 to 10. If the land was acquired under the first offer, the rights of sale, mortgage and gift did not pass on to the buyer; if under the second they did. All land bought before 1939 had no such division; the acquisition included all the rights then.

This land which belongs to the Bhil is his private property. It can be sold, mortgaged, gifted or given for rent by the individual. None, not even animals, can tresspass on it. If somebody's cattle enter another's field and spoil the crops, they are put in a cattle-pound and their owner has to pay the following release money: for a goat 0-1-6, for a cow 0-4-0, for a bullock 0-8-0 and for a buffalo 0-12-0; and this money goes to the State treasury.

Fruit-growing and other non-timber trees in the land of the owner are his if his father had the right to these trees. But if the father had no such right, he also would have no right over these. When a plot of land changes hands, in order to have a right over the fruit-growing and other trees, some money over the stipulated price of the land has to be paid. An express condition, *boli,* has to be made whether the trees will be or will not be the buyer's. In the former case he derives a right which is alienable. The timber trees on the land of the indivitual in all cases, both of the purchased and the inherited land, are State property, and if cut, the owner of the land is liable to be prosecuted by the Forest Department.

In each village there is some communal land which is for comon use only. It is not owned by anybody. This in-

cludes the *gauchar* or the cow-pastures, land occupied by the roads, the village cemetery and the communal threshing floor, *khali*. The right of grazing cattle on the *gauchar* is given to all without any payment. A Bhil's cattle can graze there for any length of time but he cannot cut the grass from there and feed them at home. 'Anyone found doing this is strongly rebuked by others in the village,' the headman of Dediapada told me. None can buy, nor can the Government sell, any plot from this communal property. The timber trees growing on this land belong to the State; the other trees can be used or cut by the people.

The headman has no extra rights over this or any other communal land of the village. He has his own land plus some land given to him by the State as payment for his services. Like any other man he cannot cut trees or grass from the communal land. Of course, he might use his position sometimes to undue advantage.

Land tenancy in the Bhil areas is almost similar to that in the neighbouring plains. The owner may cultivate the land himself; or the land may be given up if the Bhil does not want to cultivate it. If he does not pay the rent for it he will be forced to surrender it. In both cases the surrender, *rajinama*, of ownership rights over the land has to be made to the authorities concerned. If it is accepted, the land reverts to the State, adding to its *padtar* or *kharabo* areas.

An owner may lease out his land to others on either of two conditions: one, that the cultivator shall pay the rent to the State and retain the produce; two, that the rent be paid by the owner himself and the cultivator share the crops on a fifty-fifty basis with the owner. In both the cases, unless the owner wants to cultivate his land himself, the tenants, as a matter of course, are not ousted.

In *dumala* villages the *Dumaldar* collects the revenue from the village according to Government rates, Re. 1-1-0 per acre.

The Talati or the petty revenue official of the Government helps him. The *Dumaldar* has no rights over the lands already in the possession of others in the villages. On the remaining land his rights are absolute and unopposed. The Jhargaon and Dumkhal villages are under two *Dumaldars*.

(B) *Labour*

Labour is an inevitable factor of production so much so that according to some it is a claimant to the whole output of it. In modern industrial production capital is a very important factor in the process of production, but in the simple agricultural society of the Bhils labour is the main factor. 'Come, O crooked one, let us go to the field,' says a Bhil riddle referring to the sickle. It suggests that he and his sickle are the chief factors of production, so far as the Bhil is concerned. With the Bhil, the incentives to work, as with others, are largely instinctive, being biological in their origination but blended with a complexity of other factors which are the products of education, tradition, and the general social milieu. The Bhils work on an object or labour in the fields because there is the prospect of winning bread out of it. Oftentimes the aim is only 'a bellyful of bread, *dedima mando,* and a good ploughing in some womanly flesh,' as they put it in a proverb. But because the land is very niggardly they have to work hard to keep body and soul together. Hence the very social attitude to work becomes a basic element in the ideology of production.

Idlers are looked down upon; they at times find it difficult to get a wife, for the Bhils would say, 'If we give our daughter to him, she will starve.' The reciprocal duty to work falls on the woman also; an idle wife is turned out of the house; a girl, when she goes to her husband's place, is advised by her relatives not to shirk work. Even a guest, if he stays for more than a day evokes the remark of having 'come for grub only (*khahno alo hai*)' and is expected many a time to help the host family in their work. Success in the food quest determines, as it does in the Bantu society, the Bhil's social prestige. Any means, real or illusory, by which the primitive man gains power over the natural resources in the environment are bound to give him power and authority in the group.[6]

Work is generally done from nine o'clock in the morning with a small recess at noon, when the Bhil eats his *kodri* and vegetables and sleeps for some time. If the work so demands

6. Audrey Richards, *Hunger and work in a Savage Tribe,* p. 87.

he is at it day and night. When he goes to cut timber for the contractor he is out for four or five days. But he does not make at the same time a fetish of labour; he might rest for days together after hard work. I saw the Bhils of Nanakakadi-Amba sitting at home for three days, all tipsy, after the harvesting at the headman's fields was done by all of them. Apart from the production of food by labour, the Bhils engage in labour as a matter of joy. They often prepare artistic things in their leisure time—a rattle for the children or a good, coloured rope for their bullocks—sometimes for the love of it, sometimes because it is useful.

In these daily rounds of labour, the Bhils have empirically worked out a theory for getting maximum work from all, males, females and children, by apportioning to each person the work for which he or she is best fitted for. This theory of division of labour is not completely hard and fast; but the common principle which obtains is this: men attend to the more arduous and energetic occupations while the women engage themselves in more sober and somewhat more monotonous task. Most of the occupations in the search for food, requiring strength, daring and initiative, are done by men. Women do the majority of tasks connected with the consumption and preparation of food. Certain other occupations are done by men only, while there are yet others which are performed strictly by women. These restrictions are so much rooted in custom that a chance transgression of any of them leads to social backbiting: A man will not collect cow-dung from the shed and throw it in the pit for fear of 'people talking'; that is a woman's task. Every boy and girl is aware of this division of work and knows that one must pursue a socially approved economic career. Each is educated for it by a system of social control.

Table IV shows how the Bhils' work is divided among the males, females and children.

(C) *Co-operation and Enterprise*

Co-operation in labour is another organisational method employed by the Bhils for doing work more efficiently and more quickly. This kind of co-operation was also used in

TABLE IV

Work	Males	Females	Children
Household work:	1. Preparing for the work in the fields 2. Taking bullocks and cattle out of the shed 3. Brinking vegetables 4. Watching children when the mother is busy cooking	1. Sweeping the floor 2. Lifting cow-dung 3. Preparing food 4. Serving food 5. Bathing children 6. Grinding or pounding corn 7. Bringing water 8. Washing clothes	1. Taking care of yonger brothers 2. Going with the cattle 3. Keeping watch over things kept for drying 4. Giving water to young calves
Field labour:	1. Hoeing 2. Ploughing 3. Digging 4. Watching the crop from the *mali* 5. Harvesting the crop 6. Threshing	1. Taking food to the field for one's man 2. Weeding 3. Watching the crop from the *mali* 4. Cutting grass	1. Helping parents in small things
Other economic activities:	1. *Kabadu* 2. Buying bullocks 3. Collecting honey 4. Fishing	1. Bringing fire-wood 2. Buying household things 3. Fruit gathering 4. Fishing	1. Wandering after game 2. Fruit gathering
Officials' orders:	1. Attending the officer and doing his work 2. Going on *veth*.		1. Carrying messages if and when required in the village
Social duties:	1. Going on visits 2. Mourning and burning the dead 3. *Holi* playing 4. Keeping other festivals	1. Paying visits to female friends 2. Only mourning 3. Singing marriage songs	

former days when they used to do wood-ash cultivation. 'We collected together and felled branches of trees; women brought water and helped in doing odd jobs. The work went on merrily because it looked very light as we were many. We joked, we talked and the work was vigorious,' thus explained the headman of Khokhra-Umar the principle of co-operation to me. A second instance of such co-operation occurs when the Bhil calls his friends and neighbours for repairing his house, which work, because of the joint efforts, is finished in good time. This mode of taking help from others is called *madakho* or *handun* which has to be repaid in the same way. One more example of this *madakho* is the harvesting which is done by all the villagers together attending one field after another, all getting a liquor party from every farmer whose work is thus completed.

In such co-operative work the expert stands out. He is useful in skilled work like wood-ash cultivation where he has to show which branch is to be lopped off, where it is to be burnt and how the ash is to be spread. Experience and cleverness are his qualities. In unskilled activities, as in loading a teak log into a cart, the Bhils would make a team, with the expert detailing his instructions to do the needful through a spontaneous song:—

Begin O youths, *Haisan,*
Begin O men, *Haisan,*
Broken band, *Haisan,*
Burnt ashes, *Haisan,*
That side is loose, *Haisan,*
Tighten it, *Haisan.*

Others in the team go on repeating '*Haisan*' at the end of each instructional line of the expert and do according to each instruction. The song with its rhythm and its peculiar emphasis on certain words makes the whole job easier and less tedious.

In economic activities where the entire Bhil village is involved, the authority of the village elders and the experts is supreme and absolute. None can go against their directions and consequently there is never a clash between any family and the rest of the village.

(D) *Capital*

Capital in Bhil areas exists in the form of produced means of production. There are all sorts of simple instruments and implements which are not directly consumed but are used to further production. There are carts, hoes, axes, sickles, simple wedges as well as bullocks, to name only a few of their capital items.

Property is also existent here, and the part which it plays in production is very important. Property is individually owned, and everybody tries to increase it by savings, that is, surplus production over consumption and immediate requirements. A man of competence will always try to have more and more implements because they will help him in tilling more lands and thus producing more. Among the Bhils, a rich man is one who has many things, *sadhanwalo,* which concept of capital is found in other communities also.

Economic Activities

The main economic activity of the Bhils by which they maintain themselves is agriculture. They persue it with the factors discussed above and it is their mainstay. Like the Gonds and the Baigas, the Bhils also have the tradition of ash-cultivation. As late as 1852 A.D. in Rewakantha and Rajpipla:

> 'The plough was used only in the lowlands. On the hillside trees and brush-wood were cut and burnt in April and May. In the ashes seed was sown and the crops left till ready for the sickle. After twenty-five years, only a few were said to wander among the woods and live by wood-ash cultivation.'

The Bhils say they have a mythological precedent for this ash-cultivation: their High God, Raja Pantha, once used to burn borests and do cultivation in this way. They showed me the site of this divine farming—a plateau, two or three square miles in area, between the hills near the Khokhra-Umar village on the way to Kundi-Amba, the place being known as Raja Pantha's wood-ash field, *'dadh'*.

Formerly, they cut trees or brush-wood in the forest, brought them to a field and there spread them out to dry before the rains came. Then they burnt them and spread the ashes evenly on the soil with a rake, *panjethu.* They sprinkled water over it and did the sowing. Such fields were always

level and not on hill slopes. This they called *dajia.* The practice is also known to the West Khandesh, the Panch Mahals and the Toranmal Bhils. In fact the other primitive tribes of Gujarat like the Naikas, the Dhodias and the Konkanas too employed the same mode of cultivation.

In hill-slope cultivation, which was called *chhimata,* the forest growth on the hill slopes was first burnt. Tall trees were stripped of their branches and small ones cut down level to the ground. All this felled wood was then set on fire before the rains came. They spread the ashes as evenly as was possible while women who helped them splashed water over it. In three days the whole business was finished. The seeds sown on these slopes were such as *nagli, chora, tuwer* and *kakadi.* The mixed growth was harvested according to the ripening time of each.

This is not allowed now as there are strict forest laws—and stricter forest guards. But sometimes, the atavistic tendency comes out and they stealthily burn the forest growth and cast seeds there. While I was among the Toranmal Bhils in May 1944 the *Vasawo* told me that far away in the forest some people had burnt the woods and were getting ready for cultivation.

The present-day method of cultivation is that which is followed throughout agricultural India. A plough—'the brother that eats for the whole day but is still hungry'—a pair of bullocks and the husbandman himself ('three heads and ten legs') till the land into furrows before the advent of the monsoon or before the winter crop is to be sown. If paddy is to be raised, paddy seed is sown in a corner of the field. It germinates with the coming of the rains and grows up with its advance. When about six to eight inches high the saplings are transplanted in the muddy field. Whenever there is grass or other unnecessary shrubs in the field, the Bhils weed them out, *netta ha.* A watch is kept over the crop as it ripens. Later, it is harvested and taken to the threshing floor, and from there the produce is sent home. Other crops are also raised but in them the transplantation does not take place; the crops grow where the seeds were sown.

The joy of the Bhils in seeing the crops growing up before their eyes is well shown in the following song:—

O! we have planted the seed of white pumpkin.
Lo, it has grown, the sweet pumpkin.
Now there are leaves to our pumpkin;
See the tendrils of our sweet pumpkin.
Now it has budded—our goodie pumpkin;
And it has flowered, our white pumpkin;
A small pumpkin is seen on the creeper fine;
It has grown quite big on the creeper there!

The foregoing discussion on cultivation in Bhil areas will be clarified by Table V showing their seasonal activities with reference to food pursuits.[7] It will enable us to study the inter-relation between economic activity and natural conditions, such integration of facts being useful in presenting a co-ordinated view of economic activities over a long period. The table shows how each work has its place in a definite scheme of activity, and how each month or season brings its own quota of work. I have tried to include some of their festivals also in the table, which may show some relation between agricultural pursuits and religious ceremonies.

In the primitive economic organisation of the Bhils we will have to consider the place of religion and ritual also. Savage life has few safeguards. Crisis is a frequent if intermittent element in it; especially hunger, one of the major crises. Besides, who knows the caprices of the gods? They might be displeased if you don't offer to them what is for you a prize; for example, new rice or new vegetables. The safeguard against the wratch of these unknown and potentially ambivalent gods—if pleased they will do good, if displeased cause harm—they praise them and appease them before enter-

7. 'The most important task of the field worker is to draw up a calendar of economic routine. Although it is rare to find a primitive people subsisting entirely upon one type of diet, yet the economic organisation of most peoples is most unusually complex from one point of view, the combination of agricultural, pastoral and hunting activities forming a most diversified annual routine.'—Audrey Richards, op. cit., p. 112.

TABLE V

Season	Month	Work of the month	Festivals
Chomahu (Monsoon)	*Jeth-Akhad*	Ploughing (*kheda*), collecting wood (*nakud danu*)	*Nandarvo*
	Akhad-Mojar	Sowing (*pera*), weeding (*netta*)	*Matnyo*
	Mojar-Bhadarwo	Watching over crops (*huwanu*), bringing green grass for cattle	*Govaldev*
	Bhadarwo-Athem	Watching crops vigilantly	
Hiyalu (Winter)	*Athem-Dahru*	Paddy ready—watching, and some harvesting	
	Dehru-Kachki	Harvesting paddy; ploughing for winter crops; some threshing	*Divali*
	Divali		
	Kachki-Utran	Stacking of *kodra*, paddy and other unthreshed corn (*unwanu*), sowing winter crops	*Navai*
	Utran-Gimb	Paddy - threshing, grass-cutting, road repairing and making the carts ready, some *kabadu*	
Unalu (Summer)	*Gimb-Holi*	*Kabadu*, watching over gram crops, *doyaro*	*Gimb Jatra*
	Holl-Jat	*Kabadu*, gram is ready	*Holi*
	Jat-Akhatij	Harvesting gram, watching over *juwar*, *kabadu*	
	Akhatij-Jeth	Threshing gram, cutting winter *juwar* and threshing; house repairs, *kabadu*	

ing upon any business. The rituals connected with Bhil agricultural operations and festivals are rooted in some such metaphysical outlook. It permeates all the economic life of the Bhils in one shape or another. I consider this a factor of production from the Bhil point of view. R. Firth believes that though such outlook cannot replace knowledge and technique it gives confidence to the worker and acts as a supplementary sanction for the performance of the task.

These economic-religious rituals may be for many purposes—production, increase or protection from destruction. The Bhils have tried to evolve a festival culture around these

rituals, a complex of joy round the sub-conscious fear. The festival gods, who are described in the chapter on religion, show that all of them have an economic matrix round them. One or two may be cited here as illustrations. The festival of Govaldev begins with the worship of the sticks of the cow-boy by the *Punjaro,* who says 'O *Bapji,* our great father, this cow-boy offers to you a *punj,* an offering. Do not do him and his cattle any harm' and gives the sticks back to him. It is a day of joy for the cow-boy; the Bhils eat, drink and end the day with a bang. This is for the welfare of the cattle and is therefore of great economic importance.

Similarly, the festival of *Navai* is held whenever a new crop is ready. On this day, rice from new paddy and curd-curry are prepared with green vegetables to help. Three morsels are offered, one each, to Raja Pantha, the dead ones and the rest. After that all feast on the preparations. Before this day they will not eat from the new crop.

The main crops that are raised by the Bhils are: of cereals rice, wheat (mainly in Sagbara), *kodra, nagli, juwar* and *banti;* of pulses *tur, mug, adad* and *val;* and of vegetables chillies, brinjals, papaiyas and at times certain leafy vegetables. The Bhils, being devoted solely to agriculture, have learnt to recognise certain crop diseases and pests also. To name only a few: *angar* is a disease of *juwar* which makes the plant black and reduces the yield; *mulkhayo* is a root disease of the pulse plants and also of the paddy; and *era* are worms which eat away tender cotton pods, which afterwards will not have any cotton at all.

Pastoral Activities

Pastoral activity is an important economic occupation of the Bhil. Each Bhil family generally owns a pair of bullocks and a number of cows, but rarely, if at all, some buffaloes. Pastoral activity does not require the long endeavours or routine work involved in agricultural pursuits. The heards of the whole village are grazed together in the area reserved for the purpose. The *Gori* is the man who does this work. They have no right to graze cattle in the other areas but they are at times allowed to do so by the State.

The attitude of the Bhil towards his cattle varies from an intense affection and interest to a ritualistic veneration as in the worship of the cows. The festival of *Divali* is especially the day when the horns of the cattle are painted red and their trough worshipped. The animals are not yoked for that day. Beef is taboo to all the Bhils. A Bhil will never manhandle his oxen and he will be very angry with anybody who does so; he will not sleep peacefully so long as his ill calf or cow does not become well.

He rears a cow not for food but for the bullocks he will get from it. To him it provides a storeable form of wealth which goes on increasing annually. He is very particular to see that the animal has no defects whatsoever. He will consider certain signs on the body of the animal as bad; these bad signs bring sickness to the owner's family or ruin to his crops. A Bhil will not buy bullocks which have any of the following defects:—

(a) A *bhoro* which cannot be hidden by the leather band on the forehead;
(b) Yellow teeth, which show that the bullock is old;
(c) A *bhoro* anywhere but in the middle of the back;
(d) A long tail, which is a sure sign of poor strength;
(e) A tail which has many knots;
(f) Legs which strike against each other at the hoofs;
(g) Black colour; and
(h) Horns one of which is curved and the other straight, which indicate that one will drive him (the owner) down and the other push him up.

Similarly the Bhils look for certain characteristics in cows, goats and buffaloes, and only after a thorough examination for these will they buy the animals.

Though the object of cattle rearing in seldom milk, of course, some Bhils (as in Juna Rajpipla) do use milk as food and also prepare ghee from it and sell it to outsiders. They acquire cattle for social ambition also. They give cows to their daughters at the time of marriage. Cows are also tied to a dead man's pyre for some time before lighting it to show that he was a great man.

The cattle-shed forms a busy centre of Bhil activities.

Early in the morning the Bhils change the places of the bullocks, the women milk the cows, the boys or the *Goris* take them out to graze and then the women clean the shed. Thus just as the succession of agricultural activities makes the routine of the year for the men, this forms an important part of their daily routine for the women.

Sometimes a poor man is given a cow by another Bhil for a year so that he may use the milk himself. Cows which are not milch are given to others for grazing till they bear calf; at this time, the price of the cow is first fixed by four or five Bhils; and whoever wants to buy it pays half this price; it is called paying the *khand.* This establishes the principle that ownership and maintenance have equal shares of rights over an animal.

The Bhils also keep goats, which are used both for milk and meat. A goat is also offered as a sacrifice to the gods and goddesses.

Poultry Farming

Every Bhil family maintains a number of fowls. They are used mostly as food: eggs are eaten in a number of preparations; fowls are also used on festive occasions. Moreover, eggs and chicken and fowl are all very important as religious offerings; almost all their gods, goddesses and *Badvas* require them. It is more economical to breed chicken than to buy them from somebody else. Poultry is also useful in destroying the insect pests in their fields. Among such simple people as the Bhils this use must not be overlooked. They know the diseases of poultry and treat them. For common ailments of the poultry they give them the juice of onions, garlic or the bark of *indrajav* or *kodo.*

Fishing

Fishing is one of the most important of the Bhil's economic occupations. The Bhil mythology is full of stories of catching fish. Their gods used to catch fish. Once Pandhar Mata went to catch fish in a deep stream and had such a huge catch that the load of fish broke the axle of the cart—then follows the

rest of the story, which has been related elsewhere in the book.

The wife-less young god, Gimblyu, was at long lost promised a girl to be his wife by some people, who later went back on their word and decided to give the girl to another man. In the meantime they had taken 'task work' from Gimblyu, who was asked by them to bring a fish which would weigh twelve cart-loads; and he had to bring it.

Among the Bhils one method of fish-catching makes use of a net, 'the thing which is like a pumpkin when bound, but like the threshing floor when spread'. Another uses the trap, *molo*, whose operator wades through water step by step, supporting the wide mount of the *molo* on the bed of the stream, *khado*, and feeling with his hands through the small upper end if there is any fish. Another of their techniques of catching fish is ingeneous and speaks of their knowledge of the behaviour of fishes. The Bhil goes to a small streamlet, puts a barrier against the stream in such a way that water passes to the other side of the barrier through only two small holes in it. After evening, the fishes move against the current. The Bhil then puts traps near the small holes so that at night the fishes moving through the holes, the only passage upstream, fall into the trap, and are collected by the Bhil. Whole night long we can see fires burning along the banks of streams; they are of the Bhils waiting for their catch. In the day time the operation is reversed. But the night-catch is generally preferred by the Bhils as they are otherwise busy during the day.

Doyaro is the collective fish-catching of the Bhils. A number of Bhil women, young and old, after ten o'clock in the morning or after preparing food for the family, go fishing. They leave the homes carrying nets on their heads and small baskets in their hands, and keeping small sons or daughters, if any, with their elder siblings at home. Talking and joking and tying the basket on the head with their *falu*, keeping it a little open in the front so that the fish can be put inside, they enter a stream with knee-deep water, the spot having been already decided. They cast the nets in the water, raise them after some time, and take out the fish if any and put

them in the baskets on their heads. Then all move one step forward, sometimes some moving sideways, and repeat the same procedure. This thing goes on till evening when all of them come out, squeeze out water from their clothes, decide the next time's place for fishing, *modhava jaga,* and go home with their lots, the catch not being divided equally as each fished for herself. Sometimes men join in this; they remain a little in front. They have big triangular nets tied to three bamboos, eight feet by eight or six. Thus by evening women return with about two days' food or, sometimes, much less. If the latter is the case, the men may cut jokes at them: 'So much exertion and what an outcome!' Women go fishing either on alternate days or every third day, attending to household work at greater length on other days.

The genesis of this *doyaro* or *hot* is very interesting. In days gone by, they say, when men ran after any woman, and when young children were sacrificed to the gods, Raja Pantha and his friend Vina Deo went on a global tour to improve the prevailing unbearable conditions. In their tour to reform the world, they came to the Land of the Frog-Eaters, *Dedak Khaya Mulakh,* where people ate nothing but frogs, morning, mid-day and evening. The two High Gods collected the people, gave them a good thrashing and asked them to catch fish and eat them instead of frogs.

Kabadu

One of the most important auxiliary occupations of these people is doing *kabadu,* that is, felling the contractor's forest trees, shaping the logs and taking them to a railway terminus or other place from where they can be exported. The payment for *kabadu* includes the wages for felling the trees and the cartage for carrying the logs to the desired transport terminus. Throughout the whole season they are able to make five or six trips, though sometimes they may make a few more, as the places are very far apart and the roads very bad. Each trip brings anything between Rs. 20/- and 50/- for them.

The Bhils have become so much dependent on *kabadu* that many are careless about their agriculture. Another

feature which is unsatisfactory about this occupation is that contractors give them advance money on the security of next year's *kabadu* and force them to do it whenever they (the contractors) want, even at the risk of the Bhils' agricultural work.

Fruit-collection and Honey-gathering.

Two of the minor economic occupations of a Bhil are fruit-collecting and honey-gathering. Both of these, as we said in the beginning of the chapter, take advantage of the Bhil environment. Fruit-gathering is generally done by women and children. Fruits are sometimes dried and stored for future use. Besides eating these fruits (which were enumerated above) the Bhills get oil from dried *mahuda.* Some make pickles from mangoes and *khatamana.* Honey-collection is not taken up seriously as an occupation and very few sell honey. Whenever they come across any honey-comb they drive away the bees from it by smoking them out, then squeeze out the honey and eat it there and then even as they put it: 'Drive away all the cows and milk the empty cattle-shed.'

Wage-Earning.

Some of the Bhils accept work as farm labourers in the fields of neighbouring plains-people or of *Patidar* landlords in their own villages. They indenture as collectors of gum or *bidi* leaves or other things for the contractors of these, or as domestic servants in Rajpipla, Akkalkuva and Taloda, but very seldom as servants of other Bhils. Wage-earning is only occasional and even then prevalent only in those areas where the Bhils live in contact with other peoples. Otherwise, in the Bhil land proper there are very few labourers as such engaged in agricultural work. Whenever there are any, they are paid in terms of labour. Before the Second World War, for agricultural work, the Bhils in Rajpipla used to get anything between four annas and six annas a day per man and from three annas to four annas a day per woman. Sometimes they were paid in terms of grains; a man received two *sers* of paddy for a day. During and after the War

the wages went up by about three annas a day for both men and women.

The Bhil women and young girls work as collectors of many kinds of forest produce which is bought by the contractors as a monopoly for a year. Sometimes a man who has no other work also goes in for this. They work in this way from morning till three or four o'clock in the evening, and earn on piece rate basis as shown in Table VI.

TABLE VI

Article	Piece Unit	Wage per Unit
Cotton	5 seers	-/2/-
Bidi leaves	1 basket	-/3/-
Gum	1 seer	-/4/-
Tree-cotton	1 seer	-/10/-
Honey	1 seer	-/6/-

The domestic servants got Rs. 4/- to 7/- per month before the War; since the War the wages increased to Rs. 9/- per month. Food was given in addition to these wages in some cases; in others food depended on the sweet will of the employer. Only one case of a Bhil boy engaged as a servant with another Bhil came to my notice in Toranmal. This boy, Umedyo, aged 13 years, was from Dumkhal, a village in the neighbourhood. He was parentless and his uncle got him a job in Toranmal with Revlo, who paid him Rs. 3/- per month, food and clothes also being supplied by the employer. As he was young, he was asked to do easy work and was treated well.

Trade

Occasionally the Bhils sell something to outsiders and thus establish with others trade relations which form a source of supplementary income for some Bhils. A Bhil may take baskets, bamboo wicket-work or mats for sale to

Rajpipla or Akkalkuva and sell them for cash. I have also seen the Mathwari Bhils selling some of their agricultural produce like *mug*, *tuvar* and *adad* at Akkalkuva. At the Navapur railway station on the T.V. Railway they can be seen selling small quantities of chillies, raw mangoes and forest fruits. The Bhils of Mal Samot sell raw and ripe mangoes in June and July to the *Bhoiyas* from the Khandesh District.

Price Mechanism

The Bhil economy, as shown above, is definitely in touch with the general economic life of Gujarat and other areas and thus has the same price complex as in the plains. Price is determined as under imperfect competition. The imperfection of competition is due to, besides other factors, several causes like (1) the Bhil's ignorance of the general market; (2) other cleverer businessmen to whom he sells or from whom he buys exploiting his ignorance to sell to him at higher prices and buy from him at lower prices; and (3) his haste to dispose of his wares at whatever price he can get because he wants cash very badly or because he has come from a very distant village to which he wants to return in time. His purchases at higher prices are also prompted by the same motive to go home soon. Thus, the prices he pays and receives are both monopoly prices of the other side.

Before quoting the actual prices a short aside on the Bhil units of weights and measures will be necessary in order to understand their economics properly. Their grain measures are:

muthio	a handful
khobo	a joined handsful
withio	2 *khobos*
athio	2 *sers*
payli	4 *sers*
champo	8 *sers*
toplo	8 *paylis*
map	96 *champos*

For weights there are:

ser	the standard Indian seer
man	40 seers (10 *paylis*)
kolsi	16 *mans*
khandi	20 *mans*
galli	32 *mans.*

For the measurement of length they use:

angal	a finger-width
hath	an arm-length
pora	a height equal to that of an average man
khetar	a field-length, a distance of about 100 yards
vans	a bamboo-length
kosh, kos	about 2 miles
gaj	3 *haths*

Their numerals are:

ek	one
ben	two
tin	three
char	four
panch	five
chh	six
sat	seven
ath	eight
nau	nine
doh	ten
bar	twelve
sol	sixteen
vis	twenty
senkado	a hundred

The smaller numbers are expressed in terms of five, e.g. twenty-four is 'four times five and four'. The bigger numbers are expressed in terms of sixteen and twenty as will

be seen in many of their stories. Grass bundles are counted by five; mangoes by twenty and rarely by dozens. For money their units are the same as elsewhere in India—rupees, annas and pies with their different big and small denominations.

Taking these as their units for economic transactions, the following was the price list of some of the articles sold by the Bhils at Akkalkuva in April 1947:

Adad	.. ..	6-0-0 per *man*
Tur	.. ..	7-0-0 per *man*
Juwar	.. ..	5-0-0 per *man*
Mangoes	.. ..	2-0-0 per dozen
Baskets	0-6-0 to	0-8-0 per piece

The following are the prices of some of the things sold by them at home:

Milk	.. ..	0-4-0 per *ser*
Ghee	.. ..	3-0-0 per *ser*
Eggs	.. ..	0-12-0 per dozen
Fowls	.. ..	1-4-0 per one
Honey	.. ..	0-14-0 per *ser*
Gum	.. ..	0-7-0 per *ser*

The following were the prices for some of the articles of daily Bhil use in Dediapada (Rajpipla) in June 1948:

A ready-made shirt	..	1-8-0 per piece
A coarse *dhoti*	.. ..	4-0-0 per piece
A coarse *sadi*	.. ..	4-0-0 per piece
A cotton blanket	.. ..	5-0-0 per piece
A hand-mill	.. ..	2-8-0 per one
Salt	.. ..	0-3-0 per *ser*
Sweet oil	.. ..	1-4-0 per *ser*
Potatoes	.. ..	0-8-0 per *ser*
Onions	.. ..	0-4-0 per *ser*
Tobacco	.. ..	4-0-0 per *ser*
Mahua liquor	.. ..	0-12-0 per bottle
Tadi	.. ..	0-12-0 for five *sers*

III

Distribution

Distribution in the Bhil society is through the price-mechanism as elsewhere because, as stated above, Bhil economics do not differ from those of other agricultural people in India. Their economics being direct, that is, production being for consumption, there is very little complexity in distribution; in fact, mostly each consumes what he produces. Their system of distribution can be divided into two categories. One is the apportioning of a joint product among the members of a co-operative group and the other is the payment to the factors of production.

To examine the principles of distribution in the first, let us take the example of co-operative fish-catching, *doyaro*. The fish are not divided equally; whatever each gets is his; it all depends on his luck. A group of Bhil women from Ruswad went for *doyaro* together on 4th June, 1948. In the evening when they returned, I measured the catch. It was an extraordinary day for all; usually the catch is much less. That day's catch is given in Table I.

TABLE I

Name	(Age)	Catch in *sers*
Navsi	(20)	3
Sukhli	(55)	2
Nani	(28)	4
Juma	(15)	½
Surja	(31)	1
Gimbu	(35)	1½
Jhalu	(22)	2
Kali	(16)	1½

As for the second, those who help in the production of goods are given reciprocal help, but they have no right to

the product. Those who go as labourers are paid in money, the wage rate being generally traditional. Higgling for an increase in wages does not generally take place; in bad times by common consent they increase the rates. Sometimes labourers are paid for their work in food, *khawti,* if they so demand. Such a demand comes only from the very poor labourers.

Capital in the form of money lent on loans will yield interest, generally at the rate of 25%; but if the loan is from a Bhil, he does not charge the usual rate, giving a discount on social and humanitarian grounds. Rent for land is also paid to the Government; it is generally one rupee per acre.

Distribution is also marked among the Bhils by a non-economic matrix which takes the form of gifts and ceremonial exchanges. Once a gift is given freely on customary counts, the very fact of its having been presented carries an obligation for equivalent or increased return that can be ignored only on penalty of social stigma or loss of prestige. Take for instance the giving of grain, called *viro,* on the threshing floor. The measure is fixed by tradition: the headman is given fifteen *sers,* the cow-boy or the *Gori* two *sers* and whoever else comes half a *ser.* But it is in the expectation that they will do their duty properly—a material consideration—that it is given.

Bride-price is also a form of economic distribution, more so when it takes the form of payment in terms of head of cattle. When it is to be paid in cash, relatives also contribute. Each of them pays eight annas or a rupee to the father of the bridegroom, thus helping him a little to pay out a big sum. He in his turn gives an equal sum, if and when there is a boy marrying in any of these contributors' families. If he does not, he will be scoffed at.

Summarising the Bhil principles of distribution, it may be said that they recognise that each participant in a productive activity should get a share in the produce though social considerations may not allow it to be proportionate to the time, skill and labour expended by each. There is also a definite convention that services require material recognition though here also social considerations govern the form

and amount of repayment. And, lastly, there is also a non-economic matrix round some payments, though in the ultimate analysis they are also as materialistic as others.

Family Budgets

The culmination of all these economic activities of the Bhils is earning and spending for the members of the family. I give below a few representative family annual budgets which will show the economic status of the common Bhil. As there is no wide divergence in economic conditions between one Bhil and another, they are more representative of the average Bhil economic conditions than such budgets would be for our society where this disparity is very great. To be on still safer grounds I have taken three villages quite distant from each other, the families being chosen at random. That is the reason why I feel satisfied with a few samples.

Some points here may be clarified for fear of causing misunderstanding. The Bhils, whose budgets I have given here, are segregated from others and are illiterate. Because they are away from the civilised society, their wants are few and are dictated by custom and kept up by tradition. The wants, therefore, of one Bhil and another cannot be very divergent, the only difference being due to the size of the family. Secondly, they are so illiterate and ignorant that they do not even know their ages—they do not care to—and so they generally cannot remember what their income or expenditure is. The figures given, therefore, are only approximate and in round numbers. As there is no other source of verification for the facts they give, we have to depend only on what they say.

The data given in Tables II and III here was collected in November 1947.

Table II (on the Bhils' income) shows that

(a) agriculture is in all cases the main source of income for them, yielding 60% to 65% of the total income;

(b) their earnings from *kabadu* range from Rs. 50/- to 200/- per year per family and from 30% to 40% of the total income; and

INCOME

TABLE II

Village	Head of Family	Number of Dependents	Agriculture	*Kabadu* (in Rs.)	Other Sources (in Rs.)
Bokda Khetar	Nandario	5	25 maunds of *juwar* and 10 maunds of other grains	120	Nil
Do.	Vesto	6	20 maunds of *juwar* and 5 maunds of kodri	60	20
Do.	Nawsu	7	27 maunds of *juwar* and 5 maunds of other grains	150	30
Do.	Kario	4	10 maunds of *juwar* and 5 maunds of other grains	100	Nil
Do.	Fulio	3	15 maunds of *juwar* and 15 maunds of other grains	50	Nil
Jharwani	Lalji	8	30 maunds of different kinds of grains	150	10
Do.	Vesto	4	25 maunds of *juwar* and 5 maunds of other grains	100	Nil
Do.	Divalio	9	25 maunds of *juwar* and 10 maunds of other grains	155	25
Do.	Navario	5	15 maunds of *juwar* and 5 maunds of other grains	120	15
Do.	Revlo	8	35 maunds of different kinds of grains	160	30

TABLE II (Contd.)

Village	Head of Family	Number of Dependents	Agriculture	*Kabadu* (in Rs.)	Other Sources (in Rs.)
Nani Jharwani	Bitiu Lalji	8	40 maunds of *juwar* and 10 maunds of other grains	200	Nil
Do.	Vesto Sublio	10	35 maunds of *juwar* and 15 maunds of other grains	200	25
Do.	Motiu Dayu	4	'Not enough for all'	100	10
Do.	Walji Bitiu	11		150	30
Do.	Khalp Damji	6	20 maunds of *juwar* and 10 maunds of other grains	120	15

EXPENDITURE

TABLE III

Village	Food	Salt	*Masala* & Oil (Rs.)	Clothes (Rs.)	Drink and Tobacco (Rs.)	Social Customs (Rs.)
Bokda Khetar	Price of all foodstuffs consumed plus Rs. 25/-	2 mds.	5	4 to 5 pairs	20	100
Do.	Price of all foodstuffs plus Rs. 10/-	2 mds.	6	7 pairs	30	75
Do.	Price of all foodstuffs consumed	1¼ mds.	2	6 pairs	30	80
Do.	Price of all foodstuffs plus Rs. 20/-	2 mds.	6	4 pairs	20	200
Do.	Price of all foodstuffs consumed	1 md.	4	3 pairs	25	150
Jharwani	Price of all foodstuffs consumed	1 md.	5	Rs. 50/-	20	300
Do.	Price of all foodstuffs plus Rs. 15/-	Rs. 1/4/-	7	Rs. 20/-	30	100
Do.	Rs. 300/-	1½ mds.	10	Rs. 60/-	35	80
Do.	Rs. 250/-	1½ mds.	10	Rs. 60/-	40	70
Do.	Price of all foodstuffs plus Rs. 25/-	Rs. 5/-	8	Rs. 40/-	25	65
Nani Jharwani	Rs. 250/-	2 mds.	10	Rs. 50/-	20	75
Do.	Rs. 200/-	2 mds.	6	Rs. 60/-	25	80
Do.	The Bhil interviewed could not remember these					200
Do.	Rs. 180/-	1½ mds.	15	Rs. 40/-	30	200
Do.	Price of all foodstuffs consumed	1 md.	10	6 pairs	25	100

(c) their income from other sources forms about 10% of the total.

For finding out the percentage of the total expenditure spent on different items on an average, I collected the figures of expenditure budgets of about 50 Bhils more. The figures gave the pattern of Bhil expenditure shown in Table IV.

TABLE IV

Item	Percentage of the Total Expenditure Involved
Food	60
Clothes and ornaments	15
Fuel	Nil
Education	Nil
Drinks and tobacco	10
Lighting	0.8
Recreation	Nil
Marriage and social customs ..	14.2

The table shows that

(a) for the Bhils the expenditure on food is the highest, (about 60%);

(b) on clothes they spend 15% of their income;

(c) marriage and social customs consume quite a good fraction of their income; (over 14.2%);

(d) drinks and tobacco take up about 10% of their income; and

(e) they have not to spend anything on fuel and education because fuel is had free from the forest as a gift of nature, while education is not at all received by them. They spend but little on lighting because they can get on with fire only as a source of light. Recreation is not a separate and professionalised activity among these people and so they have not got to spend anything on it. Entertainments at festivals or at any other time are inexpensive for the average Bhil.

Most of the Bhils are, however, in debts. I have seen a number of them who were in debt to the money-lenders to such an extent that extrication was more or less impossible. As Symington so rightly puts it: 'At the harvest time the *sowkar* . . . comes and takes the whole of the money crop away. . . . If his debt is large or his *sowkar* particularly grasping, his food crops go as well. . . . The Bhils then have to begin to beg or borrow immediately after the harvest. . . . The Bhil *khatedar* never sells his crop, but hands it over bodily in part payment of an inextinguishable debt; consequently he makes not a pie of profit; and that even after possession of a good holding . . . he still lives in a bamboo hut, has insufficient food and clothing, and has to borrow for every petty need.' [1]

1. D. Symington, *Report on the Aboriginal and Hill Tribes of the Partially Excluded Areas in the Bombay Presidency*, (Bombay 1950), pp. 6-7.

CHAPTER V

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

How can you forecast the clouds and the womb?
(A Bhil proverb)

King of kings, who is the greatest king?
(A Bhil riddle on a child)

I

What Ashley Montague says of the Australian aborigines and other anthropologists say of other tribes regarding their ideas of maternity and motherhood is perhaps not applicable to the Bhils. For example, when it is said that motherhood and fatherhood are based upon and fulfil certain fundamental social needs, that these relationships are of a purely social nature and that there is nothing of any biological or physiological nature nor any concepts of consanguinity associated with these relationships[1] they may be basing their conclusions on a vast store of irrefutable data; but it does not apply to the Bhils. The Bhils know of the physiological origin of paternity. When the male semen which they call 'water', *pae*, meets the female secretion which is also 'water', a child is conceived in the womb. When a girl who has had pre-marital sex relations with some Bhil shows signs of maternity and is taken to task by her suspicious parents, she confesses that such-and-such man is the author of it. The Bhils believe conception starts when menstruation stops; but though the foetus is completely human in shape, life does not enter it till after three months according to some, and till after five months according to many. That is why among the Bhils abortion after five months is a crime and not so if committed earlier, though abortion is rarely resorted to. That the child gets its

1. Ashley Montague, *Coming into Being in Australian Aboriginals*, p. 330.

nourishment from the mother through the navel cord is also known to them.

By the fifth month, parents start observing various pre-natal precautions which have to be followed if the child is to be born normal and well-formed and if the mother is to have an easy delivery. Both the parents are considered equally capable of influencing the child within the womb, but in point of fact a large number of the precautions are liable to fall on the man rather than on the woman, because he is concerned with outside work. Cohabitation ceases after the sixth month and is not resumed before the child is three months old. It is only in very few cases that some may violate the rule and the Bhils denounce them in strong terms.

The important pre-natal precautionary taboos are: the father should not cut anything growing; the mother should not eat anything joint like a double banana or some double tubers; neither parent should eat any animal which has met its death in an accident; neither should stick a pole into the ground or tie a knot or drive a nail; all these prevent proper delivery. There are a great number of other prohibitions similar to these listed here. The second half of pregnancy is a period of constant watchfulness for both parents.

The growing of the foetus is well described by the Bhils from month to month, and they can tell from the carriage and the state of her body which month a woman is carrying. In the first and the second months there is no outward difference; in the third the foetus grows in the womb and she feels it; in the fourth, fifth and sixth she becomes gradually plump; in the seventh and the eighth she finds it increasingly difficult to work and her belly 'looks like a small pot', as the Bhils put it, and she grows pale; in the ninth month she must expect the birth of the child. Sooner or later, she develops a voracious appetite. She may eat earth, potsherds and whatnot; or may be she prepares tasty things at home and eats them.

The Bhils say that the sex of the child is fixed once for all, and cannot be changed, try however one may. But they claim that they can predict whether the child will be a boy or a girl; a girl is born exactly after nine months, and a boy

after nine days past nine months from the date of conception. If the foetus quickens much in the womb it is a boy; if it does not trouble the mother, it must be a girl. Delay in delivery is watched with anxiety.

Miscarriage is caused, as is the case with so many other abnormal phenomena, either by the disfavour of the gods or due to an evil eye; yet they say that if the health of the woman is good there are very few chances of her miscarrying. In case a woman has once miscarried she is placed in the hands of a professional maternity nurse. If the latter is adept and competent she does succeed in preventing further trouble.

Though the exact time of the birth of a child cannot be forecast, normally their prognosis of it is correct, for it is known from the trouble in the mother's stomach, *dedim dukhta ha.* The family itself prepares for the arrival of the newcomer; all sorts of indigenous medicines are collected beforehand; a room is set apart for the expectant mother; a cot is brought in there, though no fire is kept under it as is done by the neighbouring Hindus; and the mother is made to lie on it. To procure easy delivery gods are worshipped and propitiated or if the labour is very difficult and 'she rolls from this side of the cot to that', they put an indigenous medicinal root under her head, which is believed to be particularly efficaious. Generally the labour is easy; the nurse, *hiarpi,* is called in beforehand; other women of the neighbourhood also gather there.

As soon as the women gather and the time of the birth of the child approaches, all the males leave the hut to the women. This, they say, is done *abru dakho* (as a matter of decency and good manners). The professional midwife knows where to rub or how to set the mother in position; and other women help in holding the belly, *pet pakadavun.* As soon as the child is born she cuts the umbilical cord with a bamboo chip and the part attached to the baby's body is tied up. The baby is then washed in lukewarm water, wrapped in a cloth and put to the breast. The umbilical cord is taken in a basket outside the house, where it is burried in a pit. Nobody is allowed to look at this.

When the child is born the *hiarpi* offers three doses of

milk and three of liquor to Rehanyo Her and Dudhyo Her, both of whom are supposed to be greatly influencing the life of the child, the first through milk and the second through vitality. Dhan Kokar, who wields the destiny of all, is also given an offering of liquor at this time. After this they try to find out recognisable marks on the baby's body resembling those of any dead person; for they believe in the rebirth of its dead members in the family. They cut off the upper portion of the little finger of a dead child who happens to be the last of the non-surviving children of the family and believe that the new-born will have its little finger cut.

As soon as the afterbirth has appeared it is kept in a bamboo container which is carefully covered with a cloth. The nurse takes it behind the house, digs a pit, puts some *juwar* grains in it and then burries the container there. The places where the afterbirths are burried are considered important by the Bhils. They like to live at those places and even if chance takes them away in future, they try to return to this place; 'It calls us,' they say.

The mother also is given a bath with hot water, *ungawta ha,* outside the house, where she goes with a sickle or an arrow or a knife. She sleeps on the cot; her clothes, bedding and plates are not touched by others.

II

For the first five days nothing particular happens. The mother takes her bath every morning; whenever she goes out of the house, she takes an arrow, a sickle or a knife with her. It is believed that these give her protection against *dakans* and spirits. She is not allowed to touch any vessel or cot or clothes of common use; nor can she do any household work like lifting the cow-dung or cleaning the house, because that is taboo. The baby is given a bath twice a day by the nurse who comes for seven days after the birth. The baby sleeps in the mother's lap.

The mother is kept on a strict diet for these five days. She is given boiled *kodra* or *moryu* or *banti;* sometimes *khichdi* and vegetables may be served to her; but the general

menu is soup prepared from *moryu*. She is not allowed to eat oil and salt all these days. This is done for the safety of the child who is supposed to be very tender and susceptible to the bad effects of the mother's diet: if the mother eats curds the child will get cold or if she eats oil the child will cough.

On the fifth day (sometimes on the seventh) the mother has to come out. On that day she cleans her room and the house with cow-dung dissolved in water. She goes out with the *hiarpi* and gives offerings of *sindur* and coconut to the gods. The nurse puts whey or curd or milk in the mother's hair and washes it. After this the mother takes her bath. The child is also given a bath. A swing, *jholi*, is tied and the child is put in it for the first time. On this occasion all the neighbouring women are invited to a liquor party; but men are strictly kept out of it. From this day onward the mother can do all household work and can touch all objects in the house; but cooking remains taboo for a month.

Five children are also invited on this day and given a feast of *khichdi* and *mando* along with very small swills of liquor. This is called the ceremony of the fifth day, *pechro karvo*. After this the *hiarpi* gives a name to the baby. The name of the father or grandfather must not be repeated; but the paternal or maternal uncle's name may be given to the baby. They may name it after the day or the month in which it is born. If the parents' previous children have all died the child is given a bad name, for instance, Kutro (Dog). Some of the Bhil names appear Mohemmadan. The name pattern will be clear from a glance at the following list of some personal names of both men (M) and women (F) with their meanings:—

Amryo	(M)	The immortal
Amli	(F)	Tamarind
Alu	(F)	Friendly (?)
Awansi	(F)	Of this generation
Bapu	(M)	Father
Bilado	(M)	A male cat
Bijlo	(M)	The second

Bawo	(M)	An ascetic
Bungio	(M)	A musical instrument
Bhangio	(M)	A lower Hindu caste
Babio	(M)	A small child
Bidi	(F)	The leaf cigarette
Bhani	(F)	Of the sun
Babli	(F)	A small girl
Chhipa	(M)	A printer
Chhedadyo	(M)	A cutter
Chuhdi	(F)	A rat
Dedko	(M)	A frog
Devlo	(M)	One given by the gods
Damania	(M)	Of Daman, a town in the Surat District
Damani	(F)	Of Daman
Dhorio	(M)	One who is white
Dhedo	(M)	An untouchable Hindu
Dungario	(M)	Of the hill
Dungari	(F)	Of the hill
Dhani	(F)	The rich one
Fakir	(M)	A Muslim ascetic
Fendi	(F)	?
Funja	(M)	The Spring
Gimlo	(M)	From Gimb, the Bhil god
Gimli	(F)	From Gimb
Gunja	(F)	A creeper
Gajlyo	(M)	The thunderer
Gomsuri	(F)	Named after the village Gomsur
Gisu	(F)	?
Gandi	(F)	Mad
Gono	(M)	From Govind, a name of Lord Krishna
Heptyo	(M)	?
Hindio	(M)	One who walks
Hendra	(F)	Named after a tree
Homli	(F)	Born on Monday
Indio	(M)	After Ind, a god
Jamdyo	(M)	After Jam, a god
Jethyo	(M)	Born in the month of *Jeth*

Jhuma	(F)	One who sways
Jeta	(F)	The victorious
Jhili	(F)	A basket
Kakio	(M)	The black one
Kutro	(M)	A dog
Kotwal	(M)	Of the basket-making tribe
Kotwali	(F)	Of the basket-making tribe
Khojyo	(M)	The dogged one
Kachkyo	(M)	Born in the month of *Kachki Diwali*
Khetyo	(M)	Of the field
Kanji	(M)	One of Lord Krishna's names
Lalji	(M)	One of Lord Krishna's names; the dear one
Lali	(F)	The dear one
Laxman	(M)	Brother of Shree Rama
Masur	(M)	A kind of pulse
Moti	(M) & (F)	A pearl
Nawadyo	(M)	Much attached to the mother
Margyo	(M)	Of the road
Mamdo	(M)	A Muslim name, Mohemmad
Mani	(F)	A ruby
Malu	(F)	A water-shed
Moylo	(M)	The dead one
Moyli	(F)	The dead one
Nawsyo	(M)	The new one
Nawi	(F)	The new one
Nurio	(M)	A Muslim name
Nura	(F)	A Muslim name
Nario	(M)	A creeper (?)
Naktyo	(M)	The noseless
Namio	(M)	The famed
Nagario	(M)	Of the city
Narsi	(M)	One of Lord Krishna's names
Nadio	(M)	The joyful
Nani	(F)	The small one
Nakli	(F)	That which imitates
Punio	(M)	The pious one
Puni	(F)	The pious one

Pitli	(F)	Of brass
Pemli	(F)	One who is mad with love
Rotu	(M) & (F)	The engrossed one
Rodatyo	(M)	One who always weeps
Rasio	(M)	The man of good tastes
Ramji	(M)	One of Shree Rama's names
Ranu	(F)	Of the forest
Rupa	(F)	The silvern
Rehna	(F)	A Muslim name
Ratali	(F)	The full young
Resmo	(M)	The silken
Surji	(F)	Of the sun
Suti	(F)	The sleeping one
Sanio	(M)	Born on Saturday
Sonio	(M)	The golden one
Sankar	(M)	Name of God Mahadeva
Sunta	(F)	Of good morals
Surio	(M)	The brave
Somi	(F)	Of the moon; born on Monday
Sikti	(F)	A local goddess
Tetio	(M)	Of the banyan figs
Tulio	(M)	One who is weighed
Tekri	(F)	A hill
Umedyo	(M)	One who hopes
Ughranio	(M)	One who demands back the loan
Vaghadio	(M)	The tiger
Vesto	(M)	The seller
Vesti	(F)	The seller
Visli	(F)	From *vis,* twenty
Vanjari	(F)	Of the Vanjara tribe
Velu	(F)	An ornament
Veju	(F)	?
Yeta	(F)	One who is coming

After the establishment of regular government in the Bhil lands, a change in names, with other important changes, is taking place. As soon as the child is born, the birth has to be reported to the Talati through the headman within three days. If it is not so reported a fine is imposed on the father.

Thus he has to go to the Talati before the child is given a name. 'So we tell him any name that comes to our mind,' the headman of Kankala told me, 'and this sometimes becomes the baby's name.' Thus though the ritual of the naming ceremony remains, it loses all its motive force. In reporting the child's name to the Talati care is however taken to see that the name is not a repetition of a grandparent's or parent's name.

For the first four days the baby is fed exclusively on its mother's milk; on the fifth day, as its birth feast is being given, it is given a tiny ball of boiled rise or *kodra.* Thereafter it is sometimes given liquid food, *rabadi;* but generally it feeds on the mother's milk. Babies are given the breast whenever they cry. The child is taken in the lap of the mother who leans slightly forward so as to bring the breast within the baby's reach. The mother goes on talking to others nearby if the child is not weeping nor cross at that time. At night the baby is placed in such a way that it can easily be put to the breast if it cries.

After ten or eleven months the child begins to take a little solid food. It generally does not cry for food if it is in the mother's arms, but claws at the front of her dress in an attempt to reach the breast. If the mother does not allow it to suck it whimpers and then cries. If it is being held by other people and if the mother is present, the baby tries to jump to her so vigorously that sometimes it becomes difficult to hold it. It will claw at the carrier's front if the mother is not present.

A very young baby is difficult to be silenced if it starts weeping unless the mother puts it to her breast. The carrier, when the mother is absent, tries all kinds of entreaties and threats to silence the baby, 'Look here, *baba*', 'Don't cry', 'Look at the flower', 'O there's that tiger, *Vaghodiu alu hay*', 'A serpent will come out', being some of the most commonly used phrases. Sometimes it may be kept silent by rolling a dried white pumpkin on the ground making a rhythmic sound, or sometimes by beating the earth with a small stick and attracting the baby's attention to it. If even then it does not stop crying, the carrier tries to swing it in his or her

arms and hum a nursery tune. If the mother comes up within this period the person carrying the baby is relieved of his beloved burden; if not, he tries to put it to someone's breasts or give it its own thumb. The baby is generally silenced by this.

Otherwise Bhil children are very easily pacified. I have seen very young babies staying with their young brothers or sisters when the mother goes out for *doyaro*. Other grown-up children surround the baby and clap or beat a *thali* to please it. They also play at tickling, at the waist, knee etc.; or taking the baby's hand, go from the fingers up to the arm-pit, saying as they proceed:

We tie a horse here,
We tie a cow here,
We tie a calf here,
We tie a sheep here,
We tie a goat here,
We tie a bullock here.

When the tickler reaches the arm-pit of the baby, it is tickled to a giggling laughter.

The baby then sits and watches others playing. It tries to catch a flying insect or a roaming ant; or it may put some pebble into its own mouth, thus creating trouble for its carrier. When it is a little grown up, it will try to move on all fours. When it gets tired, the carrier puts it in the *jholi* and swings it to sleep. The baby soon sleeps. If the baby is not sleepy, the brother or sister has to wait long at the swing, singing some cradle songs:

Swing, O baby, swing.
I put you in a silken swing.
O, hush thee, my baby.
Otherwise there is a scorpion there
And it will sting you.
Sleep my baby.
See how the mischievous baby sleeps!

In another song the baby boy is asked to sleep thus:

Your father has gone with an axe in the forest,
Sleep, dearie, sleep.

Your mother has gone to foreign realms.
Your father has gone to Nandod;
He will bring *mamra* for you;
You will eat them all alone.
Sleep, *baba,* sleep;
Mother has gone for *hot.*

There is also another song which runs as follows:

Silence, silence,
Dear boy,
A little bread
You must eat.
Silence, silence,
Dear boy.

During the first year of life children are bathed with warm water every morning; afterwards this wash becomes irregular so much so that some grown-up children who are left to themselves do not bathe at all until they become big enough to have an occasional dip in the stream nearby. This habit of not taking a bath keeps them very dirty.

The teaching of sphincter control is meant to start at the age of four months when the elders take out a child at fairly regular intervals; and by a low whistle make it understand that it should ease itself. Thus the children learn to cry when they want to be taken out or by the time they are big enough, to go out themselves, some elderly person keeping watch to drive away scavenging dogs. But this is a big ideal and like cleanliness is not regarded as of emotional importance and some quite big children excrete inside the house. The traditional education goes on and exceptions there must be.

After it has made good progress in going on all fours, a child learns to stand up and by about eighteen months of age it walks falteringly with the help of older siblings. If it tries to go on hands and knees when it has learnt walking, it is discouraged. In learning these things, every little progress of the child is applauded, but over-ambitious attempts are gently discouraged. Small errors are ignored but grave ones are punished and atavistic tendency rebuked. Along with walking the baby picks up a little talking also. It under-

stands some baby sounds like *ba* (father), *ai* (mother), *alo* (comes), *pal* (see) and *nana* (grandfather) in its second year. It is always asked to repeat what the carrier speaks: 'Baby, say *Aa-i*', 'say *Na-na*'; and anxiety is felt if a child at this age does not begin to speak. The parents pray the gods to give the child speech and sacrifice fowls to the gods.

For the first year and a half a child is carried in the arms in one of these two positions: either it sits on the waist with legs apart resting on the carrier's back and front, or it sits on the elbow and the arm, and is carried near the waist. Sometimes it is carried at the back also, the carrier holding its arms lest it should fall. The use of a *jholi* is referred to above. It is a cloth tied at its four corners to vantage points so as to make a fold in which the baby can sleep. The *jholi* is tied whenever the mother goes away or is busy and there is nobody else to keep the baby. The mother works while the baby sleeps.

Until children are three or four years of age they do not usually wear clothes. Inside the house and outside it, they move without any encumbrance of clothing. Generally all have a red thread tied round their waists. When they are over four they begin to put on a loin-cloth.

The child sleeps for the first year with its mother; and then it shares its bed with its grandmother or grandfather who normally has a fancy for it. After a year or so it shares its bed with its elder siblings, the grandparent taking care of a new child if any. Even when the child is sleeping with its elder brother or sister, one of the parents generally wakes up once or twice in the night, takes it out for urination or gives it water to drink.

The mental reactions of the Bhil babies seemed to me to be very active. I tried to call the grandson of the Besna headman to me, but the baby at once knew me to be a stranger and turned its face away from me, crying. When they are among familiar people they play and laugh and some of them please their elders by doing what they ask them to do. 'Hold your ears', 'Where is your nose?', 'Pat your bottom': such would be the orders and the children, who by this time on account of repeated orders like this are fairly advanced in

their knowledge of human anatomy, do as bidden. If a child makes a mistake it is shown the correct way. Grown-up children are not afraid of strangers. The son of Dejio (village Kankala) came to me and asked me what I was doing when I was reading a book.

In their first two or three years children suffer from many diseases. The Bhils are afraid of an evil eye hurting the child; more so if it (the child) is fair. Mothers put a soot mark on their children's faces so that 'the eye' cannot do them any evil. If in spite of this somebody has cast upon it an evil eye, they try to get rid of it by 'the waving of seven cow-dung cakes'. After its first year talismans are tied round its neck to ward off evil. Children suffer from such diseases as *tama boru* and *tan;* in the former a child gets fever and in the latter its belly becomes tight. The Bhils believe that these diseases do visit every child. The only precaution taken in the case of illness is that the child is not allowed to go to any women in menses.

By the time a Bhil child is three, it is already a significant member of its society. The child has an almost complete reliance on all the older members of the group; it has been trained physically and mentally to yield to its elders, who in their turn will gratify as far as possible all its wishes. The child expects kindness and attention from others, and it weeps if it is neglected. Unpleasant sensations and hunger are reduced to a minimum for a Bhil baby, even though the parents may be below competence. Except under extraordinary circumstances a child is never alone, nor is its cry allowed to go without receiving attention. The child receives very early a notion of fear from the voice and expressions of those around it. These fears are pivoted round tigers, devils, serpents and *sepoys.* The formative influences on the very early life of a child are those of the adults' tradition depending on the child's receptivity. In the words of Margaret Mead: 'When it is the question of passing on the sum total of a simple tradition, the only conclusion which it is possible to draw is that any method will do. The forces of imitation are much more potent than any adult technique for exploiting them; the child's receptivity to its surrounding is so much more

important than any methods of stimulation that as long as every adult with whom he comes in contact is saturated with tradition he cannot escape a similar saturation.' [2]

III

After the age of three or four the Bhil child begins to be physically independent. A boy begins to put on a loin-cloth and after the age of five or so a head-scarf or at least a cap is also given to him. Girls wear round their waist a small cloth piece up to the knee with one end pulled over the head. After a year or two they are given a small bodice too if the parents can afford it. In the earlier years the children are fed from parents' plates. At about the age of four they are given separate earthen plates and cups of their own. They are given a separate meal from others'. They begin to possess small things—a toy cart or a rattle, and they do not allow anybody to touch these. But what is true property is not given to or acquired by them. They are ignorant of all the issues of adult life.

With this achievement of physical independence a child's conscious education begins. The child learns to respect elderly people; it learns how to look at things; it cannot defecate in the kitchen nor can it use bad language in the presence of its elders. It also learns the different behaviours appropriate with different members of the family: it can be freer with the mother than with the father; or it can be very cross with its elder siblings, but not at all with its uncles.

To go into the details of this education: the child's moral education starts by both precept and punishment. Moral axioms stressing social conduct are repeated to it: 'Work and work'; 'Idlers don't get bread'; 'It is a sin to tell a lie'. If the child is naughty or quarrelsome, *yidata hay,* or it does not pick up the desired thing despite repeated instructions, the annoyed parent punishes it: it may have its cheeks or ears tweaked or may be slapped in the face; a woman may hit it with a laddle or a stick. They are aware hitting on

2. Margaret Mead, *Growing up in Samoa,* p. 195.

the head is not good and too much hitting is cruel. They say, 'We also make mistakes; the children naturally do more.' But sometimes when the child is very disobedient or has committed a serious crime it is severely hit. The headman of Ambawadi told me of a father in his village who hit his son with a thick bamboo stick.

At the same time the child's technical education also starts. Children are taught work techniques by being instructed to copy their elders, by verbal instructions, or in easy works by asking them to help, as in rope-making. They can hold the rope or measure out the required length when the elders do the more technical jobs at it. Boys are also taught agricultural work like tying bullocks to their posts or giving water to calves. Girls stay with their mothers in the kitchen and soon learn the essentials of culinary art.

Physical education is not forgotten. All the physical skill necessary as a basis for a satisfactory physical adjustment to life must be acquired at this period. They can judge distances, throw straight, catch what is thrown at them, estimate distances for jumping and diving, climb trees and balance themselves on the most narrow and precarious footholds. Their bodies are trained to the adult dance steps as they join the grown-ups in a separate group and imitate them; their eyes and hands are trained to shooting; their voices accustomed to the song rhythms and their wrists are made flexible for the quick movements of the drum sticks. They learn a good many games by playing these themselves, an elder boy leading the team or otherwise teaching them. The companions at play are approximately of the same age-group and drawn generally from the neighbourhood. Some of the games reflect the economic activities of the adults as, for instance, their toy carts or toy plough doing make-believe agricultural work in the dust.

Some of their other games, the more recreative type, are described below:—

(1) The boys gather together in the water of the nearby stream, stand in a crowd, holding their fists piled vertically, one upon another. The one who has his fists bottom-most will then say:

F.....f.....fafuni
Who cut the cat?
F.....f.....fafuni
Khadiho cut the cat.

As soon as the last word is spoken each withdraws his fists, runs away and takes a dip in the water. The caller who holds his fists at the bottom has to catch them. Whoever is caught is called a *dhed* and has to keep his fists at the bottom in the second round.

(2) Six or more boys gather, one volunteering to become an *urli*. He takes a stick in his hands and goes on shaking like one possessed. Each of the team goes on slapping in the *urli's* back as he utters the following words:

Urli burli
Eats cemetery bones,
Eats a fowl with eggs,
Eats four breads;
Waghro waghro!

As soon as this is finished the *urli* dashes forth with his stick and tries to hit the other players so that none dare go near him. If they succeed in catching him, they spit in his hair so that the ghost goes away from him and he becomes all right. Whoever is hit first has to become the *urli* in the second round.

(3) A boy hides behind some stone; he is the hare; and others of the team, dogs, beat the stone with sticks. When the hare comes out they cry out: *'Chhu chhu,* catch him, catch the hare! There it goes.' Whoever is not able to catch the hare within a given time has to run in the second round.

(4) The boys gather together. The leader lays their sticks in a line keeping a broken stick among them. Each boy has to pick up one stick and whoever picks up the broken one has to give the *dav;* that is, he has to run round this line after the boys and try to catch them. The boys can cross the line anywhere but not the runner, who has to complete the full *chukkers.* Whoever is caught first is called a *dhed* and he has to begin the next *dav.*

(5) They sometimes play with marbles, of which the most common game is this: four or five companions gather together and contribute one marble each for the play. They make a small pit, *kidi,* and from about four-feet distance each has to throw, *hilwanu,* all these marbles into the *kidi.* As many marbles as he is able to put into the *kidi* are his. One by one the boys take their chances.

(6) Another interesting game is the banana game, played by about a dozen boys. Nine boys sit in a circle; three stand one behind the other, the first of whom is a bullock, the second is the farmer and the third his dog. He goes round the circle of players saying, 'King, O king, open your doors.' Then the conversation between him and the boys goes on:

Boys: Who are you?

He: A thief, a thief.

Boys: Why at midnight?

He: The queen of the king fell from the house-top. She wants bananas; have you got any?

Boys: We've just planted a banana seed.

He knocks one or two on the head, drives away his bullock a second round while the dog keeps barking, and after coming to the original place repeats the same words. The boys this time tell him that the plantain tree has just sprouted; in the third round the tree is said to have grown by an arm-length; in the fourth it has flowered; in the fifth it bears small fruits. In the sixth round he comes, feels with his fingers the heads of a few players and takes away one of them. Thus the play goes on.

This then is the way in which the Bhil infant is slowly transformed into the adult. The whole traditional complex is instilled into the child slowly by these methods and the unique culture remains what it was, not much changed by the passage of time. It is the conquest of adults and experience. Thus the outer world becomes the inner world and these men remain mostly the construct of their own culture.

IV

To the Bhil, children are economically important. If there is no child in the family, the family has no chances of physical survival; if there is no son in the family, the parents will have nobody to fall back upon in their old age. It is because of children that they get money on loan; 'If we have no child, or no bullock, nobody will give us money on credit,' a Bhil told me. The idea is that the creditor has the guarantee that if not the father, his male children when grown up will repay his money; but if there is no child he might lose the friend and the loan itself! On account of the custom of bride-price, a Bhil has an economic advantage in having a daughter also. Of course, when she goes away to her in-laws, there is nobody to work in her place. Then there is that important emotional calculus. Both of these reasons account for the family's worry when the daughter is to be married. On account of this importance of children, barrenness is considered a curse. The goddess Pandhar is very dear to the Bhils because she gives a son to sonless!

From about the age of six children should be able to assist and accompany their elders in all forms of work. A six-year-old girl actively helps her mother; the boy also at this age is busy helping the father in his work. Thus the child being a very important economic unit in the family from this age onward, there are no unwanted children in the Bhil society as in the Bantu world.

Male children after this age are given work according to their age and physical fitness and these works are such that elderly members cannot be spared for them. Children, both male and female, go out driving the cattle to the nearby forest and return at noon, during which interval the grown-ups keep busy in the fields, doing agricultural work. When the children are not watching cattle they do some household work: filling the cattle manger with grass, removing the dung on to one side of the shed or helping the mother in bringing firewood from the forest. Young girls are seen bringing water in small pots from the *khari,* walking their gentle way behind their mothers.

Sometimes, children of even about eight years' age go out with their elders in their timber cart to the transport station. They help in driving the cart; or if sometimes they yoke two pairs the boy or girl drives and controls the front pair. The walking and fatigue-resisting capacity of these children is enormous, for the distances they cover on foot in such trips in two or three days may be forty to fifty miles.

The Bhils are very explicit in their aims of economic education. Children fall into two categories: idlers and the industrious. 'An idle child sleeps or wanders for the whole day, asks for grub five times a day and, if you ask it to bring a firestick, it will move from its place after a lot of time—that too for fear of being beaten; a good child helps us and is ready at our word.' But then the character is considered malleable and children sooner or later go into the 'industrious' category and there are only very few children for whom the parents have no hope.

Children who are soon to be highly precocious or highly adaptable after their physical emancipation are well looked after. They are encouraged in many ways so that they become more useful economically and helpful to the family. I have seen a Bhil boy, Damanio (village Kundi-Amba), aged ten, doing all his father's work when the latter was ill. This boy was much ahead of other boys of his age: he sang Bhili songs, he danced and he could tell stories.

The Bhil child's economic position in the family is one of the reasons why all attempts at making it literate have to be made on a basis altogether different from the ones adopted elsewhere. For the Bhil child cannot be spared for the school: if it goes to school, the work suffers.

Today however another trend is also visible among the Bhils. Pressure on the land having increased, a large family is felt to be a burden. 'My family has become an unweildy world (*Ma sansar vodhi gayo hay*),' said Bapu of Toranmal in a dejected mood to me. When the children are too many and no work can be given to them, it is a question as to what can be done with them. Many Bhil families have reached a stage when children can be spared and spared with ease for the school. Without the school, and without

any tradition of school life these children develop the habit of escapism. If they are sent to schools—which are very few and far between—they play traunt on the way, hide in the forest and come out when the school closes. Especially is this a complaint in the *rasti* (plains) villages.

V

When a Bhil child is no longer a baby it enters into a new world different from that in which it lived so far. The Bhil boy is treated rather impersonally. Children of his age form a group which is increasingly treated as of adults. The elder ones of the group, because of their increased knowledge and initiation, are more and more taken into the adult world as they become more self-supporting. Sometimes marriage arrangements are also made for some of them at the age of thirteen. As a class, children are not ill-treated and they are provided with ample food. Girls also become physically mature at about fifteen and are much desired by young men.

Besides the games enumerated above, there are others which the more grown-up children play. The usual game which these young boys and girls play when they go grazing the cattle in the forest is 'house-keeping'. The boys erect a bamboo wicker-work on four sides and put a thatch of leaves over it: this is their house. A girl is then 'married' to a boy, other children playing the processionists and singers. If no girl is present, a boy becomes the 'bride'. Some boys open cloth shops and others vegetable stalls and the rest ornament depots. The pair goes to buy these. They come 'home' and share the bread that has been brought from home. It is playing at such games that gives them a sexual education: the boys get from it some idea of a wife and what her duties can be. Cattle-grazing time is thus responsible for much real love-making. Here are two Bhil songs to this effect:

(i)

Your calves and my sheep, O Khimla;
We'll graze them together, O Kharadi.

Your *dalia* and my *mahuda,* O Khimla;
We'll eat them together, O Kharadi.

(ii)

While grazing cattle together
We began to love.
'Where shall we go?'
We decided to fly away.
'Let us to Godhra go.'
'And what shall we eat?'
'The Kotwal at Godhra.'
'He is very bad.'
We tried to go, but O, but O!
Money was spent and love was lost.

This then is the time when the Bhil boy should get married. His mother wants it; he also wants it. Soon the preparations for the marriage take place.

CHAPTER VI

MARRIAGE

I.

Theye jinhdo hop naha (No happiness like a wife)
—A Bhil proverb.

When a Bhil boy grows out of his boyhood and attains the age of about fourteen or fifteen, when he is naturally sex-conscious and tries in every way to enhance his personal beauty by doing his hair nicely or keeping a comb in his hair, when his clothes are cleaner and put on more tidily, when his eyes brighten up at the sight of a passing girl and when at times he gets involved in some sexual intrigues, his parents are anxious that their son should get married and have a good wife.

But before the bride can be selected they have to look to the many social restrictions on the choice. For the Bhils, as said before, the Bhil tribe is dichotomized into *haga* and *hagwadia* groups. *Hagwadias* are the *vewais* or the in-laws and theirs is the group from which the bride or the bride-groom as the case may be has to be chosen.

Then marriage in one's own clan is also prohibited. Thus a Bhil who belongs to the Malsa clan cannot marry his son or daughter into the same clan, for all Malsas are *hagas* and therefore ineligible for alliance. They have to seek their fortunes in other clans like the Tamansa or the Tanvansia or any one of the many others, taking care, of course, to see that the chosen clan does not fall within the *haga* branch of the dichotomy.

Clan exogamy naturally prohibits marriage in one's own paternal family. That kind of marriage will be incestuous. Even a thought of that is forbidden and it is believed that if there is some sex relation between two members of a family it will bring super-natural wrath on the whole society. The *Panch,* therefore, take cognizance of such offences.

Along with this kind of clan exogamy there is also an idea, though not a strict rule, of local exogamy among the Bhils. Local or territorial exogamy is the seeking of a marriage partner outside a defined and definite territory, either a street, a village, a group of villages or a district.

The Bhil social structure in some places is such that the whole village generally is inhabited by a group of paternal relatives of the same clan; the village, therefore, automatically becomes an exogamous unit. There are cases where such marriages have taken place and even today the Bhils tell us that there is no restriction on marriage in the same village but invariably the families who have thus been united in marriage are those that come at different times and belong to different clans. When the Bhils tell of the freedom of territorial exogamy, they have such families in mind. Another reason for thus avoiding the families in the same village seems to be chances of complaints from any one of the parties and consequent conflict between both, which are likely to be more frequent here than when they are far apart. The Bhil girl is therefore generally referred to as a bird flying away to a foreign country in their folk-songs; and so also the *jamai,* the son-in-law, who is addressed as a foreigner, indicating that the marriage parties are dwellers of different villages.

Besides the exogamous restriction, the Bhils have also certain endogamous restrictions. Like the Hindus they do not marry outside their own tribe. A Bhil boy cannot marry a Gori, a Kotwal, a Mawchi, or a Tadvi girl, in short a girl from any other tribe. If he does so, he is at once thrown out of his own tribe and he will be taken back only if he pays a fine to his caste *Panch.* There are cases where Bhil girls have married boys from other castes, including the Muslim. They have social relations with their parents; but they are talked of by the people and are not allowed to touch the hearth or cook food at their parents' homes.

Together with this the Bhils practise regional endogamy. The Bhils of Rajpipla know that the Khandesh Bhils are of the same stock as they are, and that they can be accepted in marriage without any social stigma, but they refrain from

such marriages. 'The unknown is dangerous. Who knows what kind of girl she is?' they say. The Bhils in the plains do not, as a matter of course, bring wives from the hills; for, 'They don't like to stay with us, brought up as they are in the hilly air' as a Bhil of Limodra told me. The Rajpipla forest Bhils on their part will restrict marriages to their own Dediapada region: 'To go beyond the Rewa on the north and the Tapti on the south is not good,' though no doubt they can go. When the daughter is married not very far contact can be easily maintained by her with her father's family and that is a great solace in this patriarchal society. When the bride belongs to their own known areas, her qualities are likely to be more assimilative. These may be the reasons behind territorial endogamy.[1]

Besides these restrictions the Bhils also have certain preferential mates who if available are preferred to others. The Bhils are a cross cousin-marrying people; and therefore the ego can marry his paternal aunt's daughter (if younger to him). If a Bhil's wife dies, he can get married to the deceased wife's younger sister. Though this is not compulsory, sororate is a preferred mating. Levirate alliances also exist among them. A Bhil widow can remarry and as a matter of course, the deceased husband's younger brother, *dero,* marries her. Tario, *Vasawo* of Mal, told me that his brother's daughter, Hindi, was first married to one Margya of Dhadgam; but he died and then his (Margya's') younger brother, Surjyo, took her as his wife. There are many cases like this. In case the widow does not marry her *dero* and 'goes' to somebody else she pays him (the *dero*) a customary due of Rs. 7/- to 15/- as if it were a compensation for the fault of not marrying him.

For purposes of marriage alliances certain individual qualities are socially preferred to others. A Bhil boy is quite a good candidate for marriage if he is obedient, industrious, thrifty and unindebted. Similarly for a girl to be a good bride beauty and obedience to parents are necessary. Equally important is the quality of shyness; 'A good bride

1. See my 'Territorial Exogamy' in *Man in India,* Vol. 29, No. 1.

does not speak much and keeps her face half hidden.' Last but not the least, she must be younger than the boy. If the contrary is the case, she is not at all taken as a mate, even if fit otherwise. Rupsing and Manu (Geneology No. 1), even though cousins, have not married because Manu is older than Rupsing by a year or so. There is rarely anybody, male or female, unmarried among the Bhils. Only very serious defects keep a man unmarried, while a girl, as a rule, must be married. In my tour in the Bhil villages, I came across only one Bhil boy who was not married. He had an attack of small-pox, as a result of which his legs were deformed, and so he could not get married. 'Who will marry him' his elder brother asked me, 'when every girl that marries has first to see the boy?'

The search for an acceptable bride is carried on through some relatives or other influential Bhils who know who is who in the village. When they come to know that somebody in a particular village has a daughter who, if he agrees, will make a suitable match for his son, the father of the boy, a near relative and the headman of the village (if not busy elsewhere) go to that man's (the girl's father's) house with a small bundle, *potalu,* of *dadar* or some other kind of grain. As soon as they go, somebody or other asks them the reason of their coming. They say that they want the daughter of the house in marriage for their son. If the girl's parents have any inclination to marry their daughter they take the bundle inside their house; the guests are also received in the house and a cot is given them to sit on. Incidental talks begin, each party's antecedents are discussed and the girl is shown to the boy's party. Sometimes the boy also goes with the party. Both the boy and the girl see each other and they express their opinions to their parents or to some influential old man. 'Generally good boys and girls do not go against the expressed wishes of their elders,' a Bhil of Besna told me. If at the end both the parties feel that there is nothing wrong in the two families uniting, the father of the girl picks up some grain from the *potalu* and tells the other party to come with liquor on a certain day. 'Bring enough to go round all; mine are a big village and a

vast circle of relations (*Pat li avaja, pini, amo motho sansar hay to vari fire etlo lavja*)' he adds.

After four or five days, or it may be seven days, the boy's parents, their relatives, and some people of his village —including women and children—go in the *pat*: they take a pot of sixteen or thirty-two *sers* of liquor, the mouth of the pot being tied with a new piece of cloth at one end of which are tied four pice. They carry it in a basket with about fifteen *sers* of paddy on which rests the liquor vessel. The girl's father invites men, women and children from his village as well as his other friends to this 'settlement' liquor.

Both the parties gather together. The father of the boy, the headman and other elderly Bhils then settle the bride-price, *dej*, that has to be gievn to the girl's father by the boy's father. They talk and haggle; the mother of the girl must express her opinion; they entreat and coax each other and arrive at a figure, the traditional figure being reduced or increased according to the economic status of the boy's father, the bride's looks and the physical attributes and economic prospects of the bridegroom. The *dej* formerly was any figure between a hundred and fifty and two hundred rupees; now it has come down to eighty or seventy-five rupees. It also differs regionally. In the Mal Samot plateau it is generally fifty to sixty rupees more than in the Dediapada region, whereas the *rasti* Bhils do not go beyond fifty to sixty rupees and sometimes even less.

Then the settlers on the bride's side veer their talk to the bride's position in the other party's house: 'Let her be peaceful in the house. If she will come weeping home the curse will be on us. Do not call her names. Do not ask her to do very hard work. Reasonable work must be had from her. Do not grudge in giving her food. Whatever you eat shall be eaten by her. Last, but not the least important, you have seen our daughter: you know she is not bad; afterwards if you call her a *dakan* and dismiss her from your house we can't be sure as to what we will do. We may call the *Panch* and raise a quarrel, *jhaghdo*'. The father of the boy agrees: 'I do not want to throw away the money I give you. I will see that she is well kept in my house.'

After this, the brother of the girl, or in his absence a very near relative, unties the cloth that is tied to the mouth of the *daru* pot. The money tied at its end goes to him. This untying is called *dej mapi chhodvi.* Each of the guests is given a *khakhra* leaf which he folds into a cup. The man in charge of service offers the first doses to Raja Pantha, Mata Pandhar, Vina Deo and Ma Dharati. Another dose is offered to each of Himaryo, Bhut Bhavish, the dead and others that could be remembered. Then this *daru* is given to the guests according to age, old men getting about half a *ser,* young men a quarter of a *ser,* and women and children still less. Each pours a little liquor on the ground as an offering to the dead ones in his or her family and to the first *Vasawo* of the village. Then they drink. All must be given this liquor for it marks the formal announcement of the betrothal of the boy and the girl.

When the members of both the parties are drinking outside, both the fathers- and mothers-in-law go inside. Two leaf cups are given to them and liquor is poured in these. The father of the boy exchanges his cup with the father of the girl and so do the mothers. As they drink somebody who is sitting behind them pats them on the back and speaks out, '*Wewai-wewai, wewan-wewan.*' After the exchange of cups the new *wewais* exchange their turbans; this seals their new relationship. Then they decide the date on which the *dej* must be paid. Marriage takes place nine days after this payment. If the girl is not of age they may wait for a year; also if either party is economically occupied they may wait for a month or two. But if everything is suitable, they want to finish it as soon as possible. 'The girl has grown up and we are not responsible if she spoils her mind elsewhere,' the father of the girl would say. On this settlement day, if the boy's relatives stay with the girl's father for the night, goat's meat is prepared for their dinner.

On the day on which the bride-price is to be paid, some people from the bridegroom's party go with the money which is mixed with rice and turmeric, some ornaments (if that is also a term of the agreement) and a fowl. They stay for the night and the next morning the payment is made. Both

parties sit facing each other and one of the bride's party counts out the money, as the women sing:

(i)

Count the rupees before taking,
Sound the rupees before pocketing;
See if they are good or bad—
Count the money, count them all.

(ii)

Our X-ben wants to be a mother-in-law;
She wants to be a *wewan.*
O look at her
Who wants to be a *wewan!*

If a part of the money remains to be paid, the bridegroom's party may ask for some time. If the bride's father is good he will not embarass the opposite party. 'You may pay it afterwards. If you want to pay somebody's debt you can do so first. Or if you want to buy a bullock you may buy it. I am not in a hurry. I do not want to see my daughter in difficult circumstances,' he would say.

After this they prepare two small threads from the bark of *bhindi,* tie nine knots in each, and rub it with turmeric. One is given to the boy's father, the other to the girl's and they exchange them. Neither of them should lose his thread —a fine of five rupees is imposed on the loser. The nine knots mean the nine days up to that on which the marriage ceremony will take place. As each day passes one knot is untied. With it, preparations for the marriage day are made. Paddy is husked; firewood is gathered; clothes are bought; ornaments are made; relatives, who will mill turmeric, are invited:

(iii)

Turmeric is milled,
We move the hand-mill;
Our brother is to marry,

He will marry that girl.
To complete the marriage
Grind the turmeric fine;
We will rub it on him—
He is to marry soon, very soon.

The house is very busy and has a warmth of co-operation and affection of the neighbours, villagers and relatives. At both the houses, booths are erected and *torans* are tied round them. Many merry songs are sung from this day forward. Most of them are in praise of the groom or the bride.

(iv)

A golden *toran* to my brother's booth!
Truly it is a big booth.
Sisters gather in my brother's booth—
Truly it is a big booth.
Brothers throng in his booth,
Uncles and aunts come to my brother's booth—
Truly it is a big booth.

(v)

My brother went for a shikar alone,
My brother went out alone.
The girl went catching fish
And brother fired a gun;
It hurt the girl catching fish—
My brother went alone.

(vi)

In the crowded bazar
A she-elephant is sold;
In the deserted village
Onions are sold;
My sister is as costly
As is the she-elephant.

(vii)

My brother tied his horse
To the branch of the mango tree;
It broke loose, entered a field—
That girl holds its bridle, ho!

(viii)

My brother tied his horse
Under the shady booth;
Who was standing under it?
It was that girl;
She gave a promise to him.
When did they meet?

And they dance near their respective booths. The bride and the groom sit on the shoulders of the dancers who dance vehemently to music, the groom and the bride passing from shoulder to shoulder very swiftly. It requires fortitude to sit straight on the shoulders of the dancers for hours together. The enthusiastic young men dance till late night.

Two days before the marriage, turmeric mixed with rice and liquor is smeared on both of them. A *sowasan* woman (one whose husband is alive) smears it. Turmeric is sent from the groom's house to the girl on the first day. While applying this they sing many songs:

(ix)

Yellow and green turmeric was
Milled in the hand-mill;
The poor boy Turmeric
Was pounded in the mill;
The poor girl Turmeric
Was pounded in the mill.
We, the ladies of the village
Apply it to the groom;
The girl of that village
Is smeared with the urine of an ass.

(x)

O bridegroom, which is the sister
Who will apply turmeric to you?
Your sister Ditli will apply it.
O girl, which is the fool
Who will apply turmeric to you?
Dahri, the mother-in-law will do it.

Days pass as knot after knot is united daily from the *bhindi* bark until all the knots are untied. Then the groom's party has to go to the bride's village. On this day they get from the *Kotwal* a basket, *podulo,* specially made for this occasion. This is coloured in red and black. In it are placed six rattles and a fan; on the wall of the basket some bamboo rattles and toy birds are inserted. In this *podulo* they put two bead collars in red and white colours (black colour being strictly avoided), bangles, a comb, a bodice, a *kacharo, dhupel* or ghee as hair oil, *sindur,* two cloth pieces and a bottle of liquor. The bridegroom is bathed with water from the nearby stream; some near relatives or a friend puts new clothes on him and buttons these.[2] Silver wristlets, a rupee necklace and a head *chhatia* are his ornaments. A sword or a knife is given to him and his face is covered with wreaths hanging from his head. The marriage procession is then ready to go.

Carts are well decorated, bullocks are nicely adorned with bells round their necks and coverlets, *odha,* on their backs. Men, women and children dress up for the journey. They take their food with them, for the *wevai* does not give them any feast, 'though he takes a lot of money from our friend,' as a Bhil remarked to me. The bridegroom sits in a good cart and a small boy or a girl called *arvo* accompanies him. Women go on singing as the carts race on the road to the bride's village:

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2. In some Brahmin castes of Gujarat clothes are not buttoned on this occasion as a rule.

(xi)

Our bridegroom rides a white horse,
He looks very gorgeous;
He has a dagger on his waist,
And a thread. He looks very beautiful.
O bridegroom, swords clang on your way
And you ride a white horse!

As the groom's party enters the village of the bride, one of them fires a gun. He is given a rupee for this. This announces the arrival of the party to the bride's people, some of whose members come and receive them. They are given a house, *bahko,* where they make themselves comfortable at night. Thy are not allowed to stay elsewhere; if they do so, a fine of five rupees is imposed on them. For the whole night they dance and sing here.

The next morning they go to the bride's house. As they approach the booth the bride's sister stands with a water-pot on her head. They put nine annas in her pot. The *Vasawi* takes the *podulo* that is brought by the groom's party, goes inside and puts the clothes and ornaments on the bride, when other women sing:

(xii)

Where is the collar band?
Where is the *chirkya?*
Bring the comb.
Where is the hair oil?
Adorn the bride,
Where is the collar band?

Finally, at the parting of her hair they apply some *sindur.*

After this she is brought out, her face being fully covered. The bridegroom and the bride are made to stand side by side on a wooden stand in the booth. The *Punjaro* offers worship to the gods with paddy and leaves of *bili* for the couple. For this some money is given to him. A chicken is brought and made to sit near them, *behat korvi,* and they believe that if it keeps sitting, everything will turn out

auspicious. It is then sacrificed in the name of the gods. If it does not sit at all, they say something may go wrong somewhere. Water from a new pot is sprinkled over the couple; the ends of their clothes are tied by the sister of the bride and the couple is taken inside the house. A leaf cup is given to both of them in which some liquor is poured. They exchange each other's cups but do not drink the whole of it; it will be the urine of the other party if they do so, they say. The *vewais* exchange cups for the second time.

The new couple is brought out and is picked up for dancing by their brothers or maternal uncles. The dancers get ready when the *Punjaro* is doing his *puja*. Two people hold a green bamboo pole between the two parties so that they may not mix up before time; the headman or an elderly person warns them not to dance very much, nor to tear clothes of others nor to trample on the feet of others. 'If you will fight, I will get you roped,' he warns them. After this the pole is taken away and both the parties get mixed up. The empty *podulo* is tossed and there is a scramble to get it. This is an important stage in the ceremonies, for the mixing up shows that the patries have legally come together. With the other dancers the couple also dances.

The boy's party then retires to the bank of the stream for meal. They cook there and have a good meal at their own cost, after the tiring dance. One elderly member of the party goes to the bride's father and asks him as to when they would give over the bride (*nadi kyarhi kadhawana*). The bride's party fixes some time when it would send the bride with the groom's party. At that time two men from the groom's party come with a cart. The uncle of the girl seats her in the cart for which a rupee is given to him. The bride's party expresses its natural anxiety to them and requests them to treat her well. To the girl they say: 'Do not hear any evil talk about your husband's family. Do not talk of your unhappiness to anybody save your husband. Love him and do his work. You know your father- and mother-in-law have plunged themselves into indebtedness for your sake. If they die, you will be supportless.' To the bridegroom they say: 'Our daughter is your wife now. Even

if she becomes lame or blind you must take care of her. Do not enter into unnecessary quarrels with anybody. That is the worst thing; if you do so, we will be ashamed in coming to you. Both of you must work hard in the field.' The women of the bride's party sing:

(xiii)

O dear, dear, your father loves money;
He for money has sold you.
You may come to us at your will;
But the prison will never leave you now.
O dear, dear, your mother loves money,
For money she has sold you.

(xiv)

Go, *bena,* go you must;
Why tarry and take time?
You are married, go you must;
Go, *bena,* go you must.
Friends will go as far as the fields;
Brothers will go as far as the stream;
Go, *bena,* go you must.
Why tarry and take time?

The bride is seated in the cart. It is then driven and as they go people from the bride's side make a mock attack on the groom's party with dust and pebbles. Some elderly members of the bride's house go with her. Ornaments are also given to her. As they go the bridegroom's party sings:

(xv)

The bride weeps,
And weeps the bride's brother.
You can't help it.
You must take her with you.
The bride weeps,
And weeps the bride's mother.
What's that to you?
You must take her with you.

(xvi)

We did not know
The girl would be so aged!
Where had you kept her?
Was she kept in a chest?
The girl is not good:
She has twelve fathers.
The girl is not nice:
She has thirteen fathers.
We did not know
The girl would be so big!

When the party reaches the outskirts of the groom's village liquor has to be served to all its members. After this they are free to go to their own houses. When the groom and the bride reach their home, they are seated on a cot in front of the house; men dance and women sing there. The dancers go inside and put a cot near the family hearth. The couple is brought inside and seated on it; the bride is shown the hearth. The dancers go five times round the hearth and sing:

(xvii)

The lone *sato* was eaten away
And driven outside.
A strange girl is brought home,
The lonely *sato* was eaten away.

Those who brought the couple inside tie their cloth-ends. The bride is brought by her relatives. The newly-weds exchange their liquor cups. The relatives of the bride again instruct her about household affairs and home work. They stay for the meal and then go home.

On the second day a bronze dish, *thali,* with a little *kumkum* in it, is tied with a new cloth and all the relatives put some money in it. This gift is called *melawanu.* It is to be returned when there is a marriage ceremony in the giver's family. For nine days the bridegroom keeps the ornaments on himself.

They are taken off by his wife's sister when he goes to his father-in-law's on the ninth day. The bride and some other relatives also go with him, and he takes along with him a bottle of liquor. They are served a good meal there. The bridegroom does not at once begin eating the meal. The in-laws ask him why he does not eat. His relatives tell them that he is not a cheap man. If they do not give him something precious, he will not eat. The father-in-law promises him a cow. If he wants more, he will still not eat. Or, if he is satisfied he will partake a little of the food served to him and finish soon. This is called *vasan.* After the meal a cow or a bullock is given to the groom; or some rupees are deducted from the *dej.* The bride and the groom stay for a night at this place and return home the next morning. From this day forward the girl will go to her father's only on important occasions.

For the new bride, the house of her husband is at once strange and the sphere of her potential influence. All people are new: she cannot be voluble with anybody; she has to keep mum at the fire-eating *nanad's* words; she has to honour and avoid all the male members of the household who are older than her husband; and her mother-in-law may or may not be kind to her. Other relatives also are all busy in the stock-taking of what the *vewai* has or has not given. If they find that something is not given, they reproach her or taunt her. The only companion may be the husband; even he cannot talk to her in the presence of others. They can sleep together from the first day. 'But we can't speak much to each other. It is highly embarassing. You don't know what to say. But as days go on we come to know each other better and then she feels homely in our house,' said a newly married young Bhil of Rakhah Kundi to me.

II

I fell in love when we were young;
How is it possible to kill that love?
How can I eat, drink, and be merry?
What is it you want, boy?

I want to go away with you,
Go beyond the Rewa, fording the deep waters.
Whose are the bangles you are wearing?
Where are you going with shining bangles, girl?
Where shall I find you, my girl?
I will meet you on the road bordering the field.
(A Bhil love song.)

Besides the regular marriages in which the boy and the girl are bound by the decision of their parents and the relatives, there are marriages which are decided upon by the boys and the girls themselves. A girl is at perfect liberty to refuse the choice of the parents even in the case of a regular marriage; but she does not do it for fear of social reprobation. Nevertheless, if a girl wants to marry a boy with whom she is in love, she can do so, of course with a little heart-searching on the parent's part. The idea of revolt against tradition does not occur here, for these marriages are as good as regular marriages, at least theoretically.

The following case comes from Toranmal. Chhatriya, aged 40, had a daughter. Charming, young Rukhi was of bright eyes and a determined mind. Janio, a poor lad from Sindhi, was an occasional guest in the house. The girl took a fancy for him and when the parents wanted to get her married to another man she unequivocally told them that she would not marry anybody but the boy from Sindhi. 'He is poor. He has no parents. He will not be able to maintain you,' her father tried to reason out with her. But Rukhi would not swerve from her decision. 'And I had to marry her to him. Now they are staying with me and looking after my fields. The boy is hard-working and the little girl likes him very much,' the father told me, as the girl, who was nearby, bowed down her head with an embarrassed smile.

Love marriage does not change the position of the bride-price, which has to be given in any case. The only concession that may be given at the intervention of the girl is of some rupees. The ceremonies are the same and the position of the bride in the house is also unchanged.

If a boy is in love with a girl from his boyhood days, as echoed in many Bhil songs, and if the girl gives a little

inkling of willingness to go away with him, the boy elopes with the girl. He goes by a pre-arranged plan with two or three friends to where the girl is working, and the boy and the girl run away from there. When the daughter of the house is not found for a day or two, they know the mischief-maker, whose house they approach and ask the boy's parents to find him out; 'Or we will call the *Panch* and your name will become as black as soot,' they threaten. The parents of the boy are helpless. The boy might have gone away without informing them. But they try and send word to where he possibly might be: 'Don't be afraid, we will do you no harm.' When both come out, the father of the girl tells the boy that if he wants to marry his daughter he will have to pay the regular bride-price. The *Panch* is called to settle the price. The marriage ceremony takes place; and then both of them live as man and wife without much further ado.

Sometimes it may so happen that a girl who is in love with a boy is married elsewhere. But she is free to change her attachment: she can go to the house of the man of her choice and live with him as his wife, even if he is already married. The woman goes with a veil over her face and taking a packet of *ahindra* leaves with her she enters the house of the man she loves and tells his mother that she has come to live with her son. This is reported to her father, who tries to disuade her; but if she turns a deaf ear to his advice he asks the man if he is ready to keep her. The man, as a matter of honour, has to keep her, paying the bride-money to her first husband. This kind of marriage is known as *jai pethi.*

Bapu of Toranmal told me that his third wife was not happy with her first husband, who did not treat her well. She might have heard from somebody that Bapu of Toranmal was a man of means and kind-hearted. So she went to him, when he was about forty-five and she only eighteen. When I saw her she was happy with two children by Bapu. This illustrates the *jai pethi* marriage.

Similar to the *jai pethi* custom is another in which a man runs away with somebody's wife. The paramour is

chased and when caught he may be beaten. Sometimes very serious fights take place on such issues. But generally such quarrels are settled by the *jhaghdo bhangwo* method. The paramour pays the money that has been settled by the mediators in *jhaghdo bhangwo*. Both the old and new husbands of the woman must forget the past. Children, if any, by the first husband remain with him. If the woman has a child at breast it goes with her and the father of the child warns her that if it dies he will prosecute her for murder. Such child returns to its father when it grows up.

Not only in marital ties but in sex relations also a Bhil woman is more free than her sister in the Hindu society. Most of the elopements of married women are cases where there are secret sex relations between the two before they so run away. Pre-marital sex congress is not unknown and many cases can be cited where an unmarried girl who had relations with a man became pregnant and when asked by her elders told them of the man she had connection with. People of the village in such cases gather together and call that man for inquiry. Generally he has no other course open but to concede what the girl has confessed. The people lay on him a fine of twenty-five rupees, which they spend in drinks. The girl is then given away to him if he likes to marry her and pay the bride-price or to some one else. This is called averting the sexual quarrel, *chhinalu jhaghdo bhangwo.*

A Bhil man is also at liberty to divorce his wife for certain reasons: the wife may be diseased, she may not be working to his satisfaction, she may have her affection elsewhere, or she may be suspected to be an evil woman learned in black magic. The man calls the people of his village as well as of hers and tells them that he wants to divorce his wife. He then ties five rupees to her scarf-end and tears off a little piece from his turban and gives it to her. After this the woman can go to any man she likes and the former husband is not entitled to the bride-money from her new partner, which money would have been his had the woman gone without his permission. This divorce is called *chhedu fadi apavu.*

Widows are also allowed to remarry.[3] The woman has to lie with her dead husband on his pyre for some minutes before his body is set fire to. The woman believes the dead man remains her husband: she keeps on her the anklets given by him and also the bead collar. After one year is complete, the *Punjaro* comes to her with the clothes of the dead man, who is offered food and water with the words: 'Eat this. This woman of yours has followed the rules. Till today you were her husband; now she is free to go wherever she likes. Don't trouble her hereafter.' After this she is allowed to marry anybody she likes. In the widow remarriage all the ceremonies of the regular marriage are not observed. The woman has to pay ten rupees to her former husband's brother as *der vatu.* The man who has asked for her hand treats her relatives to a liquor party, gives her new clothes and brings her home as his wife.

Thus, theoretically a Bhil woman is completely free to change her marital attachments; and the ties are not sacrosanct either as in the Hindu higher castes. But in practice this is not encouraged much and a woman who changes her husband 'as a man in the plains changes his shoes' (as the Bhils put it) is often criticised and made a laughing stock. Generally, a woman, once she gets a child, has no inclina-

3. Remarriage of widows: There is, however, no obligation on the widow to marry any particular person such as her husband's younger brother. In case she chooses to remarry, the suitor goes to her village with some clothes as presents, attended by four or five friends. He pays seven pice to the widow's brother's wife or to her paternal aunt provided they have their husbands living. A general drink is then indulged in, in which the *Tarvi* of the widow's village takes part, and the ceremony is complete. This remarriage always takes place at night. The widow never enters her new home by day, as this will, it is believed, produce famine. The widow and the children by the new marriage have no interest in the property of the first husband. In a case where she marries her deceased husband's younger brother, should there be already a son by the first husband, children by the second husband have no rights to the property of the first. If on the other hand, there is no child by the first husband, children of the second will inherit that property. This is an account of widow remarriage according to C. S. Venkatachar.

tion to leave the house of her husband and to begin life anew.

III.

You are a queen,
I am also a queen:
Who will put fire to the hearth?

(A Bhil proverb.)

Marriage is a very important occasion in the life of the Bhils. Economically, marriage is an occasion of unprecedented give and take—traditional exchanges, feasts, and getting a bride and thus adding to the labour assets of the family. Marriage is at the very root of the family which is the fundamental unit of Bhil life. Production and consumption of the utilitarian resources are carried on within its limits. Were marriage to lose any of its vitality the family could scarcely continue to function unimpaired. Since the circulation of valued objects reinforces the whole structure of marriage it also acts as a guarantee of the effective functioning of the family and therefore of the economic life of the people. That mainly is the economic importance of marriage.

Bride-price is the largest sum that a Bhil at once gives or gets. Other payments like crop-money and labour wages are very small compared to it. Many Bhils get into debts on account of it. Many Bhils cannot get married till they are thirty as they do not have money to pay as bride-price. In order to collect this lump sum the Bhil is prompted to raise production and curtail expenditure; thus saving is effected. From his young age a Bhil boy knows the importance of *dej* and he becomes hard-working. 'Otherwise you will not get a wife,' the old men tell him. Especially, two or three years before the marriage a Bhil works hard to save for this. In one of the Bhil folk-stories we come across a Bhil headman's son who goes on working for years together day and night to save and get a wife.

Bride-price varies, as already stated, according to region and tradition. From one end of the Bhil land to the other

it varies from seventy-five rupees to three hundred. Other incidental expenses on presents and gifts total up to about twenty-five rupees. Bride-price may not be considered as a compensation for rearing up the girl. In losing her the family loses an important producer: the girl had been earning her keep, or even something more, for a considerable time before marriage. Of course, we shall not be far wrong if we say that the expenses of bringing her up have been fully balanced by her work alone not to mention the emotional satisfaction which her presence brought to her parents. But in the Bhil culture, economic reciprocity between children and their parents is just as definite as that between man and wife. So it is not for rearing up the girl but, it seems, for losing a valuable asset that the father is given some money. This can be very well seen from the outlook of some of the Bhils who told me that their daughters worked sometimes more than their sons. 'She is our prop,' one of them told me.

Or it may be that the demand for girls in this society is more than the supply (which means there are more bridegrooms than brides) and therefore there is a price paid by the competitors for a bride. Whether this is correct or not we cannot unhesitatingly say; but the following figures do testify that there are more boys than girls among the Bhils.

In 1941 the ratio of distribution of the Bhil population according to sex in the following two areas was:

Area	Males	Females
Baroda ..	32,404	30,629
Gujarat ..	96,582	92,317
Total ..	128,986	122,946

That means for every 100 males there were 95 females. The total Bhil population in the Rajpipla State in the same year according to sexes was 73,940 males and 70,813 females; it means that for every 100 males in the area there were only 96 females.

More interesting in this connexion is my own investigation in 62 families of 7 villages, where of the total number of 180 children born 118 were male and only 62 female; i.e. the ratio of female children to male was only 52.6 per hundred. In spite of the limited nature of the data the results appear significant.

But the economic burden in societies like the Bhils' where custom is king is heavy, and to keep up tradition people have to suffer much. The Bhils in order to pay this customary bride-price run into large debts or sell away their bullocks or are otherwise economically ruined. Some of them told me that if this custom were stopped it would be a great relief. Though bride-price may have had its social worth in former days, today its re-evaluation must be made on the considerations of Bhil poverty and indebtedness.

That the bride-price is very important and must be paid is seen from the custom of keeping a *ghar-jamai.* Any man who cannot pay his bride-price stays with his father-in-law along with his wife. The *ghar-jamai* works in the father-is-law's fields and gives him any other help required of him. The general term of this 'sweet' servitude is seven years which from the Bhil point of view is sufficient work for the bride-price. After the completion of this term, the son-in-law and the daughter are free to settle wherever they like. The relation between the *ghar-jamai* and his in-laws is very cordial; they love him and treat him as a son. But at the same time, there are Bhil stories which tell us of the extra-ordinary hard work taken from sons-in-law by the parents-in-law. The story of Gimb is one of these.[1]

The feasts given in the marriage are, to use R. Firth's

1. *Ghar-jamai*: Instances of the payment of bride-price by means of personal service are often met with. Where the girl's father is well-to-do the young man undertakes to serve for a term his future father-in-law. This is commonest where the girl has no brother to assist the father in his work. The usual term of seven years is reported to have been raised in recent times to nine years. The *ghar-jamai* often escapes with his wife after two or three years, but ordinarily the two live as husband and wife and do not leave the bride's home until the period of service is completed. If the two live amicably but after two years have no issue the father-in-law has them annointed

words, 'thoroughly enjoyed by the people, as they tend to relieve the tedium of life by introducing the variety and excitement of travel or the reception of guests, and provide a plentiful entertainment in the matter of choice foods.'[4] These are also occasions of enjoyment and good social intercourse. But the economic frame-work on which they rest is always in the forefront. They involve a great expenditure and hence are an incentive to production and saving. They may be given by the bridegroom's or the bride's father, or both, but they involve reciprocity and have to be returned when occasions arise.

It may be noticed here that the father of the bride does not give a feast to the people on the groom's side. What he may do is to entertain his relatives at his house. Thus he is saved of one half of the expenses. The Bhils have struck upon a good solution for this: those who go with the *jan* go with their own food. Only once or twice in the whole series of betrothal and marriage ceremonies are they given drinks or a feast. This helps the poor Bhil very much; and there is nothing socially derogatory about it.

There are certain customary payments which are reciprocal in character and have a great economic significance in the sense of co-operative financing of some part of the marriage expenses. Such is the custom of putting some money in the bronze dish by all the relatives who attend the marriage. A Bhil told me that he got about hundred and fifty rupees this way. When it is to be paid back, it is in very small sums, a rupee or eight annas depending on the nearness of the relation between the two parties. Other traditional payments consist of gifts to be given to the relatives out of the *dej*. These gifts are a socio-economic motive force which develops a more solid relationship between relatives. One such gift is called *hali;* the gift given to an uncle is called *kak-hali,* that to a maternal uncle *mam-hali* and so on. The brother, sister, uncle, aunt and mother's

as if for a regular wedding and they are made to do seven *pheras* (rounds) as in ordinary marriage. The father-in-law provides the young couple with means to start their own home.

4. R. Firth, *Economics of New Zealand Maori,* p. 307.

sister of the girl are paid one rupee each and her mother four rupees. The shares of others from the *dej* are like this: the headman gets one rupee, and the *Pardhan* who waits on the groom's party and the *Vartanio* who fires the gun on the party's arrival in the village are given eight annas each. The wife of the headman receives four annas and a bottle of liquor when she dresses the bride. The village gets fifteen rupees as its share from this *dej* for drinks, *pini.*

It will not be amiss to look at the economics of polygyny here. Bhils allow polygyny: some of them have as many as four wives, three wives being sometimes as common as two. Out of thirty-three Bhil householders in Toranmal in 1944, three had three wives, six had two, and the rest had one wife each.

I also surveyed 14 villages in 1947 and found the incidence of polygyny as shown in Table I.

TABLE I

Village	Total Number of Families	No. of Householders with Two Wives
Butwad ..	17	2
Bokda Khetar ..	5	Nil
Dugli ..	16	2
Dediapada ..	50	3
Dunkhal ..	17	Nil
Juna Rajpipla ..	17	3
Jharwani ..	28	2
Kankela ..	10	2
Mal ..	30	1
Navagam ..	40	2
Nivalda ..	17	2
Sagai ..	10	Nil
Samor ..	40	1
Timbapada ..	20	2
Vaghuma ..	10	1
Total	327	23

It means that in a survey of 327 families of 14 villages only 23 or 7% of the families were polygynous.

The incentive to taking a second wife is mostly economic. Those Bhils who have two or three wives are holders of bigger plots of land than the monogamous Bhils. It gives a great relief from paying the recurrent wage bill for field work: one of the wives works in the field or in the forest and the other looks after the house and the children. For them it is also a matter of pride and social dignity to have more wives than one because it signifies more money with the man. If you ask a Bhil why he has only one wife he will say, 'Why, I have no money: otherwise I too would have had two wives.' The desire for children may be the cause of polygamy in a rare case, because as a class, the Bhils are not very fertile. In my survey I found the fertility rate in 62 families as shown in Table II.

TABLE II

Number of Children per Family	Number of Families	Percentage
0	4	7
1	12	19
2	10	16
3	16	24
4	9	15
5	5	8
6	4	7
7	1	2
8	1	2
More than 8	Nil	Nil

That is, a large number of families have four or less than four children and the average number of children per Bhil family is only 2.9.

The second wife is taken in almost all cases with the consent and sometimes at the request of the first wife. The con-

trary would bring her displeasure and that would mean the desolation of the home. Consent is given because the first wife understands that a new woman's arrival in the family would be a great help and relief to her, both physically and mentally. The first wife requests the husband to have a second wife if he has no children by her or if she has a sister or some other female relative to marry and she thinks that her husband would make a good husband for her relative also. They live happily adjusting themselves to each other. Such family adjustment is inward and not outward. It comes from an actual harmonizing of interests rather than the mere bowing down to forces that cannot be withstood but that leave the individual with a sense of oppression and bitterness, which soon show themselves in a fersh outbreak of trouble. Theirs not being such an adjustment under threat, the Bhil marriages are happy ones as a rule.

This was seen by me at Besna where I talked to the two wives of one Dajia. The elder wife told me: 'Why should we fight? She is younger than me and is my sister. We are very happy. We do our work and help our husband.' Her children also were crowding round the other one who had already called one on to her hip.

The co-wives live in happiness and peace, doing the work divided between themselves by mutual consent and social sanction. But faminine emotions sometimes side-track from this normalcy and there may be quarrels for paltry reasons: 'The man favours you; he gives you new clothes and nothing to me. Am I to be thrown away?' or 'He takes you to the field every day and not me, why?' or 'You are a queen; why should I be low? I am also a queen!'—such may be the complaints and in the end the hearth may have to be lit by the husband himself. But as we noted above such cases are few and far between; the common instance is one of peace and co-operation.

CHAPTER VII

OLD AGE AND DEATH

I

Adults and old men are very important as trasmitters of the culture pattern to the younger generation. It is by instruction or imitation of the old men that tribal attitudes pass on to the next generation. As a store-house of experience with their knowledge of all fields of tribal life, the Bhil old men command great respect from others. The word for an old man among the Bhils is *dayo,* a wise man; and he is addressed as *'daya'* or 'so-and-so *daya.'* If there is more familiarity or if the old man is to be taken into confidence he is addressed as *'dohno bahko'* or *'dayo bah',* meaning 'old father' or 'wise old father'. There is no difference between a man's father and other old men of the village as far as respect and veneration are concerned.

The Bhils say that they cannot do without old men. 'Our cart cannot proceed without the old,' says a Bhili proverb (*Ghoydo vana gado chalej naha*). There is a story which they often recall to support this. The younger Bhils of a village once went in a marriage procession leaving all the old men at home. But the father of one Bhil hid himself in a gunny bag and went with his son in the *jan.* The father of the bride asked these youngsters (from the groom's party) to fetch a piece of wood, a foot long but with one hundred natural divisions, *per,* in it; if they did not, he said, the bride would not be given to them. 'It is impossible,' thought the youths and decided to go back, ashamed and insulted. The Bhil who had brought his father went to him and told him of their difficulties. The old man asked him to bring the root of a certain tree. The root was brought, and it had to their amazement actually a hundred divisions. It was given to the bride's father and the bride was won.

Old men are referred to in all matters of life. Mar-

riages are settled and *jhaghdas* broken, festival dates decided and diseases warded off, officers approached in case of official work and agricultural jobs divided among all, by old men. Their presence gives a sense of security and safety to the young Bhils; for they know through experience the nature of difficulties and the ways out. The younger Bhils of Dhansara were afraid of a certain Talati. They did not know what to do; the old men in the village came to their help and they were at ease. Old men are, as it were friends, philosophers and guides of the younger Bhils.

Only two examples of the extensive wisdom of the old will be sufficient here. The first is their fund of proverbs, which they know by dozens and quote at apt times and places to bring home a very important matter to the inexperienced in a short and acceptable way.

Because their life is one of hardship and labour they always stress the importance of labour in many proverbs:

'Labour removes famine; famine is meant for idle persons only!'

'One can live by working. If one does not work, death will be the result.'

'Cultivation, manure and water will bring home fortune.'

'All this exertion is necessary for the sake of the stomach.'

But then intelligence is also necessary; for 'If one has intelligence one can have enough' or 'Before intelligence, strength is just a drawer of water.'

A man is responsible for his deeds and he must not shirk his responsibilities. 'One who does must suffer', 'Let there be death or safety; if one does, one should face it', or 'Once your head is in the mortar, why should you be afraid of the buffets?' But even if labour, intelligence and daring have not produced any result, why worry? Because, 'Who can know what is in store for us?' Or 'Nobody can wipe out what is written on the forehead'. It is silly to depend solely on others and especially on the money-lender because, 'The debt of the *sowkar* is like a stone round the neck' and 'He is the happiest man who is free from debt'. So also, 'If

one tries one can dig even mountains'.

They also preach certain truths about the family and social life such that the growing generation tries to keep itself within their bounds at any cost. 'There is no happiness in life without a wife' or 'What else does a Bhil require beyond a wife and a piece of bread?' Besieds the wife, the brothers are also important; and whatever the conflict, they can't separate just as 'Though beaten by a stick the waters can't divide into two'. The family is the centre of happiness, even if some members are bitter-tongued: 'Even though a neem tree is bitter its shade is always sweet'. Together with family pride the Bhils also have quite a great self-confidence: They can be heard saying:

'You have aroused a sleeping tiger.'
'It is the fire of the snake.'
'A snake bites when you tread on its tail.'
'The vengeance of a Bhil is as hard as a *khair* stump.'

There is a large number of such proverbs all of which are impossible to be enumerated here. Some of them like the following have some ethical and wise motif:

'When the arrow's point has missed you, why fear the feather?'
'The calf jumps supported by the post.'
'If it moves it is a cart, otherwise a dead thing.'
'A twelve-year-old wise man, an eighty-year-old child.'
(This is said of a man who has not learnt anything from experience.)
'One should tell what is seen and not what is heard.'
'Reserve is useful in time of need.'[1]

Another instance is their knowledge of the natural phenomena. Even though the present study has been called the study of a primitive people it does not mean that the Bhils, like so many other so-called aboriginals, are pre-

1. Some more proverbs can be seen in P. G. Vanikar's *Bhilona Gito* (Ahmedabad 1946); in D. P. Khanapurkar's 'Proverbs of the Raniparaj', in *Man in India*, Vol. XXVII, No. 1, March 1947, p. 81; and in Rev. Hedberg's articles in the *J.A.S. of Bombay*, Vol. XIII, No. 8.

scientific as many romantic anthropologists believe. 'Keen eye' says J. A. Thompson, 'will describe a preliminary condition of all scientific investigation—one certainly that has led to many scientific discoveries. By it we mean the observant habit, the alert mind, the appetized intelligence, the inquisitive spirit.' This keen eye of the Bhil old men has observed many repetitive processes in nature and in man's body itself and has generalized certain conclusions in a rough and ready manner. Thus they know quite a large number of natural phenomena: stellar constellations; trees and their uses; soils and their nature; animals, their anatomy and diseases and man's body and a large number of diseases connected with it. It must be clearly recognised here that the super-natural—whatever be their conception of it—is in no way connected according to them with some diseases, which are strictly secular; and their medicines also are from popular pharmacopoeia and it is only in certain cases that the super-natural is invoked to intervene.

The anatomy of the human body is known. They have names for all the parts of the body; the skull is *topra;* head, *mund;* forehead, *nindal;* back neck, *bochi;* eyes, *doa;* eyebrows, *neyan;* eye lashes, *bimthya;* iris, *dubul;* ears, *kan;* nose, *nak;* forehead, *toto;* shoulders, *khandh;* elbow, *koni;* busts, *chuchi;* palm, *telru;* chest, *sati;* waist, *komber;* back, *tengar;* belly, *pet;* buttocks, *chaka;* thighs, *jangu;* knee, *ghutan;* biceps of the legs, *potari;* foot, *pog;* and the male and female private parts, *kachh.* There are many other anatomical names. As far as the internal structure is concerned they know of the intestines, *ante;* of the heart, *pipli;* of blood, *rogot* (which is about three *sers* in the body and which circulates); of bones, *atko* (but they don't know of what they are made, though there are 'joints in the bones as otherwise sitting or moving would have been impossible'); and of ribs, *pahali.* There are nerves and veins, *nas,* in the body with the flesh and they keep men active. We take air and whatever we eat is first digested, *zirayo thato;* and it then becomes blood, part of it coming out as night-soil.

They say: when the heart beats stop, *dugdha bandh vi jay,* and the body becomes cold, life is gone; when blood is

spoilt, it becomes puss; when nerves get loose a man becomes old; when a small-pox patient or a leper is touched others will contract the disease; when there are frequent vomits and motions it is cholera, *kolaru;* when urine is reddish yellow the sufferer is not feeling well; when a woman is told harsh words like 'Why don't you work?' or 'We paid so much for you and still you are not working', or 'We shall get our brother married to another woman' she will get fits, *merghi.* Thus there are a large number of diseases that are diagnosed by the Bhils just from experience.

The pharmacopoeia of the Bhils is exhaustive and deserves detailed study. Below is given an indication of the exhaustive nature of their prescriptions for all the ills which the Bhils are generally prone to:

For serpent-bite the juice of *sap-kachru* or of bitter *dokhi* is used.

For scorpion-bite the barks of *khakhro* and *madhlo* trees are tied on the spot.

For stomach-ache a lotion of the *kodla* plant is pasted on the stomach.

For eye-ache they tie the leaves of *vasala* on the eyes.

For tooth-ache they prescribe brushing the teeth with the roots of *chhinra.*

If there is puss in the ears they ask the patient to pour some drops of the juice of *kati* leaves.

A patient attacked by small-pox is given a fume-bath of monkey's flesh (which is sometimes also eaten by such patients;).

For a sprain a paste of turmeric and sweet oil is rubbed on the affected part.

For michturition the patient must drink the water in which some *al* bark is soaked for a very long time.

The world is not a bed of roses for an old man: there may be too many children in the family; or the eldest son may not have enough land—the old man would be at a loss to know what could be done. Grieved and worried, he would be relying on the hope that the Malkho will do everything all right. If he is well-to-do he may not worry so much; but then such ones are very few. These pre-mortem worries do

not leave the Bhils too.

The old Bhil repeatedly tells the younger members of the family not to quarrel and not to go on spending money on liquor. He also gives them other pieces of advice for, he says, 'I will go away and I know you will make people look down upon my house with shame if you go on doing this. Do not spoil the good name of the house. Let not my *jiv* (soul) be worried over it.' The young Bhils try to satisfy him and the old man's days pass on. But if he is a man of too much anixety and thinks his sons are not working as efficiently as he used to, he may try to work in the fields, look after his crops or go and settle the price of a bullock that he wants to buy or sell. He may thus go on doing his work without knowing any rest. I saw the headman of Khokhra Umar, aged about eighty, looking after his household, watching his crops and doing all sorts of official business. Another old man, the headman of Kukadada came six miles walking in the mid-day sun to meet the Talati and put his case before him. Rarely does the old Bhil sleep away his old age; even when he cannot do any work he will play with the young children or guide them in doing certain easy jobs. The old man works and works and stealthily comes Death on his visit one day.

Here are some life stories of old Bhils as they told me. Even though they are brief, they will give us some idea about the life and adventures of the aged Bhils.

(i)

'My name is Heptyo and I live in the village Khokhra Umar. My age is about two times twenty years. My father was Goso, now dead long since; my mother Gimbi is also dead. My elder brother Ramji has married in Sarapada. I am not married and hope never to marry. Once unselected, forever debarred. My left leg is lame and it is the work of a *dakan*. It was because of my lameness that I could not get married.

'Once I was carrying timber in my cart to Moabi and suddenly it overturned; I was thrown away amidst stones,

two of which struck my head so severely that it had a swelling and it took some months before I got well; the oil bottle was broken and had pierced by chest—besides this, there was nothing that I could remember of the accident. My whole life has been spent with the axe and the sickle. I like drinks very much; but I don't feel easy when I drink in a large quantity.'

(ii)

'I am Hindio of the same age as Heptyo. My father was Lashkari and his father was Margyo; and his father's name I don't know; we Bhils are always such: we never remember the names of forefathers. I am the headman, *Vasawo,* of Dhankhetar for the past fifteen years; people there all obey and respect me. I possess about thirty acres of land, two bullocks and a house; thus economically I am not badly off. I also go for cutting timber and at times keep busy with the Government work.

'Once I had gone to Gangapur in my cart. It was night and I met a tiger. I shouted many times but it did not move. I was very much afraid but somehow drove my cart onwords when the tiger was afraid and went away.

'I had two wives: Surja and Mura. The first was from Kanbudi and for her I paid a bride-price of eighty rupees. The second was from Thawa; for her I paid one hundred and fifty rupees. Surja has gone away to somebody else and from the man to whom she has gone I recovered a *dawa* of about a hundred rupees. I have three sons and two daughters by Mura.

'I do drink; but it is better to remain within limits; it will then do good.'

(iii)

'I am Tetia Hunia of Dhankhetar and I can't tell you how old I am. You can put down whatever you think may be the correct age.[2] We were six brothers in all; but all the

other five are now dead. Two of them were married also. My grandfather was Nawo and his father's name is not known to me. I was married at Kundi-Amba; I paid a bride-price of Rs. 30/- for my wife and gave drinks worth fifteen rupees.

'My son, aged about 25 years, who married and became a father too, died of some fever. His wife has married somebody else. I have now only one son, Damnyo, whom I married only last eyar. So far he has no children. I have some land, and I pay a rent of Rs. 30/- to the Government. I also keep some cows and a pair of bullocks. I am an employee of a Parsi landlord who pays me Rs. 12/- per month. I am not keeping well and I live waiting for death. I am prepared for the worst.

'I had once gone to Ankleswar, but I do not like your plains; our land is very good.'

(iv)

'My name is Nagaria Sonji; and I am almost three times twenty years old. My father's father's name was Kachhyo and his father was Babno. I know their names because Kachhyo died only five years back. I had only one wife Kalu from Wadwa and for her I paid fifteen rupees. I have three sons by her.

'First we were the inhabitants of Chuli; but the village did not suit my father as some of the members of my family died there; so my father settled in Khupar where afterwards some families from Kunbar and Dhansara came. Khupar has a stream near it; so it suits us well. After the death of my father, I became the headman of the village. I have four fields and some other *sarkari* land.

'Once when I was a small boy, a Musulman, Gulab by name, gave me a red cap which I wore with joy; all people laughed at me and called me a *Muhlo*. Thenceforth nothing happened. Some years back I was ill for a couple of years; but I am well now. I do drink, but never quarrel in a tipsy mood.'

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2. He was about 50 years old.

(v)

'I am from Dhankhetar and my name is Olio. I must be over 45 years.[3] We are four brothers, all staying separately. I got a wife from Ghani Khunt and have two sons and one daughter by her.

'I like dancing very much; and who is there that hath danced with closed eyes? We all look at beautiful girls and many a time I crushed such girls while dancing.

'Once while I was weeding in the fields with my brother, a tiger came out from behind us; we shouted very much and the tiger ran away. Once again while some of my friends and co-villagers were cutting wood in the forest a bear tried to attack us. We shouted and still it would not go. It pounced upon one of our party and mauled him. Naturally there was a great uproar. The bear then got afraid and went away. I have never seen a ghost in all my long life.

'I had many wounds while cutting this thing or that; but they all healed up by the application of plant medicines. I have never taken medicine that is given by the Dediapada doctor. My son also got ill last year; but I took him to the sorcerer and by his *mantras* he got well.'

II

The Bhils say that sometimes when a person is on the point of death his house makes a creaking noise. This is the Joring Padsha coming to take away the man. Sometimes an *oni* (a bird) is seen on the top of the house. But these do not necessarily precede death. Death is ascertained by the physical symptoms which are well diagnosed as discussed already. The eyes are closed, the throat makes a gurgling sound, the veins, *noho,* stop throbbing; and the heart becomes still, *dhuk dhuk bund vi jay.* They feel the hands, but the legs are generally not felt. From the state of coldness of the body, they decide whether a person is actually dead.

3. He looked less than 40 years old.

When they are sure that he is dead, all weep loudly. Nobody is allowed to leave the house. The children, if very young, are removed to a neighbour's house so that they may not be afraid of the whole unprecedented affair. Neighbours, some very near relatives and others from the village are already nearby. Everyone of the assembled pours a small dose of liquor, *chhak pade,* in the dead man's mouth and says: 'Drink my share.' The dead body is not put down on the ground; it is allowed to lie on the cot.

As soon as a person dies, a widowed woman, generally one very old and experienced, who is called *'Harwani'*, puts an earthen cooking vessel, *hallu,* full of water on the hearth. All of the gathering put some rice in it, each putting in a handful and saying, 'If any of our dead-and-gone ancesters come, give them something out of this.' After the rice is cooked, morsels are prepared and a fowl is also cooked. The fowl is not killed as on ordinary occasions, but in a different way: its neck is twisted and feathers plucked out. The last item to be cooked is dried fishes. The *Harwani* is given eight to ten annas for this.

The wife of the deceased man or his daughter is given a new winnow in her lap in which is put a new basket, *chhibno.* A cloth piece is taken; the cooked food is tied in it and the bundle is put in the basket. This is called *petio.* Outside the house three stones are placed and the *Harwani* lays the *petio* on them. An empty blackened pot is put in a *shiku* (a pendent-support made from ropes) and covered by a small basket containing some rice and four pice. These are also put near the *petio.* After this the cot is brought out, assisted by the *Harwani dosi* (old woman).

Water is to be brought from the stream to bathe the body: The daughter of the man or some other female relative, usually his sister, takes a new pot, *navi toani,* and a sickle, *dahlo,* to which is tied a black bead collar, *kalo chiro.* A male Bhil (any one from the gathering) follows her, with an axe on his shoulder. The woman scratches the water making two intersecting cuts in it and fills the *toani.* She takes it home, with the man following her this time too. This water is heated on the same hearth on which the

Harwani had cooked the food now kept in the *petio.*

When the water is being heated a small plank of teak, *patani,* is put under the dead man's feet and his hair is rubbed with curds. He is then bathed with the hot water. His body is rubbed dry and a female relative puts collyrium in his eyes, *doa aji dida.* All this time a cloth (her own *sari* for a woman and his *dhoti* for a man) is held over the corpse as a shade-canopy, *padado.* New clothes are put on him; and his body is decorated with all the ornaments that he possessed. When this is finished, each of them puts some money, two annas to eight-anna silver coin, in his mouth. The *padado* that was held over him all this time is now wrapped round his body. The women throw some rice over this, asking him to give it to their own dead relatives.

After this a small but very significant ritual takes place. If it is a man who is dead, his wife has to lie with the dead body for some time; if it is a woman, her husband has to do so. If the body is stinking, the person may just sit down on the cot and get up. If a widower dies, this ceremony is not done—not even if it is a widower married for a second time. This is only for the man who dies during the life-time of the first wife.[4]

Any four of the mourners carry the cot. They are called *khatnawala manaho.* A man with a sword goes in front of the carriers; the *Kotwal* plays on his *tur* all the time till they return from the burning place, *mahan;* and if there is a gun it is fired and men and women mourners follow the bier. After going some five hundred steps, they stop; this place is called *nihamo,* where they put down the cot. The *Harwani* takes the plank on which he was given the bath and she breaks two white pumpkins and a black

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4. 'In the *Rigveda* and in the later Samhitas, Brahmanas as well as in the Grihya Sutras, the widow is made to lie down with the dead person on the cremation pyre together with his favourite implements etc., the bow and the arrow, both the wife and these implements being taken back.'—P. G. Shah's paper on 'Non-Hindu Elements in the Culture of the Bhils of Gujarat,' *Essays in Anthropology* (presented to S.C. Roy), p. 177, on the authority of V.M. Apte's *Social and Religious Life in the Grihya Sutras,* pp. 292, 294 and 310.

pot on it. From this *nihamo* men and women separate, men carrying the dead go to the *mahan* and the women go to the stream.

The women take with them the sickle and black pot which were used in bringing bath-water for the dead; they also carry caskets and all sorts of grains, *nagli, banti, kodra* and *makai* and some vegetables like pumpkins, ladies' fingers, onions and pulses. Each of them takes also a bottle of liquor from her own house.

On the *khadi* bank they mark a small rectangular plot and divide it into five parts and place the grains and vegetables in them. The liquor bottles are also broken there. The wife of the dead man (if he had one) goes with her ornaments and there the *Harwani* unties and breaks her beads. The pot is broken and its water is sprinkled on the unfortunate woman. It is also given to the dead by the *Harwani* with the words 'Drink this'. Then all take their bath in the stream and wash their clothes. This ritual by the women is called *pae deta ha.*

When the dead body is carried to the burning place, the *Harwan,* male performer of the death ceremonies, carries a burning cow-dung cake in a black pot, the *petio* and the *siku* with the *toani* in it. Whenever they have to cross a stream, he holds a small stick in his hand, the other end being held by one of the two carriers in the front; if he does not help like this they cannot, it is believed, cross the water and the carriers would stop on the other side.

In the *mahan,* they put down the cot with the head of the corpse to the north. The relatives sit on the cot, hold an umbrella over his body and keep on fanning it with their hands. They also weep all this time. All the others go and bring firewood to burn the dead. Each one brings a bundle of sticks and unties it near the dead. The old men of the company arrange the pyre, *hol hichata ha,* with these sticks. If the dead man was rich they keep some rupees on the ground where the pyre is to be arranged; three fire-logs are kept widthwise at a distance of about two feet from each other and on these the other pieces are placed length-wise, making the pyre waist-high. The cot is moved five

times round the pyre and then placed on it with the head again to the north. The Bhils tie bullocks, buffaloes and cows near this pyre according to the economic condition of the man when alive. There is a Bhil folk-story in which near the pyre of a prince even elephants are said to have been tied! They are taken away home after the rites are over.

The *Harwan* brings water in the pot he had been carrying, gets a tooth-stick, *daton,* for the dead, crushes one end of it himself and moving it over the dead man's teeth two or three times, splits it in two, waves it round his head and throws the pieces away. He washes the dead man's mouth and face; after this he washes his own hands. Then he takes the cooked food from the *petio* in two *kodias,* earthen lamps, with crossed hands and throws them away towards the feet of the corpse.

It is then the turn of the relatives to feed the dead man. They put some food in the crossed hands of the *Harwan,* and touch him as he says: 'This relative of yours feeds you. He does everything for you; and for you he gets into indebtedness. Give him plenty; do him no harm; do not harass his cattle.' Then the *Harwan* throws this towards the dead man's feet. This is done by all who wish to feed him. Each of them has to give some money to the *Harwan* for this.

The *Harwan* tears off a small piece from the cloth covering the dead man and ties it to a tree as a loin-cloth for the dead. They tie some money to the waist of the dead man; throw down everything they have brought around the pyre, (this is called '*hol bandhvi*'); place a pumpkin on the ground near his head and, to the south near his feet, put some leaf cups containing rice and say: 'Eat this from us. Take some of it to our relatives who are also there.' After this some silver coins, whatever is possible, are put in the mouth of the dead. On top of the pyre clothes, ornaments and some of his agricultural implements are put to burn with him. The nephew or some relative of the dead man then tells the *Harwan* that as everything is ready he should light the pyre. The man with fire goes from west to south, from south to east and from east to north and the pyre is lighted

from the head-side.

The pyre being lit they go away to the stream, each picking up a handful of grass on the way, the *Harwan* doing it first. On reaching the stream they put down the grass there. The *Harwan* places a *khakhra* leaf there, with an anna, a maize-head and some tobacco in it. He pours water five times on the grass and requests the dead man to drink the water; all others also do the same thing and make him the same request. After this they take their bath and wash their clothes.

They then embrace each other. Out of the liquor they take with them, some is offered to Pae Devi. The *Harwan* takes away the anna put there; crushes the maize to tiny pieces and lets the tobacco lie as it was and the mourners start for home. At a little distance form the unhappy house, they wait. The *Harwan* places there some flour of any grain except *moryu,* a fowl (plucking off its feathers and twisting its neck) and some liquor; and he prays to the dead in the same manner as before. This is called *'khetaru karavu'*. After this all men and women drink liquor.

After coming home from the *mahan,* water is sprinkled on them; the house is cow-dunged and cleaned. The mourning house does not prepare its own food, but food for the dead man has necessarily to be cooked in the same house. Out of this, three shares are put in a winnow, one on the right-hand side for Ath Rayo, the middle one for the dead man himself and that on the left-hand side for Pui Rayo. It is kept outside for antyhing to eat it away. All the others go to their respective homes and the inmates of the house keep on talking about how good the dead man was and what things he had done and so forth.

III

On the second day after the death the *Harwan* and two other Bhils go to the *mahan,* taking with them a bundle of firewood. The *Harwan* also takes two breads and an egg. If the body has not burnt properly they put the firewood there and set fire to it. The *Harwan* places some tobacco

and the egg and the bread in three shares. He searches for any ornaments or gold and silver that may be there. They then go to the stream where they put this gold and a head of maize. The man from the bereaved family takes his bath, gives four to eight annas to the *Harwan* and takes away the valuable metal. They drink and have their meals there. This ceremony of going to add firewood to the pyre is known as *nakud hedkyo goena.*

On this day, they take three leaf cups with *khichdi* and curds in one, water in the second and flour of any cereal save *maryu* in the third. (They also put some rice or *juwar* grains on the flour.) They cover these cups with a basket and place a stone on it so that no animal can eat away anything from the cups. This is called *vato mukvo.* The next morning they see these; if there are some finger-prints or such other marks they believe that the dead man has come to the house. This is an ominous sign and, may be, after this some unhappy event may be visited upon the family.

On the third day, the Bhils of the village gather together, sit on cots and talk; this is the *Kol Padsha mandal* or the gathering of Kol Padsha. The moustaches and beards of the relatives are shaved. The *Kotwal* is called. He brings a new basket with him. The *Kotwal* cooks *tuwar,* grams, maize, *bhinda* seeds and *choli* in ghee, and also prepares *khichdi.* He puts this food on leaf plates which are then kept in the basket. He also has two bamboo tubes, one containing milk and the other cow's urine which are also placed in the basket, which then is tied with a piece of cloth. Over the cloth they place a bundle of the *vijal* grass. The *Kotwal* carries this to the *mahan,* the people of the dead man's house following him upto the *nihamo.* The *Kotwal* brings four dried barks of teak, puts them on the four sides of the pyre, one on each side. An important man of the house touches the *Kotwal* and says: 'If anything remains to be done, tell us. We will do that; but don't trouble us (*Kay sansar wey to balto wejo; battho koi dehu*).' After this the *Kotwal* gathers the ashes in a heap with the barks from all the four sides. This gathering of ashes is called *'khari walvi'.* Some of the cooked food is strewn there, water is poured on

the ash heap and the basket is torn on it.

The *Kotwal* then brings six sticks and with them prepares a small booth, a foot high; he puts the bundle of *vijal* which he had been carrying on it as a good thatch. Under this, he divides the food into three parts and pours the milk and the cow's urine in each of them. They call this building a house, *koo bandhvo.* They then go home. This ritual on the third day is called '*tijaro*' and the *Kotwal* is paid three rupees for his services on this day.

On the twelfth day a diner is given to all the friends and relatives; it is called '*kaththaitu*' or '*kaitu*'. *Rotla* or *manda* and *dal* are the main food for the dinner. Some of the food is given to the dead man by all, saying, 'Our such-and-such old man is dead. May this reach to him.' Then they play on tom-toms, shoot arrows into the trees and dance and amidst this confusion of music finish their dinner. In some Bhil areas for this obsequial dinner, much liquor is distilled and a dish called *ghughri,* made of Indian corn, gram and wheat boiled together, is prepared. Guests gather in hundreds, liquor is handed round and in a leaf each guest is given a small dole of the food. The relatives usually bring a goat, a young buffalo or a few yards of country cloth as a present for the son of the dead man. If they bring cloth it is given when they leave, if they bring a goat or young buffalo it is at once beheaded and its head thrown upon the roof of the house of the deceased. The body is taken to a distance and the meat is cooked and eaten.

For a year from death, the dead man is offered food and water twice every day out of what the members of the family eat. On all the festive occasions, all the dead of the house—one or two hundred or as many as they can remember—are given their share of the food. If they can't remember all the names, they address the last dead: 'This you should give to all our dead who are with you. Give first to the leader of the settlement of our village and then to others.'

The dead bodies of grown-up children are cremated but those of very small children are generally buried. Some liquor is put into the mouth of the dead child which is then

taken out to the burial ground, the dead body being shrouded in a white cloth by the mourning villagers. A pit is dug. The child is put in it with some copper pieces in its mouth. It is then covered well with earth or stones. (Each of the mourners puts a stone to cover it.) They profusely scatter gram, paddy, *banti* and *kodra* round the grave, saying, 'This is in lieu of the goat (or the hen) that was to be offered to you by word of the *Badva* if you had become well.' They put four pice, one on each of its sides, and the cradle swing-rope on top of it; the swing-cloth also is burried near it. The mourners then take a bath, return home and drink liquor at the house of the bereaved family. If the dead child was at its mother's breasts it is offered its mother's milk and cow's urine on the third day. Those who die unnatural deaths e.g. those dying in an attack of small-pox or cholera are buried. Lepers who die are also buried. Only the *Kotwal* does all the death-rites, including the burials, for the lepers. The *Harwan* and the *Harwani* are not invited for their obsequies. The *Kotwal* is paid whatever wages he demands for these services.[5]

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5. At this stage it will be interesting to compare the obsequial customs of some other tribes with those of the Bhils. Among the Maria Gonds, according to Grigson, the body is not washed nor otherwise prepared, but is just left as it was after death. The head of the corpse points to the west and as soon as the grave is completed some spirit of *mahua* is poured on the ground and a little husked grain is also strewn. Roughly-shaped posts called *'henal gutta'* are raised near the grave. A piece of cloth is also tied to the branch of a tree. Each puts a log of firewood on the pyre if the dead man is burnt, or a clod of earth if he is buried. Mourning is observed for four days and work is strictly tabooed during this period. Menhirs with some human shapes carved on them are raised in memory of the dead.

Among the Santals of the Midnapore District of Bengal my own investigations have revealed that the dead body is smeared with turmeric on the *kulhi muchak* or the outskirts of the village. Some money is tied to the clothes of the dead and some household utensils are also kept near him. Women do not go to the *modakud* or the burning place; one of the men carriers takes fire with him in a pot. A small pit is dug and the pyre is arranged over it. Fire is also kept in the mouth of the dead. Near this place they raise posts, as do the Marias. When the body is consumed by fire, they gather some charred bones

IV

All the ceremonies described above give us an idea into the mind of the Bhil as regards death and dead men. What passes away from a dead man's body is something thin and unsubstantial; in its nature a sort of vapour, film or shadow; the cause of life and thought in the individual it animates. It can continue to exist and appear to men after the death of that body. It is also able to enter into, possess and act in the bodies of other men, of animals and even of things. The country to which the dead man goes is not known; some say that the dead go to the country of Kol Padsha or Joring Padsha. They also cannot describe the country where the dead live, nor have they any idea as to how they live there. But they are sure that the dead man meets all his ancestors, relatives, villagers and acquaintances who are dead and gone from here. There is a heirarchy of the dead in as much as the dead long past are forgotten by the people on the earth and those recently dead are fresh in their memories.

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in a pot and bury them on the village outskirts under a *mahua* tree. They take a bath and prepare a booth on the *kulhi muchak*. They place some food in the names of Marangburu, the god, and the dead man in the booth and then set fire to it. 'Your house is burnt down; don't come now,' they say. After nine or fifteen days they observe the *tel nahan*, when relatives shave their beards and moustaches. And a feast is given to all the relatives and villagers. *Bhadan* is their great *shraddha* when they go to the river Damodar and throw the dead man's bones into it. In the family apartment there is a place called *bhitar* which is supposed to be the place for the dead. Every day food and other things have to be offered there.

Among the Bhils of the Panch Mahals District the following are the death customs and beliefs: When life is gone the relations bathe the body, place a waist-cloth over it and carry it to the burning ground on a rough bamboo bier. The son or the other nearest relation of the dead man sets the pyre alight all round. When the body is half-burnt, the mourners bathe, go home, salute each other and depart. As soon as the bereaved family can get enough money the anniversary day is held, when much liquor is drunk. If the dead man was an important person, stones are raised in his memory. The stones are washed and daubed with red powder before being raised. At that time a goat is also killed and its blood sprinkled over it.

The recently dead constitute the link between the dead of long ago and the living. The recently dead one is asked to give some drinks or food which the members of the family offer in his name to others. Another difference between the dead of long ago and of the recent past is that the former do not care to come down at all, forgetting the world altogether, while the latter may come down.

That is why they put the *vato* on the second day after a person's death and see if any finger-prints are there. If he comes, he is taken to be dissatisfied and it is possible that he may harm the family in some way or other. He is therefore, conciliated in every way: a loin-cloth is offered to him, food and liquor are given to him and for one whole year he is remembered almost every day. This is a sort of ancestor worship and speaks of the mixed feelings of fear, respect and reverence that they have for the dead. After death, they believe, a man becomes a *put* (ghost) and has in his possession many super-natural powers capable of causing evil.

Many of the human complexes, the emotions as also the needs of the person, it is believed, remain after death. The wife or the husband must sleep with the dead at least for some time; the dead also feels hot; so he or she must have a shade and requires somebody to fan. Ornaments and clothes, the best that they have, are also given to the dead.

Is the mission on which he is going or the place to which he is retiring not bad? He is bathed with curds to clean his hair; collyrium is put in his eyes; new clothes are given to him and music is played all the time! Even though the mission be good, it is certain that the dead cannot reach the destination without the help of the *Harwan*. We can see this clearly reflected in the *Harwan* helping the carriers of the dead while crossing a stream with a stick.

Though the passing of the man to the land of the dead may be a good mission, the house from which he goes is considered unclean. Prophylactic rites have to be performed; the house is cow-dunged and cleaned, and on the third day the male members of the household have to shave their beards and heads.

CHAPTER VIII

RELIGION

I

Previous Writers

The Gazetteers say that the chief objects of the Bhils' worship are spirits and ghosts. In the forest near an old tree or well, or anywhere, they offer to ghosts and spirits earthen horses, jars and beehive-shaped vessels. In honour of the spirits in most of these god-yards they also raise beams of timber, sometimes twelve feet long, poised on two uprights. Here they offer them goats and cocks, and a number of Bhils afterwards eat the sacrificed animals and drink. Brahmins are not held in special reverence; they have their own priests, some of whom are expert witch-finders.

'The animal held in most veneration by the Bhils is the horse. If a prayer has been granted, they often make small clay horses and range them round an idol. In many of their legends the principal event depends on the assistance or advice of an enchanted horse.' The chief Bhil festivals are those in honour of the dead. Others are Holi, Dassera and Diwali. Both Holi and Dassera are times of great drinking and merriment.[1]

About the Rajputana Bhils Captain Bannerman tells us that besides the *Kuldevi,* Mahadeo and Hanuman are everywhere worshipped as also the minor gods Bhairon and Ganpati. In Mewar, the Jain saint Rishaba Dev or Rakhabdeo, under the name of Kalaji, is the chief object of reverence. They have a very clear idea about the future and believe to some extent in the transmigration of souls. They are very superstitious and are convinced that ghosts wander about and that the spirits of the dead haunt the place where

1. *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency,* Vol. IX, Part I, pp. 294—311.

the deceased lived. They are much influenced by omens and believe in witchcraft. *Bhopas* or witch-finders are still to be found in many villages. The witches used to be put to a very cruel ordeal; but the practice no more exists.[2]

Mead and MacGregor, writing about the Bhils of the Bombay Province, give some *devaks* which appear to be totemistic, as the *Panch-Palvi,* which are leaves of five kinds of trees; tiger; *bore,* a kind of bird; *badle,* another kind of bird; peacock; sparrow; and *ahir,* a snake-like fish.

'The peculiar deities are Dungaryadev or the Hill-God, Shivaryadev or the Boundary-God, Waghdev or the Tiger-God, and Nagdev or the Serpent-God. Besides these they worship Mhasoba, Khandoba, Bahiroba, Mari and Asra. The Gujarat Bhils pay no respects to the Brahmins. Their knowledge about these gods is always vague and varies with their environment. They reverence the Moon (Barbij) but chiefly worship Waghdev and ghosts for which every settlement has its god-yard, with wooden benches for the ghosts to perch on. *Bhagats* or *Badvas,* devotee exorcists, *Rawals,* priests, and *Bhats* or *Dholis,* minstrels, are held in special reverence. They raise memorial stones for the dead.'[3]

Venkatachar believes that though the Bhils have been in contact with Hinduism for a long time, and in spite of their preference for Hindu gods and godlings, their outlook is essentially animistic. They claim themselves to be the followers of Mahadeo and have appropriated most of the Hindu gods; and Inder Deo, Baba Dev, Bhilat Deo, Ruparel Gawli and Mheinda Rani are some of their deities, local gods varying from place to place. They also have great reverence for hill tops as being the abodes of spirits which must be propitiated during sickness or calamity or to obtain offspring.

Belief in magic and witchcraft is universal. If anybody falls ill without clear cause, the *Badwa* is called to exorcise the evil influence at work and to discover the origin of the illness. Usually he would attribute it to some old beldame

2. *Census of India* 1901, Vol. XXV, Part I, pp. 142-43.
3. *Census of India* 1911, Vol. VII, Part I, pp. 237-38.

of the sick man's village. Such a witch was tried by ordeals, though the practice is now dying out.

Venkatachar speaks of the tradition of human sacrifice to the Mata when they could seize a whole herd of sheep and kill the shepherd near the goddess.

It is believed that Yama comes from the south and carries the dead man's soul to the north. On its way, the soul first crosses a thorn-strewn plain; then passes between two heated pillars; then encountering the keeper of a food shop who offers hot food, it reaches a river. It is also put in each one of the three hells, one of nectar and the other two of varying degrees of filth. Memorial stones for the dead are raised, a man on a horse-back being the common motif of carving.

As regards festivals, they observe the principal Hindu ones, though they do not hold the Brahmins in any reverence. A mock marriage of two dolls representing the deities controlling rain is performed. Holi is their chief festival, during which they dance and drink to inebriation. They usually respect any object which is regarded as a sept totem, it being never destroyed or injured; and its effigy is never tattooed on the body.[4]

Dr. Koppers considers that Bhagwan represents the highest type of god known to the Bhils. He is described by a number of adjectives: Parmeswar (great god), Nabhav-wa-walo (supporter), Kharo Dhani (true master), Uper-walo (one who dwells above), Bap or Bapji (father), Annadata (giver of food), Moto Dharmi (the great pious one) and Bhalo Dharmi Rajo (good and religious king). He concludes: 'Though the religion of the Mundas shows lunar rather than solar affinities, the Bhagwan of the Bhils appears to be free from both lunar and solar hereditary traits and to represent in this and other respects a sui generis High God.[5]

This then is what the previous writers have said on the religion of the Bhils. These short accounts have not fully dealt with many points regarding the Bhil religion. Some

4. *Census of India,* 1931, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 51-56

5. W. Koppers, *Bhagwan, the Supreme Deity of the Bhils,* a pamphlet.

points have been totally left out and others have a dubious value as regards ethnographic authenticity. For example, Dr. Koppers does not mention the village gods and godlings, the prevalent belief in witchcraft and *dakans,* or the frequent sacrifices of fowls and goats to the presiding deities of the dead. The failure to study the lower Hindu culture of contiguous areas has led Dr. Koppers to a great ethnographic blunder in believing Bhagwan to be the Bhils' supreme god, who in fact is known by all Hindus by the epithets he has given.[6] I will try to give below as full an account of the Bhill religion as possible.

II

Gods and Goddesses

Birth of the World

The story of the Bhil origin of the world begins with a Bhil housewife who, as will be told in detail later on, was warned by a fish of a coming deluge. The woman and her husband were saved as they took precaution against the deluge, and from them were born the Bhils, who at first lived with the gods and also shared food with them. But once when they were eating together flies sat on the food which the Bhils were taking. Disgusted at this, the gods bade them live apart and cursed that flies would always sit on their food. From that day the Bhils live separately from the gods.

Valati Panud, the wife of Parop Deo, by the grace of God one day gave birth to Holi, then the Holi dancers and then the tom-tom beaters and flute-players. After them were born the songsters, Diwali, Bohon, Gamtidevi, Nilo Nandervo and Jatra Gimb. Then from her womb issued forth animals—tigers, bears and the rest. Raja Pantha and Vina Deo came and joined many into couples from these to live as husband and wife thenceforth.

At the time when the world was born and these creatures

6. P. G. Shah, *Man in India,* Vol. XXIII, No. 1, p. 92.

lived in it, it was not quite fit for human habitation. There were demons everywhere and no human beings; there were no cattle, *hingoti,* nor any grains, *kani;* and later too the dwellers ate cockroaches and frogs. Promiscuous sex relations were rampant; women did not know any decency; and they indulged in intercourse with horses even. Mothers went to the fields and fathers kept the children; hewers of wood were so foolish that they cut the branches on which they sat. Kids instead of chickens and grown-up men in place of buffaloes were sacrificed to the Gods. Some men had ears as big as could cover the whole body. In some parts all the inhabitants were cannibals. These intolerable conditions were improved by Mata Pandhar and the two gods, Raj Pantha and Vina Deo. Mata Pandhar, disguised in the form of a peacock, went to Dudha Gawli's realms, stole some *juvar* grains in her beak at the peril of life and sowed these in her father's country. Thence forward the country thrived with a luxuriant yearly crop. The two gods went on a mission of reformation. With unusual power at their command they asked the people of these strange countries to stop their evil practices and showed them better things which could be done. As a result of this, promiscuous marriages gave place to cross-cousin marriages, human sacrifice to offerings of goats, fowls or eggs, and the eating of frogs to the eating of fish. People became wise and the brave new world prospered.

High Gods

The Bhil pantheon has a considerable number of gods and goddesses; many of them are lesser ones, quite a large number important and some of them very big, to whom the qualification 'High' will be applied here. First in the V.I.P. list comes Raja Pantha, who is the son of Taria Baman of Ghani Khunt, a village in the Rajpipla State. He is a possessor of enormous strength, so much so that when he grew up and went to stay at his father-in-law's house as son-in-law he did as much work as fifty persons could do; with this strength he also overpowered all those demons and ghosts

who had occupied the country. He also changed the face of the world as narrated above. He rides a white horse and his aide-de-camp is called Andoo. Raja Pantha has all sorts of powers; and he has a magic wand, Amri-Samri, with which he can raise the dead and a rope which beats and binds anybody if he so commands. He is in possession of that mysterious *mantra, hokot,* by which he can take any form he likes or can defeat anybody in duel or in armed fight. He has a number of queens, of whom Rani Pandhar is the chief. Of the others Hargo and Vargo, daughters of Jomrai, pound his grains; Domkhal and Deo Katan fetch water for him; Deo Rupal and Deo Kupal prepare his meals; Bhori Mandav and Kali Mandav wash his dishes, while his food is served by Pandhar. He has many sons and daughters all of whom are also Bhil deities. They will be described later on.

Raja Pantha's ever-present companion is Vina Deo. They married each other's sisters; both of them are worshipped together as Benu Heja. Vina Deo is the king of Hela El. He is the son of Khotar Deo and Mata Gandev. His stepmothers are Nili Jine, Mata Nagon, and Muwa Patnu who are respectable Bhil goddesses. His chief consort is Heli Helabh; and his other queens are Nili Nilabh, Ahwal and Kahol. He rides a black horse and has the same powers as Raja Pantha. One very important thing about these two gods is that they are shown to be very sexy; in their global tour of reformation there were occasions when they indulged in sex relations with wicked women 'to teach them a lesson.' Both of them are never forgotten by the Bhils in any ceremony.

The Bhils show a number of places where both of them played some mischief or other. These are like the Hindu *tirthas* with which the names of the epic heroes are associated. In the basin of a small river near Khudadi, the Bhils showed me a place where the Benu Heja tied their horses; there is also a hole, which they say, was bored by Raja Pantha's penis in a fit of sexual impetuousness. In the bed of the Tapti, there is a big pool where both of them washed their clothes; on the Mal Samot plateau, there is a place

where they ate honey and left the comb; and somewhere in the hills there are vessels in which they distilled liquor. The Bhils hold these places in reverence and call them *krishthan jaga,* places of the heroic deeds of their gods.

Mata Pandhar, the chief queen of Raja Pantha, is the daughter of Kaldabh Padshah; she is very beautiful and is supposed to live in *moryu,* a kind of grain.[7] To obtain her, Pantha had to stay at his father-in-law's house and work there as a labourer. Pandhar is always referred to as the mother, *Yah,* and the Bhils are very grateful to her because she made the country full of cattle and food. She is the most virtuous woman. Once Raja Pantha, in order to test her, alleged that she had faltered in her fidelity to him and had slept with some one else. She would not brook this insult; but Raja Pantha was out to test her. He made her swim mine into sixteen plus nine times, *nav holan nav wakht,* in tanks of boiling oil. Pandhar had magical powers; she became a fly; brought Im and Khim Rais, the lords of cold and safety, in her barcelet and braved the test, scalding only just the tip of her tongue. Pantha was not satisfied with this result; again she had to undergo the ordeal; and at last she came out unscathed and 'clean as the tears of a peacock', as the Bhils put it.

Pandhar also has sanctified many places. We have referred to a place where she went to catch fish. There is another place where she took her bath and Dev Mogra is her headquarters, where every year on the last day of the month of Maha, a fair is held. There thousands of Bhils collect and ask for her favour; for she is supposed to give a son to the barren, food to the hungry and a throne to the dethroned. Goats, fowls and buffaloes are sacrified to her.[8]

While about these gods the Bhils have fairly well-conceived notions, Pormesro or Malkho, which means the Great God or the Master, is one of those for whom, to use the words of Levy Bruhl, the Bhils have no system or hierarchy

7. The Bhils believe this grain to be sacred. They do not use it for the rituals of the dead. Does this show another origin of totemistic beliefs?

8. *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency,* Vol. VI, p. 161.

to include them.[9] But to give him a benefit of doubt and from the pragmatic consideration of his commanding the Bhil reverence he is included here. He is offered all things on all occasions. Malkho is worshipped before inhabiting a village, building a house, eating a new crop or doing the ceremonies for the dead.

Spirits of Corn

Nandervo is one of the High Gods of the Bhils; he is the presiding deity of corn. Some Bhils told me that he is the greatest of gods; nobody could see him; and none knows where he stays. If he is not worshipped, he gets displeased and some calamity descends on such a defaulter. He is offered a cock and a goat every alternate year. Fowls and leafy vegetables are tabooed from the day he is worshipped.

Hirkulyo is a great agricultural god. After the rains come, he is worshipped at the headman's house, all the males, females and children dancing for the whole of the following night. The ritual of his worship is elaborate and interesting. The cow-boy brings water from the nearby stream and warms it at the headman's house; the *Punjaro* is smeared with curds and is given a bath with this water. After this the *Punjaro* covers his face with paper or a white piece of cloth. The dancers stop all of a sudden and he says, 'We will hold the fair on such-and-such date.' A man who is inside the headman's house cries out 'Ulululu;' the *Bhuwas* begin to shake and tom-toms make a great noise. The male dancers generally have soot-smeared faces and female costumes. Thereafter the *Punjaro* and the cow-boy eat, drink and rest. Next morning they go and sacrifice a goat or a fowl to the god, and place a small horse-idol and a beehive-shaped jar there.

Matnyo Dev is the king of vegetables. When the leafy vegetable, *matni,* grows up, the headman brings it to his house and offers it eggs and liquor. The cow-boy is also a party to this worship. He has to clean himself before the

9. Levy Bruhl, *Primitive and the Supernatural,* p. 28.

worship. In olden times, two or three pots of liquor were offered to the god on this day, which lifts the periodical taboo on eating green vegetables.

Agya Khambe was the enviable country where only there were cattle and corn. There was a field twelve *kos* long and twelve *kos* broad and twelve buffalo hides made one sling for the watchman who looked after the crops that grew there. Gawli, the magnificent king, applied butter to his hair and kept his head shining; but the people of Kaldabh, the country of Pandhar's father, had their hair as dry as grass. Gawli had a cap of cream, a coat of whey and shoes of clarified butter. Agya Khambe and Gawli are given votive offerings on important occasions.

Govaldev is the chief god of the cow-boys. One day in the year is celebrated as a festival of this god. The festival begins with the worship of the sticks of the cow-boys by the *Punjaro,* who says; 'O *Bapji,* great father, these cow-boys offer you *punj,* worship. Do them no harm.' Then the sticks are given back to the cow-boys. It is a day of joy for the graziers; they eat, drink and spend the day in merriment.

Another god, Gamandev, is believed to be the cow-boy of Pandhar Mata and his abode is the cattle manger. Nobody can wash his dirty hands there, nor can a woman in menses touch it. In Diwali, this god is worshipped. The head of the family stands before the middle post of the manger and marks it with liquid flour and *kumkum.*

Khetar Pal is the watch-god of the fields. He is given votive offerings of three doses, *chhak,* of liquor before harvesting or before taking the produce home. If this is not given, it infuriates him and he does them some harm. When crops are ripening a couple cannot sleep together in the field while watching it and if they do so they will be thrown, they say, out of the *mali.*

Deities of the Hills and Forests

Waghdev is more feared than loved; he is supposed to be very easily displeased; and thus displeased, he lifts their

cattle or hurts some of the family. One very important point to be noted here is that the Bhils do not believe the tiger to be a god. A woman complained to me that there was a tiger which had killed many cows of her village and it had to be killed. 'But the tiger is your god,' I interrupted. 'No, no, not this tiger. It is just a tiger.' She was trying to convey as it were the primitive conception of a god apart from its form. It must be something which is 'indefinite and impersonal to start with' and which is believed to take any shape or form. Here that power, indefinite as the gaseous appearance of the milky way, was supposed to take the form of a tiger.

The rituals of pleasing Waghdev in Toranmal are very interesting. The villagers buy a goat, go to Waghdev's place, which is generally a stone outside the village, and there the *Punjaro* waves some grains over the animal, sprinkles water over it from head to tail and tying a rope round its neck, tethers it fast to a pole. Then some one hacks its head at a single stroke. Using more than one stroke in this is considered as a bad omen.

Gopehohan or Bhatidev is the god of serpents and generally every village has a stone consecrated to him, with white flags flying on the tree under which the stone lies. If Bhati is pleased with somebody, he can undo the effects of a snake-bite, however poisonous it may be.

Each hill is a god. It is also the residence of some god or the seat of some power. (Again, the adjective 'indefinite' would describe the power here aptly.) Rayer, Payer, Waghanmal and Tamanmal are the four sons of Raja Pantha by Pandhar. The first two wanted to fight with each other as soon as they were born and hence the parents drove them apart, one to the east and the other to the west. There they are standing to this day as hills. Of the second pair, one was born from the right side of his mother and the other from the left. Waghan was the first one to test the first liquor distilled by the gods. Iron and Kali Chaudesh are the wives of Waghan, and Thewal and Newal of Taman. These two are also hills near Dev Mogra. When the fair at Dev Mogra is held the first offering must come from the

Punjaro of the Waghandev Hill.

Other hill deities of the Rajpipla Bhils are: Dev Anjwo, Hawaj, Dev Hatrio, Irimal, Modh Bamhan, Olie Dungar, Poptyo Dungar, Rupa Mal, Ratnomal, Ronomal, Devtokario and Udyo Dungar. Each of them has wives and children, all of whom are considered as deities.

Water Gods

Pae Devi or Pa Janjali is the goddess who dwells in water, in seas and streams, and who has control over the Seven Seas—the Small, the Snake-poison-filled, the Poisonous, the Tasteless, the Saltish, the Sweet and the Big. Sunagi Moru is her husband. All the fishes and alligators, and other water-dwelling animals are under her command. We referred to Gimb's search for a fish which would weigh twelve cart-loads. He crossed the six seas and came to Vodu Dariu, the Big Ocean, where Pae Devi resides. She was his mother's sister, *mashi,* and so she gave him that fish. While going to his own country, he was bitten by a corcodile and only a little life remained in the last finger of his foot. When his *mashi* came to know of this, she sprinkled some *amrut* (nectar) on him and he regained life. Pa Janjali is worshipped by the *Punjaro* when a village is being inhabited and also when somebody is dead. Many of the post-mortem rites are done near a stream where she resides. She is also offered some *punj.*

Megh Raja or Kalo Waro (Black Wind) is the god of rains; Kali Badli (Dark Cloud) is his wife; and Bari Megh (Twelve Rains), Gajan Ghotho (Thunder House), Thothi Vijal (Limping Lightning) and Kali Vijal (Dark Lightning) are their offsprings. All the clouds are at their command. The family is related to Raja Pantha because Megh Raja is the former's son-in-law. Once in their well-known tour, the two gods had to fight a king in whose country every drop of a wounded soldier's blood produced a new fighter. They sent for Black Wind who came with a fleet of clouds. The clouds rained heavily, washing away the blood not to allow new fighters to rise up. The wicked king was thus

finally defeated. This celestial family is much respected by the Bhils; each one of them is given some *punj* on all occasions; and when there is a lightning in the sky they say, 'It is Vijal and soon Gajan Ghotho will follow.'

Beneficient Spirits

From the Hindu point of view ghosts, *bhuts,* are all malevolent spirits; but for the Bhil, there are two kinds of ghosts—the beneovlent and the malevolent. The benevolent ghosts, *Putada,* are considered as gods and offered sacrifices and worshipped. There are, chief among these: Pario Put, Bogne Put, Kali Put and Dehno Put. Pario Put is the warden god of the Dev Mogra *jatra* and a goat is offered to him on the *jatra* day. Dohno Put lives in the east, rides a horse that is so high that there must be twelve spurs, one above another, to mount him. He moves round the world with a turban on his head and watches over the activities of men.

Deities of Festivals

Gimb is one of the gods whose exploits are told in glowing terms. Of all the offsprings of Parop Dev and Panud, only he was not given a wife. After many difficulties, he set out to get one, which he could do only by doing task work as a *ghar-jamai.* A fair is held every year in his name, when the Bhils ask from him a wife or a son or food, and sacrifice fowls to him.

From this *jatra,* they bring a green bamboo and erect it in their own village. This marks the beginning of Holi, which is their greatest festival. The goddess Holi is called Jogan Mata and is believed to be born out of Panud's right side. Her husband is Mashru Dev. They dance round the bamboo many days in advance and sing songs in praise of Holi:

Once in twelve months
Comes Holi Bai;
She took a lot of time

In coming, this Holi Bai.
Holi and Diwali are sisters two;
They sat and said:
'Let us go, let us take the road!'
'But how shall we go?' said one.
'You go in winter, I go in summer,'
Said Holi to sister Diwali;
Diwali took *dhol* and *pawri,*
Holi Bai came with *jatra;*
Once in twelve months
Comes Holi Bai.

They collect money from every house and have a lot of fun if there is no illness in the village at this time. The headman fixes a day on which they burn cow-dung cakes and firewood arranged round the pole. They dance round the fire in great enthusiasm singing sloppy songs:

A baket on Holi's back,
The boy does not come;
A broom on Holi's neck,
The boy sleeps with a witch.
A swing on a tall mango tree
Is tied by my brother;
On it sat that girl—
That girl with such big hips:
She sat and the *jhoola* broke;
With it she broke her buttocks too.

No goats or fowls can be sacrificed to Holi; she does not like cruel offerings:

Diwali wants a buffalo,
She also wants a goat;
But Holi Bai, she does not take this:
She wants a coconut.
Come, O Holi Bai, come,
Cross the long mountain and come!

A small packet of bread and *gur* is tied to the end of the central pole. When it burns, the bamboo is to be cut from the top. This is to be done with one stroke and the bundle is to be given to the man who is successful in this. Those

who try and fail are each fined five rupees by the headman.[10]

There are special dancers for the Holi; they are called *gosais.* From about one month before Holi, the *gosais* are forbidden from sleeping with their wives; they may not so much as touch their wive's clothes. They smear their faces with soot, put on ornaments, dress as women do and dance for the whole month, finishing only five days after the Holi. Then they return to their work.

Diwali, as the first song above shows, is the sister of Holi; and her husband is Nandervo. They prepare special breads on that day, namely, *wankada manda, huwna manda, hela manda* and *thokalva tankya* and offer some of them to all the dead. At night earthen oil-lamps are lighted and put on the threshholds; then they take six or seven bamboo-chip sticks, light them and move them round the family hearth and afterwards go out singing,

Jaje Diwali; awje Holi.

(Go Diwali; come Holi.)

Then they throw them on to a nearby tree. The women in the house bring one of these home, strike a winnow with it and put it along with some ashes form the hearth outside the house. The whole thing is done, it seems, as prohylactic magic. A man collects these from all the houses and throws them away. He gets a bread from each house as remuneration for it.

Other Powers

Toranyo is the god who is supposed to live on the out-

10. The Panch Mahals Bhils have a very interesting game during the festival of Holi: On the next day of Holi, they throw dust on each other, play and dance. While dancing, one of the women snatches a shoulder-cloth from one of the men, puts a small lump of *gur* in it and climbing a tree, ties up the cloth to one of its branches. All the women gather round the tree brandishing long bamboos while the men struggle to break through the cordon of women to recover the cloth. The game goes on till one of the men succeeds in getting up the tree and securing the cloth. While the contest continues bands of men and women take turns to lead the attack and defence while others in turn rest, eat and drink.

skirts of a village. He is offered a goat or a fowl by the whole village gathering together, except the females, on the Nandervo Day. He is also appeased before a village is inhabited.

Hanuman is present in every village. He looks after the village cattle. His idol is smeared with *sindoor* and oil; he cannot be given any offerings involving violence; nor can a drunken man go near him. Devotees pour milk on him while fulfilling certain promises to him.

The Sun and the Moon, Chand-Suraj, are also their gods. They have each three queens. In Rajpipla they are not given sacrifices on any occasion; but the Panch Mahals Bhils believe in Barbij, the Moon, and swear by him.

Mother Earth, Ma Dharti, is very important. She shares all the votive offerings with Raja Pantha and Vina Deo. Before building a house, while sacrificing to the dead or while harvesting, she has to be worshipped.

Himaryo is the god of the boundaries; he wanders round the jungle and protects the animals. Like the other gods of the Bhils he too is ambivalent; if he is not worshipped he takes a terrible turn. The Bhils, therefore, do not forget to pay him reverence.

When a child is born, votive offerings are given amongst others to Rahnyo Her and Dudhyo Her, which probably mean City of Life and City of Milk. From the primitive point of view this is appropriate, because they think of life and milk to be coming from some invisible source, which also must be worshipped; otherwise both these prime founts of life may dry up.

III

Religious Personalities and Worship of Gods

White Magicians of Dev Mogra

Every year many *Badwas,* whom we may call 'white magicians', gather at the fair of Dev Mogra. Their stock in trade consists of a basket full of paddy, cucumbers, a sword

placed in the basket, some feathers of a peacock and a *pawri,* a musical instrument. People throng to them for knowing the reason and cures of diseases that prevail in their family or among their four-footed, for knowing how someone who is barren will get a son, or how a bachelor will get a wife. The *Badwas,* with their long hair flowing, shake and tremble, *dhune,* take the small packet, *pudi,* of paddy and a pice which has been waved round the man, woman or thing about which something is meant to be seen, count the paddy grain by grain, recite some *mantras* and go on telling: 'This is waved round a person'; again after some *mantras,* 'It is a woman'; if the man opposite does not respond, they at once say that it must be a man or a child round whom the packet has been waved. This goes on till in the end the *Badwas* diagnose the cause of the disease; it may be a witch or an evil eye, a passing wind or a devine displeasure. The party is asked to sacrifice a goat or a fowl to Pandhar Mata next year. The *Badwa's* fee is two annas.

This kind of divination is learnt from a teacher who in return is given some fowls, money and liquor. Anybody who learns this has to live a disciplined life: he cannot speak a word of it to anybody; he must fast on Sundays and keep aloof from his wife for six days in a week. Even if all this is done the gods may take a great toll of life in his family. The headman of Jhadgam told me that because he knew these spells, he lost five of his six sons. Those who want to unlearn it go to a river, speak it over a lemon and a coconut and throw them upstream.

The *Badwas* can exorcise, once the divination is done as above, any evil power that is working against their patients. One of the magic formulae uttered at this time is:

Bismilla, Rehman Rehm,
Ghats over ghats—
Who will eat?
The memorial-stone *Pir.*
A monkey on a banyan tree,
It has a big tail.
Every flower has a lamp burning.
Fly, fly away.

If you do not go from here,
May Valandev's displeasure fall on you.
Bali fisherman and Bali river
Came stooping low;
Stooping they worked evil;
I ask them to fly away helterskelter.
If they do not, I will bleed them through the nose.
Who can do it?
The memorial-stone *Pir's*
Uncle, Kaka Gosai,
Went and began to dance.
I take out a mare to ride;
And enjoy very much.
Memorial *Pir* is a good *Pir.*

Much of this is nonsensical jingle of words but it hypnotises the patients and helps their recovery.

They ask the disease to go away for they know the presiding deities of individual diseases. They sacrifice a goat or a fowl, or offer some liquor and request him to leave the victim. When it is a case of fever, the *Badwa* summons Agyo Khambe, Rohonyo Khambe and Jaldeo; when somebody suffers from an evil eye, he waves a lamp in the name of Pae Devi, paints a swastik on it and leaves it on the bank of a stream; if it is a snake-bite, the gods called to attend are Kali Chudas, Sekh Lag (Shesh Nag), Kalu Vanvah Deo, Taman Mal, Dhaman Mal and Ima and Khima Garudis. (The last two are heavenly exorcists who, if called, can take back the poison of any serpent). If it is a case of some evil wind that has hurt, Kalo Waro is called; if the patient vomits too much, he is asked to sleep near the *toran* of the village; it's presiding deity is Khod Kosra Mata; on her advent the whole country becomes clean. There is not a single disease which man is heir to that has not its individual deity and appropriate remedy from the *Badwa.*

Another form of remedial worship is to prepare a small toy cart, give it some offerings and take it to another village. This according to the Bhils symbolises the taking out of the disease from their village to another. The second village takes it to the third and so on it goes till the cart reaches

an inaccessible mountainous or forest region. This ritual is known as *roth kadhnu* (taking out the cart).

Sorcerers of the Village

When several men die in succession in a village, when children suffer from one disease after another, when a milch cow suddenly stops giving milk or dies, when crops fail at the last moment, or when a mango tree in the compound dies all of a sudden, the Bhils suspect sorcery of some man or woman—generally the latter—in the village. This woman is supposed to do many more evils; she eats away the fowls of her enemy; she stops the birth of children to prospective mothers and at times she does harm even to her next of kin. Because of suspicions of this kind, while at a meal members of a family do not face one another. These strange superstitions are fostered by a deep-rooted belief in shape-shifting. The witch is supposed to assume the form of a jackal, a buffalo or a serpent, but the most favoured form she takes is that of a cat.

The ordination into sorcery is said to take place under strict privacy. The *Badvi,* the woman who knows it, they say, calls the tyro at the dead of night to the bank of a river or a cemetery. There she sprinkles water on the pupil's head, murmuring certain spells when the novice becomes possessed; she shakes, puts off her clothes and runs stark naked towards the water. The *Badvi* digs seven small wells in the bed of the river and gives her a bath from their water. After this the tyro stops shaking and regains her own self. Then she has to sit on a single-threaded swing in a well and eat human excreta whereupon she becomes a full-fledged *dakan.* If she gives up in the middle she will die. She has also to sacrifice a near kin to the spirits of the witches.

The *dakan* knows all black arts to harass or kill anyone whom she wants to. She makes an effigy of the man she wants to kill and takes it to the river, speaks some *mantras* sprinkling some water over it; and the man gets fever and dies in a day or two. Sometimes in the favourite form of

a cat she goes to the victim's house, licks the sleeping man's feet and the victim goes on losing vitality and dies soon. The ordinary harm that she does is to cast an evil eye, *palua chhatwo.* The victim gets fever, his eyes become red and he loses his sense, which are the symptoms of the 'eye'.

Apart from the divination of the *Badwa,* who tells the name of the witch, another ritual is done to get rid of this evil eye. Seven cow-dung cakes are waved round above the patient's head one by one and are put in a water bowl in which are also kept twigs of *pipal, shindro* and *umro* and a loose leaf from a broom. This bowl is then placed under a stone on the outskirts of the village. If on the next day this water turns red, the evil eye will be believed to be over. If that does not do him any good, the patient is taken to the *Badwa* who fans him with the leaves of *nim, asadwan* and *shindro,* speaking some magic formula like the following:—

Wake up, O Jagrai
O Jagrai, O holy Jagrai!
Holi Mogi, eternal dawn!
Bawa Hikan went.
The shackles of Misery are breaking.
The disease that eats
Now should leave
And throw the misery chains
In the deep, deep sea.

When the *Badwa* shows his suspicion that a certain woman is a witch, people take her out of the village and subject her to a number of ordeals, detailed in the chapter on crimes. They believe that she forgets her *vidhya* (magic) by these ordeals. Lowie speaks of the same kind of punishment in the Ekoi;[11] and Margaret Murray in mediaeval Europe[12] giving the examples of Rufus and Joan of Arc. These practices however no longer seem to exist among the Bhils now.

There are male sorcerers or *dakanas* who are supposed to be experts at killing their victims through spells, or in

11. R. H. Lowie, *Primitive Society,* p. 35.
12. Margaret Murray, *God of the Witch,* p. 16.

uprooting trees whose fruits they were not allowed to enjoy. The only thing which a *dakana* does is to 'throw' a spell-striking hand in the direction of such object, *muth marvi*. The *Badwas* know the antidotes against this kind of evil magic also. But generally the Bhils' terror is not so much of the male sorcerer as of the female, *dakan*.

Here a reference should be made to the male malevolent ghost, Mahanyo Put, which generally lives on the branch of the *harda* tree. It moves unseen like the wind; but 'sometimes takes a huge form, wears a white dress and moves here and there on the skirts of our villages,' the Bhils say. Sometimes before his death the house of a sick person makes a noise as if it were breaking; and sometimes the *khatali* (the cot) on which the dead person is carried to the crematory becomes unusually heavy—these are signs that the dead body is accompanied by a spirit. It should not be displeased; otherwise the deceased will become a *put*. The Bhils are therefore meticulously careful in the service of the dead; and when they offer food to the recently dead, they give one offering more and say, 'If the dead of the long ago have come, if the dead relations of the persons present here are near you give them this.' This personification of the dead world which can become ghost-like is a remarkable feature of the Bhil religious outlook.

Among demons who are really malevolent are Bhenhahur and Mahahur. The first if displeased lifts cattle and the second, men. They are said to be the friends of witches; hence the Bhils are very much afraid of them too. Votive offerings are given to these demons.

Worship of the Gods

The Bhils have three classes of intermediaries between themselves and the super-natural. They have no Brahmin priests, as we said, for any ceremony whatsoever. The *Badwa* has the pride of place among the intermediaries because of his command of magical formulae and extensive experience of human psychology which is required in healing the patients by auto-suggestion or hypnotism. Any tribesman can be-

come a *Badwa* irrespective of his economic position or antecedents. In the social life of gods also there are *Badwas* and *Punjaros*. Tudu Badvo and Lilyo Suvryo are the celestials' *Badwas;* Pechru Punjaru, Hinglu Guniu and Khadiu Kondal are the *Punjaros*. When Pandhar Mata was put to an ordeal by Raja Pantha, she wanted these priests to perform certain ceremonies before going through the test.

The second intermediary is the *Punjaro*. His wife does not necessarily have any privileges because of him. The *Punjaro* knows a few *mantras* and is approached for the treatment of diseases. He worships the pantheon on all occasions and for this he receives some grains at the harvest from each man in the village.[13]

The *Kotwal* is the last man. He blows the *tur*. When any one dies all the ceremonies of the dead are done by him, the most important of them being the offering of food to the dead.

It will be improper to forget the fortunate oracles of certain gods who get magical powers from them, as for instance against snake-bites or alternating fever. They are addressed as *Mahraj* by the Bhils. I met a young Bhil in Nana-Kakadi-Amba who said that God was pleased with him and had given him a spell against snake-bites. He did not touch the victim at all; he just sucked his own hands and the poison left the victim's body. To retain this power he had to observe more than four hundred rules.

The general relations between the priests and the laity are very cordial, almost parental. The lay Bhils call them

13. Among the Panch Mahals Bhils instead of Brahmins three classes of men are held in special reverence. These are *Bhagats* or *Badvas, Ravals* and *Bhats* or *Dholis*. Any Bhil who can learn to recite the incantations can become a *Badva*. The *Badva* conducts sacrifices and is consulted on occasions of general calamity or individual sickness. The *Punjaro* worships the village gods by washing and daubing the idols with red lead. For this, he gets five seers of grains from each householder of the village. He also manages the village fairs where he invokes the gods to attend. The *Dholis* play on instruments at both the marriage and death occasions. They earn by begging, for which certain villages are fixed for them. The *Raval's* chief duty is to offer food to the dead at an obsequial dinner.

'father' or by some other respectable name and the priests can ask them to do antyhing. This religious separatism is always present; even when there is a purely individual business to be carried out, the priests act as leaders and headmen.

There are certain occasions when the worship is performed by the individual himself. Diwali and Gaman are worshipped by the head of the family; so also the Harvest-God before taking the grains into the house. The gods, generally approached through the priests, are, on very tense moments, invoked by the lay men also; as for example, when a man's child suddenly becomes ill and the *Badwa* lives far off and cannot be approached, the man himself calls out to the gods to help him. For this he himself offers to the gods goats, fowls or other things.

The Bhils have no temples to house their gods. They have idols for very few gods and these are housed, if at all, in small huts with grass thatch, open on all sides. The only big hut for any indigenous god was found to be made for Pandhar Mata at Dev Mogra.

As for idol worship among the Bhils, there are very few attempts at iconistic representation of their gods. Only Pandhar and Kalka Mata have idols, one of white stone, the other of black, both nicely worked out, and probably made by some Hindu artist, though the legend of their automatic emergence from the waters of the Tapti is prevalent among the Bhills. Hanuman is represented by two stones with white flags flying over them. Gopehohan's hut has sometimes a serpent's brass figure put in it. I saw only one of this type at Nana-Kakdi-Amba. Himaryo is represented by stones on the outskirts of a village, and horse-idols and beehive-shaped jars repersent their Ghoda Dev.

The Bhils raise memorial stones for the dead. If they cannot set up big stones (and now-a-days there are seldom any stone memorials), they put up a small wooden piece, 18 inches x 6 inches x 6 inches, with a human figure carved on it roughly. There are stone memorials of olden times in the villages of Besna, Kukadada, Khokhra-Umar and Morian in the Rajpipla forests. Here is a description of one at

Besna. The stone is about 9 feet high with a square base, each side one foot. An attempt has been made to cut its upper end artistically into a design. On all the four faces are figures of a man on horse-back in an area of about one square foot. Below the feet of the southern horse is shown a pig; on the western face is shown a buffalo suckling its young one; on the northern face is a woman riding a horse. The figures of men are shown wearing nothing except a quaint head-dress. The woman has anklets in her feet, a thread round her waist, a mace in her hand and a pigtail at her back. The horse is fully adorned. Lower down is another rectangle in which are inscribed the year and the name of the deceased in the Devnagari script: 'Samvat fourteen hundred and seventy-two' and 'Vasav'. These stones must have been raised in memory of some old Bhil headman. The local Bhils know nothing of the history of these stones; they call them Anwat Pir, believing them to be gods.

The common offerings to all gods consist of fowls, eggs, goats, buffaloes and liquor; 'good' offerings are milk, fruits, red lead, sweet oil and flags. Grains and coins can also be offered to all the gods.

Jatras

Fairs, *jatras,* in honour of their gods are also held by the Bhils; and they are an important part of the Bhil religion. The places where they are held in Rajpipla and Khandesh are: Dev Mogra for Pandhar Mata; Sulpaneshwar for Shanker; Mal Samot for Malvi Devi; Toranmal for Gorakhnath; Taloda for Kalka Devi; Akkalkuwa for Hanuman; and Pati, Shahada, Mhasawad, Kadia Dungar, Hurvi, Havlai, Sarang Kheda and Bandhara for various local deities. *Jatras* can be held at any place if the Bhils wish to and if there is any reason; for example, in Mal Samot no fair was held formerly; but some six years back the region suffered from cholera; so to get rid of it, they took this vow: 'If we are free from this disease we shall hold a *jatra* here every year.' So they brought from Molat a goddess supposed to control cholera and began to hold a fair since then in her honour.

I was present at the Dev Mogra fair in 1946 in the month of Maha (February-March) on the last day known as Maha Shivratri Day. Dev Mogra is the centre of Gujarat's Bhil world of gods, the seat of their kingdom—a place where mighty deeds of prowess and valour were accomplished. This fair is held there in honour of the loving goddess Pandhar.

In the fair there were many stalls selling various wares of every-day use: cloth, cooking vessels, earthenware and wooden articles; puffed rice, parched gram, fruits (both dried and green); fowls and goats; bullocks and horses; foot-wear, trinkets and cheap ornaments. In the tea-stalls the boys were shouting *'Cha garam tantiya naram';* musicians were singing and playing on various instruments and there were dancers and actors busy in their own activities. The whole Bhil world as it were had flocked to this spot behind the hills.

The centre of this fair was a small hut inside which was kept in an earthen jar, *bodadi,* a small idol of Pandhar, facing west. It was about six inches in height, the facial lines were quite pleasing and the glass eyes were sparkling. It was covered with a silken piece and had a small vessel in its hands. To its right a ghee lamp was burning and there was a dish to its left.

The Bhil chieftain of Sagbara, Thakor Karan Singh, was to perform the ceremony of giving votive offerings to the goddess. He was present with his kinsmen and other visitors, his *korbhari,* the forest officials and myself. There was complete silence in the dimly-lit, mystic-looking room. The worshipper of the goddess came with a basket, full of paddy, a bottle of liquor and a fowl. The Thakor rose from his seat, offered to the goddess a silver necklace, *hasli,* a silken head-scarf and a ten-rupee note and folded his palms to her. Then, one by one, each of the assembly got up to offer something to the Mata—a rupee and a coconut, a fowl, a goat or a buffalo calf.

The other ceremony was to give *punj prasad* to each of the assembly as a gift and assurance form the goddess that whatever the devotee wanted would be his. The first turn

to receive it was the Thakor's. The *Punjaro* dropped some liquor on the ground and then gave the Thakor some paddy grains and a two-anna piece in his hands and said 'Let this not fall'; he held a sword on it and muttered some formula, out of which I heard these words: '*Kan mage kan ape, raj mage raj ape, jodu mage jodu ape, Mata no seva chakarî karjo, bhulsho nahi* (Ask for grains and she will give, ask for a kingdom and she will give, ask for a spouse and she will give; serve the Mata, don't forget).' Then others went in turn and the *Punjaro* gave them the *punj* after repeating the same formula and in each case asked the person to offer next year a fowl or a goat or a buffalo calf to the goddess when his wish is fulfilled. Thousands of people had gathered for this *punj;* so great was the Bhils' faith in this goddess.

The first goat for the goddess was cut into two from the neck and was offered. All the devotees who had gathered with fowls, goats and buffalo calves then one by one got their offerings cut outside the hut. This lasted form morning till late evening. The Bhils believe that though so much of blood flows on this day, there will be no flies nor stink on the spot even after the fair is over.

IV

Other Elements of Bhil Religion

Forecasting Through Omens and Dreams

There are a large number of omens, both good and bad, recognised by the Bhils. The emotional relationship between an omen and the result of a work following it is one of those subjects of human psychology that cannot be explained very well. There is in it a tinge of imitative or sympathetic reasoning. For instance, if a Bhil going on a business meets a monkey he believes that his work will not be fruitful; because, he thinks that when somebody is unsuccessful his face looks like that of a monkey. Or may be it is from long association that an omen is taken to be good; for example, a person's meeting a woman carrying

water on the way speaks of a good future for him, since for a long time this has been considered a good omen.

Some other omens are these: when a Bhil goes out, if somebody sneezes or he knocks his foot against something he is bound to fail; when the bird *tido* speaks out on starting, even the king's shikar escapes; but if somebody says 'My work may not be done' and this bird speaks out, the work will be successfully done. A large number of other birds and beasts are ominous. When a *tas* bird twitters on one's left, the work is not done; or when a rabbit crosses the way while going for the first ploughing, the bullocks stand in danger of being bitten by a snake; if a crow caws on a dead tree there is a danger of a relative dying. Similarly if an owl sits on some ill man's house it forebodes bad future for him; if at night while going out a goat flutters its ears, a tiger will confront the person; a *fokdi* crossing the way will spoil the work; a cock crowing at even-tide foretells illness in the house; and an *oni* sitting on a buffalo or a bullock speaks of the animal's death.

Other things which signify failure are: a meeting with somebody carrying a pot of whey on his head, or an impotent or moustacheless man, and the throbbing of one's left eye. Things which foretell some near one's death are: meeting with a man carrying a bundle of dry firewood while one is going to the *Badwa;* or a *bidi* catching fire while you are lighting it.

There are a large number of things which portend the coming of guests: sneezing while sitting at a meal, a hen splashing in the ashes, a hand at the grinding mill giving way, or a *lota* of water falling down from the hand.

Though many of the omens are common to the Bhils with those of the neighbouring Hindus, some of the latter's well-known ones are not recognised by the Bhils: a cow is not considered by them to be a good omen nor a cat a bad one. Similarly a bare-headed man is not a bad omen, nor is a woman carrying a bundle of washed clothes such.

The Bhils believe that in dreams their dead relatives appear and tell them what they want. Generally such dreams come in definite shapes for which the Bhil society has assign-

ed definite meanings and the motives of dreams are socially interpreted. 'Every dream has a meaning; otherwise they would not come,' they say. Some dreams forecast events; the *Vasawo* of Toranmal had once dreamt of a *sadhu* whom he asked, 'Where are you going?' 'For alms. We are many; don't you know that?' he was questioned. 'No, who are you?' asked the *Vasawo*. 'We are the Diseases, and will come from all sides,' said the *sadhu*. The *Vasawo* told me that a couple of days after this dream the village was overtaken by a cholera epidemic and four persons died of it. A similar dream foretold a cattle disease to another. My informant dreamt that he saw a camel with a red-lead mark on its forehead. It was drawing a cart filled with coconuts and told him that it was coming to his village. Shortly after this the village suffered form a cattle disease. Another person from West Khandesh dreamt that while starting for a shikar, a *chide* bird crossed his way; though it was highly ominous he did not care and nothing wrong happened in the shikar. But the next day when he again went with others for a bear hunt he was badly mauled by the beast.

Some other traditional dream forecasts are as follows: a tiger in the dream means the birth of a he-calf to the cow in the house; a buffalo signifies an encounter with a *dakan* some time or other; a serpent signifies only a rope in actual life; if a marriage party is seen in one's dream, it forebodes some death in one's family (Devno of Besna had such a dream when he lost his father); a motor car means the arrival of the 'disease cart' in the village from elsewhere; a river with turbid water signifies suffering from cold, *bokhno;* a successfull attempt at crossing a river means that life will be saved in an attack of small-pox; and, an unsuccessful attempt will show the attack proving fatal.

Muslim Influences

A brief mention must be made here of the Muslim religious influences on the Bhils. Worship of tombs and of Muslim saints, both local and others, is a common feature of the religious beliefs of all Gujarat Hindus. The Bhils of

Rajpipla and Khandesh also worship tombs. At Ratanpur, Rajpipla State, they have a tomb of Baba Dev, highly venerated by them. In Mandara, in the Sagbara State, there are two tombs of an unidentified Muslim couple, and hence the village is called Pir Mandara. The Bhils of the surrounding villages worship these tombs, believing that the *Pirs* help them in finding out lost cattle and curing children's diseases. They offer them coconuts and milk and light a ghee lamp and *agarbattis* at the tomb. No eggs, fowls or goats are however offered to them.

Even chance *fakirs* (Muslim mendicants) are welcome to the Bhils and are given alms. Some of them are believed to be experts in magic and a Bhil showed me an amulet that was given to him by a *fakir* as a remedy for his wife's barrenness. 'After he gave me this I am the father of two children,' he told me. In many of the Bhil magical formulae also some Muslim names of God are used and Urdu terms are often mixed as if the language had a potential power. For example, in this chapter itself mention has been made of a *mantra* which starts with *'Bismilla Rehman Rehm'*. There is another which ends with *'Tera bhala hoga'* (Good will be done unto you.) In Gangtha, in the Kathi State between the Khandesh District and the Rajpipla State, a *urus* (fair) is held in honour of a Muslim saint every year and it is considered by the Bhils to stand in the same category as their other fairs. They gather there in thousands to pay their homage to the tomb as well as to enjoy the fair.

Apart from this, there are no other evidences of Muslim contacts among the Bhils of Rajpipla and Khandesh. But what is already stated is enough to show that the field of super-naturalism is made up of a large number of things which cannot be definitely put down into a single and clear-cut category.

V

Religion, says Lowie, is verily a universal feature of human culture, not because all societies foster a belief in

spirits but because all recognise in some form or other the awe-inspiring, exrta-ordinary manifestations of reality.[14] We tried to see how the Bhils look at the objects of their surroundings, and how they are full of significance for them: it may be a god, a good or a bad forecast of a future event, an evil eye, or the sign of favour or disfavour of the deities. This perception is not a matter of cognition but of feeling, the abstract element in such a case being subjectively grasped.[15] This 'effective category' of Levy Bruhl, or 'the light of nature' of Marret[16] gives the Bhils their religion at its widest. Apart from its psychological significance such religion is a dynamic force which binds together social groups, co-ordinates their activities and provides a spiritual background for every phase of their social life. An attempt has been made here to show how religion has a reciprocal relationship with social institutions and how each social fact and religion has complementary validation.

The complementary validation of religion and social institutions is very well seen in individual crises. In birth, marriage and death it is religion that is in the forefront. The child is born because of the favour of a god; when it marries, the gods have to be pleased; and when a man dies great precautions are to be taken to perform all the obsequial ceremonies. The Bhils are more scrupulous than any other people from the plains in fulfilling the outward observances that religion prescribes.

Belief in the super-natural provides two important mechanisms by which self-interest is rendered socially effective. The belief in spirits and their power to cause illness acts as a powerful deterrent against certain classes of anti-social behaviour. To give false evidence, to steal somebody's goods, or to indulge in incest are sins punished by divine wrath in the form of leprosy or madness and hence the tribal law is preserved through the social control of religion.

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14. R. H. Lowie, *Primitive Religion*, p. xvi.
15. Levy Bruhl, op. cit., p. 32.
16. R. R. Marret, *Man in the Making*, p. 26.

Sometimes religion helps to maintain customs of social co-operation. The headman has customarily to give his help to anybody who asks for it. It was seen that when Pandhar Mata broke the axle of her cart, she went to a nearby village and requested the *Vasawo* to lend her an axle. But as he did not do so, she uttered on him a curse: 'All the *Vasawos* of your village will henceforth be poor.' Since that day every headman of that village has been always poor. The headmen of other villages take a leaf out of his book. Sometimes religion supports the authority and thus helps the positive maintenance of customs. The first headman of a village is always worshipped; he passes into the strata of gods. Because of this the living headman also derives an aura of religious sanction around him, enabling him to exercise control over the villagers.

Apart from the relations already shown between religion and economic life (Chapter IV) religion also performs a more general function among the Bhils: that is to provide a character for the existing economic institutions. The whole system of Bhil mythology gives a binding force of long-standing authority to contemporary institutions. We saw how ash cultivation by burning forests is supported by the belief that their gods used to do it. In fact the Bhil economics even today are the same as they were in those times when 'the gods reformed the world and made it fit for human habitation'. Their gods had fields, carts, cows and bullocks; they went for corporate fish-catching and also for *kabadu*. Their family budget was the same; they fed on fish and *kodra* as the Bhils do now; they wore the same dress and ornaments; they were the first to distil and drink liquor, and the Bhil tradition of drinking continued unabated as late as yesterday, upsetting the family budget.

The fairs round their gods and goddesses serve a very important economic purpose. These fairs are as it were instantaneous cities where the Bhils can buy all their needs. The towns of the plains where these goods are sold are so far away that they can hardly go there once a year. But here in the fairs, which are held quite frequently—almost every month in the year in their very midst, it is very easy

for them to purchase their requirements and thus the economic sector of their life does not starve as there are periodical replenishments. Here they can also sell any goods, some grains, a horse or a cow that is in excess with the family. Thus a fair is a regular economic institution with them as the market is with others.

CHAPTER IX

BHIL MYTHOLOGY

The Bhils have a very interesting mythology wherein the exploits of their chief gods and their ideas about the original social conditions in the world are described in details. The festivals, gods and goddesses have their due places in this story: every institution of the Bhils has a sanction in this 'epic' which may very well be described as the Purana of the Bhils. The story is well-known, in parts if not in full, to all the Bhils from the Narbada to the Tapti. This incidentally shows that culturally all the Bhils belonging to the area of the present study are one. It is a wonder how such an important element in the culture of the Bhils did not attract any attention so far. Below is a brief summary of the story, parts of which have already occurred in various chapters.

To Taria Baman of Ghani Khunt on the banks of the Tapti Raja Pantha was born. When he was born he was so big that to put him to sleep a cloth was tied to two trees standing on opposite banks of the river (a distance today of about half a mile); and the post-natal blood from his mother's womb smeared all the Tapti stones red. (The Bhils account for the red stones in the bed of the Tapti flowing through the Sagbara territory by this incident.)

In Dab, an adjacent territory, Kol Padshah reigned as a powerful ruler. His territory was inhabited by ghosts and demons, and there was no trace of human beings there. He had a beautiful daughter whose name was Pandhar. Pantha served Kol Padshah as a *ghar-jamai*, worked in his fields and his house single-handed and at a time did as much work as fifty persons could do. With this strength and the tact which were inborn with him he overpowered the ghosts and the demons, married Pandhar and negotiated for a place of settlement with Paria Put of Dev Mogra, who readily gave him some land. After clearning this country of local

demons he settled there with his wife. (Even today as already described the biggest Bhil fair of the region is held at this place).

In the meantime, Pantha married his sister Holi Helabh to Vina Deo or Ina Dev of Dudha Mogra. This Vina Deo was an accomplished horseman, shrewd warrior and faithful companion; and Pantha and Vina thenceforth were constant friends through thick and thin. (Both of them are worshipped together by the Bhils today.)

Pantha's other sisters, Funja and Valati Panud, were married to Parop Dev, son of Kalo Pahad. Funja got a number of children but Panud had no issue at all. She wept day and night over her ill-luck, without eating or drinking anything. Bhagwan came to know of this; and so he went to the country of Parop Dev in the guise of a *sadhu* with a *tumdi* (pumpkin water-vessel) in his hand and a *jhulni* (loose cloth bag) hanging from his shoulders. He was received by Parop Dev who after ministering to him well presented him some money (which he refused to accept). Being pleased with his hospitality, the *sadhu* asked him to bring some water from the river. When the water was brought, he sprinkled it on five grains of rice, muttering some *mantra* over it; he gave these five grains to Parop Dev and said: 'Give these to your wife so that she may fructify. Ask her not to let them touch either her tongue or her teeth; for, if the rice grains touch her tongue your son will be long-tongued and if they touch her teeth, he will have his teeth jutting out of the mouth. She must swallow them direct into her stomach.' Then he asked for some milk and a few eggs in return and disappeared.

Panud swallowed the rice grains and in course of time she conceived. When nine months were complete, she asked her husband to call a *karigar,* a male *dai.* Panud, lying on the ground in her labour struck this wall and the other, rolling; so furious were the pangs. The *karigar* to whom Parop Dev had gone refused to attend her delivery for he said he had already been at two deliveries that day. Parop Dev went to a *Badwa* who also could not go with him because his wife was in menses. Then he went to Khadia

Kondal, the highest *Badwa*, who had two wives, Mani Sotari and Pangli Viday. The *Badwa* was resting and his wife Pangli Viday was killing the lice in his pubic hair; and both of them were having obscene talk and laughing. Parop Dev was disgusted at this sight and returned home without any nurse to attend his wife in labour.

When he went home, he heard music being played inside his wife's womb. He heard the thythm of the *gosain's* dance, the low beats of the tom-tom, the shrill sound of the clarinet and the songs of the *jhoriyas*. This was heard in Dev Mogra at a distance of twelve *kos* by Pantha and he wondered how there could be music from that quarter when Parop Dev had no issue at all!

Then all was over and Panud delivererd. From the right side first was born Holi, the *Jagan Mata;* then one by one the *gosains,* the tom-tom players, the flute-players, the clarinet-players and the musicians; then were born Diwali, Bohon, Gam Devti, Nilo Nandervo; and thus 'nine times sixteen plus nine' were born of her right side. From the left issued the lion, the tiger, the bear and all other animals. When all were born Raja Pantha and Vina Deo came and made them into couples; Diwali was married to Nandervo and Holi to Mashru Dev; many others were similarly married there and then and were given huts. These new couples began life very well.

Gimb was left alone for he was not given a wife by the two gods. Gimb was enraged at this and inquired of his mother who was the final authority that had behaved so badly. He wanted to kill him whoever he was. He then went to Pandhar Mata for a loan of two rupees and also to ask Raja Pantha why he had been given no wife. Pandhar awakened Pantha who was asleep. Pantha became angry and took his wife to task: 'There is no salt in the house and you want two rupees for Gimb; and—yes, he has no wife in his *nasib*.' Hearing this, Gimb got still more angry, called his *mama* names and did not stop to eat what Pandhar offered and went away in search of the 'fate writer'.

Gimb wanted to find out from her if he had a wife written for him in her books. He passed through many

strange territories like the Sapdi, Petya Haga, Tomba Pipri, Dab, Versa Viji, Khokhlo Kanbi, Potariyo Pavo, Hede Khaya, Hingale Hahla, Timbanyo Nayako and Kanad; beyond many seas like the Vado Daryo and Moto Daryo and across many *khadis* like the Vikho Khadhi. After many hazards and much hardship, he came to the country of Dhan Kokar, the writer of the fates of all who are born.

He went directly to Dhan Kokar, who was bending over her books with her spectacles on her nose, and asked her to see at once in her books if there was a wife destined for him. Dhan was overawed by this rash youth and looked into all her books but found that there was nothing written to that effect. Gimb caught her by the neck and ordered her to find out if there was a spouse written for him in any of the other mutilated and moth-eaten books. 'Find you must,' he said. Dhan Kokar once more bent down over the volumes but she could not find anything. Then she saw some loose pages which were lying in a rat hole and looked into them; now she beamed over her success but immediately looked sorry: she told Gimb that the daughter of King Kala Vidiya was destined to be his wife—but nobody could go alive to that king's country which lay thousands of fearful *kos* away from her own country and that the king was very evil-natured.

Intent on getting a wife, Gimb immediately set out for the country of Kala Vidiya. He travelled through the regions of the following: Pochar Pado, Rogo Vahavyo, Mundal Vado (who was the son-in-law of Raja Pantha), Helya Vadvya, Huna Vansali (whose children were Koyru and Koch Baru); through Kala Kunbi, Fukna Raj (where all people remained hungry and thirsty for ever), Khar Patyo, Agya Khambe; and across Khari Daryo. Finally he reached Kala Vidiya's kingdom.

Vidiya's wife was Dev Sundri and his daughter's name was Mohlobai. Gimb blew some magic over Mohlo's name and wished that she should go out to fetch water; accordingly she at once came out with vessels of gold. When she was at the well, Gimb turned into a leper and asked for water from her; and when she was pouring water in his

joined palms he gave a bite on her hand and thus set his 'nine times two plus nine teeth' there. With this bite love for him was also impressed in her body and thenceforth she was deeply in love with him and began to call him *'Mati, mati'* (husband, O husband); but Gimb had disappeared. The next day when she was at the well, he went there in the guise of a cow-boy and met her. In this way, they met every day and their love deepened. Mohlobai began to pine for him, muttering always *'Mati, mati!'* When this became too much and ruined her health, her mother asked her what the matter was and learnt from her the reason. Dev Sundri told this to Vidiya who pondered over his daughter's love for the foreigner.

They called Gimb home and requested him to stay with them as their *ghar-jamai* and he readily agreed to this. The queen, his mother-in-law, told him that he would do whatever she wanted; and to this also he was agreeable. One day she gave him twelve maunds of *til* and asked him to sow them in their field, tilling the land with his elbows only by the time she prepared a bread for him. If he took more time he was to forfeit his life to his in-laws. Gimb set out on the task, but try however he might he could not do it. It was an impossible task. When he realised what danger was awaiting him not being able to finish the assigned work he began to weep. Raja Pantha at once knew that his nephew was in trouble. He sent 'nine times sixteen plus nine' pigs, which in no time scratched the field into furrows. Gimb was glad at this and, after sowing the *til*, he went to his mother-in-law. But she told him that she was so sorry she had asked him to sow in a wrong field; and therefore, he must bring all the *til* back so that it could be sown in the right field. If a single *til* was lost, he would lose his life. This was more difficult than the first task, and once more Gimb wept like a child who had lost his mother. Vina Deo came to know of this. He asked his son, Chid Guva, the king of all the birds in the world and in the heavens, to help Gimb. Chid Guva sent all the black sparrows to pick up the *til* from the furrows. They did so and heaped them near Gimb's mother-in-law, who counted them all and found

that the grains were less by one! Gimb was taken to task for this and was asked to find out the missing grain at once and he was threatened that if he failed in that, he would be killed. Gimb was once more helpless; but Chid Guva again came to his help. There was one sparrow among those that had helped which had one of its teeth missing and in this tooth cavity the *til* was stuck. Chid Guva found it out and gave it to Gimb. Thus once more his mother-in-law failed in her evil designs.

Many more equally stiff tasks were set to Gimb afterwards. He was asked to ride a very vicious horse which was Kala Vidiya himself incognito. The furious horse was breething fire. Gimb turned into a beautiful mare, went to the horse in a courting mood, licking his body and rubbing his neck with her own and Vidiya calmed down. This opportunity was at once taken by Gimb to bridle and ride him. After this Gimb was asked to eat 'nine times sixteen plus nine' he-buffaloes and the same number of she-buffaloes and oxen. It was simply impossible, but Gimb found out a trick. He became a furious tiger and attacked and devoured them all one by one. He was then asked to make a barren buffalo conceive. Gimb blew a magic, *hokot,* over it and it gave birth to 'nine times sixteen plus nine' calves.

In this way he served them for twelve years, passing successfully through every test; but the evil king and his queen would not yet get him married to their daughter! They said, 'Now do just one thing for us; and then you will marry our daughter: bring us a fish as big as twelve carts put together.' Gimb went in search of such a fish through the Viho, the Jhero and the Kharo seas and then came to the Vado sea. Sitting on its shore, he began to weep. Pa Janjali, the water-goddess and Sunagi Moru, her husband, were staying in their water-palace near here. Pa Janjali was the *masi* of Gimb. She heard somebody weeping and came out to see who it was. She found that it was her sister's son Gimb. She took him home, gave him sumptuous food and made him rest in a cosy bed. Then she asked him why he had been weeping. When he told her of his miserable life, she simply laughed and said: 'When you go the fish will be

ready out of the waters on the sands. Just pick it up.' Gimb went out and saw the fish lying on the beach. He asked his mother-in-law to pick it up.

One day Kakada Kukda Vidiya came to Kala Vidiya and proposed to the latter for his daughter's hand. Kala Vidiya and his wife, dishonest as they were, agreed to his proposal. They sent for liquor, the *dej* was settled and after they had drunk over the acceptance, they decided to have the marriage ceremony after nine days therefrom.

Gimb who had suffered so much for this girl saw her slipping into the hands of some one else, and that against her will. He became desperate and wretched. He could not eat anything nor take a drop of water. Raja Pantha at Heli Mogi and Vina Deo came to know of it and they prepared to go to Gimb's help. Pantha rode a white horse, Khandu by name; he had the lion as the ensign on his flag. Vina's horse, Kandu, was black and his flag bore the emblem of a bird. Their dress was rich; and there was a *gefno* on the head of each and a *lakhyo* in each one's nose. Two beautiful young boys were their attendants. They ate and drank so much before the journey that for twelve to twenty-four years next they would not get hungry or thirsty. They bade good-bye to their relatives and giving them an arrow told them that if the arrow developed red spots they must know that both of them were dead. Then they started on the journey.

This was a reformation tour of the gods. They went through a country called Signyo Kotnyo where they enjoyed themselves by putting on long-coats of flowers; and then they crossed the countries of Helabh, Delabh and Hela Dab and came to the Rotten Country where the people were living amidst dirt and filth. The gods cursed them, asked them to bathe at least once a year and then left the country for the Sitala Khadi to get water for their horses. Even today the Bhils show the foot-prints of the gods and their horses in the *khadi* near Rup Devdi and Ghani Khunt.

They arrived in the country of Chandi Matwali. A pubic hair of Chandi, so strong that none could break it, had been tied to the buntings at the entrance to this realm. It was

tied so low that every one going to that country had to pass through under it. But Vina Deo cut it right through and entered the kingdom. He then took Chandi to a thicket and had such sexual relations with her that thenceforth she became mild and humble.

From her country, they went to the region of Kolkhaya, where the people ate worms. The two gods gathered them together, gave them a sound beating and asked them to give up eating worms and to start eating dried fish instead. The same thing happened in the next country, Land of the Frog-Eaters, where the inhabitants all ate only frogs. After giving them a sound thrashing, the gods taught them how to catch fish in *hot* and asked them to eat fish and not frogs.

The country to which they went next was the Habla Shing Desh, the Country of Horned Rabbits. There a he-rabbit was looking after his children and the wife was away in the forest doing work. All the he-rabbits there did females' work and the she-rabbits engaged themselves in males' work. The gods asked them to exchange their routine for each other's and departed.

Then they came to the Pangar Sondya country where all the people had a strange custom: they climbed to the tops of trees and when they wanted to come down they cut down the branches on which they would be standing; down they would come with the branches. Raja Pantha and his companion asked them to come down from the trees on which they usually stayed. They haughtily said, 'We are not free. What do you think we are? We are Pangar Sondya youths.' The gods then forcibly collected them, gave them heavy blows and showed them the right way of going up and down the trees and of cutting them.

The next country they reached was of the Ek Tangyo people, all of whom had only one leg each. Their chief caught hold of the reigns of the gods' horses and said, 'Let us run a race. Let us see who wins, your horses or I.' When they ran, the chief was about to win, but Raja Pantha hurt his working leg by magic and thus he (the one-legged chief) was left behind. But the gods gifted all of the people with two legs each before they left them.

The journey thenceforward to the country of Vina Bangya was the most hazardous one. In that country all the new-comer males were killed and their heads hung as a *toran* at the entrance to the city. Both Raja Pantha and Vina Deo sent away their horses and then assumed the form of two youthful girls, one of sixteen and the other of fifteen. The elder one put on a golden *khope* in her hair, hung *lakhvo* from her pigtail, had a pair of real gold *bachke* and dressed in *Amadavadi* clothes. The younger one also had all these ornaments, but they were of silver. Then both put on *vanks* which had small bells; *gefno* which were worth more than a million rupees and *korne* which were incomparable with any in the world. The breasts of one were as big as green mangoes; and the second one's were 'betal-big'. They chewed *pan,* and smoking pipes, they started. Swaying their hips, they entered the city as the bells on their ornaments tinkled sweetly.

The king, who had put on shoes made in Avidh (a village in the Rajpipla State) and a golden-threaded turban, was drunk with *Amadavadi* liquor and *Hansoti tadi.* He was extremely pleased with the new beauties and invited them to his palace. They were willing, they said, to stay on with him if he got all of his five queens killed. 'Oh sure, that is not at all difficult,' said the king. He asked for a week's time during which interval the girls were allowed to move freely about.

This was an awkward position. They could not stay there for ever without their being discovered, and such a tyrant as the king could not be suffered any more. Nor was it easy to defeat him, because, if any warrior of the king was killed, from every drop of his blood that was spilled a new warrior would arise. That was the greatest source of strength for the Vina Bangya king.

Raja Pantha, in the guise of the beautiful woman, took some dirt from off his chest, gave it the shape of a crow and put life into it; and with this crow he sent a note to Hela Kasa, where his son-in-law, Megh Raja, was the king. Todgya was his *wazir* and Kolda his minister; the Black Cloud (Kali Badli), the Thunder (Gajan Ghotho), the Twelve Rains (Bari

Megh) and the two Lightnings (Thothi and Kali) were his near ones. There were nine lakhs of clouds in his army. When Megh Raja knew that his father-in-law was in trouble in a foreign country he rushed there immediately with his mighty army.

Raja Pantha and Vina Deo now declared war against the king of Bangya. It was a dreadful battle between the two armies; pairs of horses pulled off each other's ears; the soldiers cut off one another like grass; and the clouds poured down rains so that the blood of the Vina Bangya warriors was washed away and no new soldiers were allowed to spring up from it. In this way the tyrant was finally killed and his country subjugated by the two gods. All his property was seized and sent to Dev Mogra. When the remnants of the populace began to weep and pray for mercy, the gods gave them enough wealth and advised them not to be cruel towards others. Then they started onwards on their journey.

They came to the city of King Gawli. The king's country was luxuriantly waving with crops, golden wheat and silver *juwar;* and *mahudas* in blossom were sending their maddening smell in all directions. There were plenty of cattle, which gave milk and ghee that fattened the people. This was unknown to and unforeseen by the gods. 'Somehow the grains and the cattle must be stolen from here to our country and our men must be taught the use of these valuable things,' the gods thought. But stealing was punished in that realm with death. The King, Dudhyo Gawli, was dressed in a short-coat and *dhoti* of whey, a cap of milk and shoes of ghee. He was protecting a field twelve *kos* by twelve, where grains were ripening. His shoes were made from the hides of twelve buffaloes stitched together. Raja Pantha established friendly relations with him, and did not trouble him. But in the meantime Pantha sent word to Pandhar Mata, his queen, that her help was immediately required there. Pandhar came, and advised by Pantha, assumed the form of a pea-hen and took as many grains from the king's country as she could carry and sowed them in her country. She also turned some bulls and cows as well as buffaloes into

flies and carried them to her own country. Thus it was that Pandhar first brought food-grains and milch cattle to the country of the Bhils. By the time Gawli came to know of this theft, the gods had escaped and were on their way to another country.

This country was Bhoro Kanjayo, where any man would have sexual relations with any woman he liked 'as is found in animals today'. This enraged the two gods, who beat the inhabitants so severely that the skins of the victims came off the bodies. They then ordered these people not to indulge in such promiscuous relations. They asked them to marry their cross cousins and restrict their sex relations in that circle. Any revival of the old practice, threatened the gods, would be severely punished.

Going further they entered a territory in which the people were sitting under fig trees with their mouths wide open in the hope that some figs would drop down into their mouths and they could eat them. That was most ridiculous. These reformer gods gave them axes, asked them to do work in order to produce food and not to depend on chance for their livelihood. The people had to obey them.

Traversing the territory of Pipar Otya where they told the people to be less niggardly and more religious, they came to the realm of Dev Kharya who was the *Vasawo* of a country which sacrificed to the gods grown-up human beings instead of hens. Here also the two gods fought with the *Vasawo* and forced his country to offer sacrifices of buffaloes, eggs and hens instead of what they had been offering till then.

Then they passed through other countries like Bhus Khayo and Mundal Bodo. When they were flying over the Viho Jharo (the Poisonous Streamlet) their horses fell down in the stream and began to be affected as if with leprosy. The king of the stream was Vihar Lago who was married to Soden Rani, a sister of Pandhar Mata. When the brother-in-law came to know of Pantha's trouble, he made the horses all right by applying some medicines to their bodies. Pantha and Vina took the medicine from him as if they wanted to see the wonder-drug and as soon as the herb was in their

hands both the gods disappeared with it!

They then emerged in the Hungry Country where there was ample room to sleep but no food to eat. The gods gave the people food to eat and also taught them food cultivaiton. Farther on they passed the strange countries of Ragho Vasawo, Pohno Poyro, Kol Vechyo and Hele Vadwai, and the Vangar Desh and Kanad Desh. In the last-named country people had such large ears that at night they slept on one of them and covered themselves with the other; and in the day time they put both the ears on their heads. The king of this country was Chamad Vesh. To tease him Pantha asked him if he could spare for him (Pantha) one of his (the king's) ears as he wanted to make shoes out of it.

At last they came to the country of Kala Vidiya whose daughter was destined for Gimb but who was lately promised to another man by her father. It was all pomp and show, gaiety and rejoicing at Kala Vidiya's palace because Kakada Kukda Vidiya was to marry his daughter. Pantha became an old man and Vina a cow-boy, and both of them began to sing a song, apparently meaningless to all but full of meaning to Gimb who was staying just nearby:

'If Gam Devi lets you escape, you can.
Nine times sixteen and nine *naktis* are there.
Let this young boy go away.
Don't be afraid.
I can crush anybody who comes in my way.'

Then Pantha played some mischief also. He caused the marriage party fall fast asleep and then, turning himself into a mouse, gnawed away all their new clothes which were specially made for the marriage occasion. In the morning Pantha and Vina turned themselves into tailors and got a brisk business of darning clothes. When everything was ready for marrying the girl with Kakada Kukda Vidiya, the gods assumed the forms of two *pujaris* and began to repeat the names of Pohlo Put, Kol Dabho Vasawo, Dudha Mogra Vasavo, Pangli Viday and Koli Padshah. The people saw that these two persons were experts in the goldly lore and appointed them to officiate at the marriage ceremony. Both the parties were seated in the marriage booth and every-

thing was proceeding well. The expert *pujaris* were repeating *mantras,* when all at once there came a host of soldiers. They were Pantha's men and they routed all the people there, robbing them of their ornaments and valuables. Only the bride was left and she was with due rites married to Gimb by the two gods.

Then they returned to their country and lived happily.

CHAPTER X

THE CRIME PATTERN

I

The Bhils are not a criminal tribe; but crime, in the sociological sense of an act believed by the group that can enforce its belief to be injurious to its existence or in the sense of violation of socially accepted norms of conduct, is there. These are crimes within the Bhil society; but they may or may not be the concern of the law of the State. The crimes recognised by law and the offences against the laws of the State are also there as in other castes and tribes. This chapter will briefly discuss both these categories of crime and other associated topics.

'Messengers of Death'

People in the plains who have no idea of the Bhil as he is have a belief that the Bhil is a dark man and kills anybody he comes across to loot him or her. So among them, a very naughty boy who bullies his mother for small things is called a 'Bhil'. Similarly, a small child which goes on obstinately weeping is silenced by the threat that the 'Bhil' would come and take it away if it does not cease crying! The painters, who also are guided by this folk-belief, represent the Bhil as fierce-looking and invariably holding a bow and an arrow. This belief may have some roots in the history of the Bhils who at one time were wild and used to plunder the plains whenever they could. Even those who have written on some aspects of the Bhils viz. their land settlement, a tour of their regions, or a narrative of their life have not failed to mention something exaggerated about their criminal tendencies.[1]

1. Bana Bhatta, in the celebrated work *Kadambari,* in the same mood describes them as 'messengers of Death', 'as dark as the Deluge Night,' 'as fearful as the Comet' and 'as bad as a crowd of Sins'.

In the history of the Rajput dynasties of Anhilwada, the Bhils are commonly referred to as guards and plunderers, black as soot or *kajal;* and as enemies they are 'a force against whom no man could fight.'[2] In 1826 the Political Agent of the Rewa Kantha Agency complained of the aggressions almost daily committed by the Bhils.[3] In 1847 they were said often to band together and attack the village they were paid to portect.[4] Some of them were believed to be armed with bows and arrows, ready to fight with each other or their neighbours either to please their chiefs or to shelter a criminal.[5] Malcolm also wrote that the customary occupation of a Bhil was to commit thefts and the common answer of a Bhil whenever charged with theft or robbery was 'I am not to blame; I am Mahadeo's thief'; in other words, his destiny as a thief had been fixed by God.

But later on, in 1855, Mr. Pollexfen found the Rajpipla Bhils patient, inoffensive and susceptible to kindness. And when he was among them he never heard a case of theft or murder; and when the Gazetteers came to be written in 1898, they were even more quiet and better-behaved.

The Bhils themselves say that they are very bad avengers. A Bhil will not forget an insult inflicted on him and will kill the man for it; if he cannot do it, he will ask his son to avenge him. So 'the Bhil's vengeance is as hard as the stump of a *khair* tree', as a Bhil proverb runs. Some of their stories also tell that they committed many crimes like human sacrifice, promiscuous sex relations and adultery as well as limitless drinking. It was only after the reformation of the tribe by their gods that they took to quieter ways of life, according to them.

Revolts

The Bhils have shown a tendency to disrespect law and order. They have often voiced their feelings against an

2. Forbes, *Rasmala,* I, pp. 104-113.
3. *Bombay Government Selections,* XXIII, p. 139.
4. *Ibid,* p. 321.
5. Malcolm, *Memoirs of Central India,* I, p. 526.

alien Government over them in no uncertain words; and they resorted to violence at all times against it. The following will sum up their main revolts:

(a) They rose against the Marathas in the 18th century. They were given severe punishment by the Marathas for this.

(b) They revolted against the Britishers in 1800. Captain Briggs in 1828 attemtped to subdue them. Till 1828 there were so many Bhil revolts that in that year the Collector of West Khandesh said, 'Only after twenty years there is a continuous peace of six months in this land of the Bhils.'

(c) In 1846 Kuvar Jivo Vasawo did not like the interference of the foreigners in his own affairs and he rose against the Government.

(d) In 1857 Bhagoji Naik in Ahmadnagar and Kajar Singh in Satpuda fought against the Government and looted the Government treasury passing from Indore to Bombay and helped Tatya Tope, the famous leader of the 1857 War of Independence. They could not be subdued for two more years. After they were subjugated the subsequent history was one of peace.

(e) The Rajpipla Bhils also showed a history of disorder for a long time. The British Government had to interfere in the affairs of Rajpipla in 1820 and one reason for this was the urgent need to change the disorderly Bhils into peaceful and industrious subjects. The Assistant Resident, Mr. Willoughby's inquiries showed that between 1763 and 1785, before the disorder had spread, the Bhils were kept quiet by the establishment all over their districts of strong military posts. Misbehaviour on the part of the Bhils was always severely punished. If a whole village was at fault it was generally attacked and burnt to the ground and its people, regardless of sex and age, were put to the sword. Bhils guilty of treason or other heinous crimes were impaled, burnt slowly over fire,

blown from a gun or beheaded. Lighter offences were punished by maiming, flogging, imprisonment and fine.

In 1821, Mr. Willoughby's inquiries into the state of the Bhils led him to divide them into two classes, the quiet Bhils and the unruly Hill Bhils. In the districts held by the former, in Mr. Willoughby's opinion, it would be enough to see that their rights were respected and that they were in no way oppressed; as for the latter districts, they were to be managed by strong military posts at Sagbara, Rhocha and Rajpipla.

Thefts

The only crimes commonly committed by the Bhils today are theft, robbery and dacoity. The Bhils of Usker Togapur in the Mandvi Taluka of the Surat District are believed to be notorious thieves and dacoits.[6]

When I was touring that taluka in 1947, many of my acquaintances simply refused to accompany me to these two villages as they were afraid of the Bhils there. They are not dangerous, though they had some dacoities to their record and hence the police department keeps a strict watch on them. The Bhils elsewhere are not thievish. If at all a theft occurs, it is not because the offenders are Bhils but because they are poor and are driven to this crime as anybody else is.

Violation of Forest Laws

Another offence which the Bhils are prone to committing and do commit sometimes is violation of the forest laws. For fuel or for building a house, or because the tradition of

6. The same is said of the Bhils of the Panch Mahals also. Says Mr. Vanikar, 'Some Bhils, who cannot find any gainful employment, go out to play *indari* (i.e. to commit thefts) at various places. Some indulge in plunder also. Cattle-lifting too is not uncommon.'—*Panch Mahalna Bhilona Gito*, p. 19.

wood-ash cultivation lingers on, or just because of ignorance they cut down the forbidden trees. They are born in the forests replete with the idea that the forest is theirs, but the Forest Guard on rounds one day seizes them and only then do they realise the actual position. Sometimes there are cases when, goaded by the force of undying customs, they burn down forests and sow seeds there, thus infringing the forest laws which do not allow them shifting cultivation. I came across an example of this in Toranmal in June 1944 (as was said in chapter IV). It was reported to the Collector that a Bhil of Toranmal had cut down in a very remote part of the forest some trees to sow seeds in the cleared area. Because, that year the *karvi* plant which blossoms every twelve years was to blossom and this was a sure sign of the failure of rains so that the land they tilled would not produce anything. Thus it was that the Bhil took great care in order not to starve; but he committed a crime all the same.

Drinking and Illicit Distillation

The Bombay Government introduced total prohibition all over the State in 1950 and the Bhil areas are also covered by it. In these circumstances their habit of drinking is worthwhile examining in detail. *Horo,* liquor, was first prepared by the gods according to them:

Parop Dev rubbed his chest and produced a *mahuda* seed, which was planted in the Daria Bet (an island) where it grew to be a big tree bearing maunds of *mahuda* fruits. In the gardens of Agya Khambe there was a bird, Fulpechori by name, which flew west every day to this island and brought some *mahudas.* The heap of these fruits grew into a mountain when the two gods, Raja Pantha and Vina Deo, were in the country of Agya. They took the *mahudas* home. There these were stored in a big open vat. By chance a donkey and a tiger fell in it and decayed with the fruits. Kalyo Put (a ghost whose wife's name is Raghu Vahavi) also fell in it and was dissolved with the mess, which began to smell very strong. Pario Put, attracted by this smell,

wanted to taste it. He took a pot, a laddle and other paraphernalia to distil it. When some of it was collected pure in the pot, he saw the two gods coming. He did not want them to share in his dear liquid, so he drank the whole of it and went mad (for the stuff was very strong, containing as it did a donkey, a tiger and a ghost!) and broke the pot and other instruments. Raja Pantha and his friend tasted the lingering drops and found them very tasty. Then they distilled more of it and thence the art spread to other people.

Money or no money, most of the Bhils manage to drink as is revealed from their life stories. The tavern at Dadiapada could be seen full of these people the day I went there. A Bhil of Khokra-Umar is said to have lost his plough and his house because of drinks. 'Some go to the extent of selling their wives just to drink,' some old Bhils of Nevalda told me. Even if we don't take these extreme cases as representative, an ordinary Bhil surely used to spend about ten per cent of his income on drinks.

Besides its daily consumption, liquor is also used (approximately) as shown in Table I.

TABLE I

Occasion	Use	Quantity Used.
A guest at home	An adult man	2 to 4 oz.
	A woman	1 to 2 oz.
	A child	Nothing or ½ oz.
Birth of a child	To the gods	1 *chhak* (1|8 oz.) each.
	To those present	½ oz. each
Marriage	When a marriage proposal is accepted	2 oz. to each present.
	When *dej* is paid	40 lbs. pot to be drunk.

TABLE I (Continued)

Occasion	Use	Quantity Used.
	On the marriage day	2 oz. to each present 1 bottle to the headman. 1 *chhak* each to the gods
	On the marriage of a widow	½ oz. to each present
Death	Given to the dead person by each person present	1 *chhak*
	To the mourners	2 oz. each
	To the gods and the dead of long ago	1 *chhak* to each
	To those presensent on the *Kaita* day	2 oz. each.
After harvesting or other work.	To each one working and present	2 to 3 oz.
When a *Panch* is in session.	To each member	2 to 3 oz.
On festivals.	To goddess Pandhar	2 to 3 lbs.
	To Raja Pantha and other gods	1 lb.
	To other deities	2 to 4 oz. each
	To a *Badwa*	1 bottle

Even the Bhils' songs show their love for drinks. Here are a few examples:

(i)

Come soon to the tavern,
Raisingh gave you a little of liquor;
With only one dose you went tipsy,
O girl!

(ii)

We drank in the Korai fair
and you fell intoxicated on the road.

(iii)

Give me, O Parsi, your liquor—
Let me taste it.
I want to taste it and go mad!
Let me see your *daru,* O Parsi!

(iv)

The smart young man loafs about;
He won a *jhaghda;*
He is fond of liquor—
He won a *jhaghda.*

Thus, it is seen that for the Bhils liquor was not only not bad but it was inevitable. They were much given to drinks. Kinbery rightly observes, 'Alcoholic liquor plays an important part as a crimino-etiological factor..... Intoxication is conducive to certain kinds of criminality such as acts of violence, assault, man-slaughter, rape and other sexual crimes.' This is true of the Bhils as well. The headman of Toranmal told me plainly, 'Once we drink, we can commit any crime.'[7]

7. Kinbery, *Basic Problems of Criminology,* p. 211.
Lombroso also concludes from the statistics collected by a number of European investigators that alcoholism occurs oftenest in the case of those charged with assaults, sexual offences and insurrections. (See 'Some Pathological and Criminal Results of Alcoholism' by A. Mathew in the *Indian Journal of Social Work,* Vol. VII, No. 3.)

In the changed circumstances when drinking has become a crime, the Bhils with the above-mentioned pattern of life will find it difficult to abide by the law and will commit the crime of illicit distillation. They very well know the technique of doing it. Some Bhils of the Valia Taluka were arrested for this crime in August 1950. Every day the newspapers carry similar reports.[8] Illegal drinking and illicit distillation are therefore two other offences which the Bhils commit and will probably go on committing for some more time at least.[9]

II

The intra-group crimes among the Bhils must be discussed in a wider context. These crimes may or may not be recognised by the Government; nevertheless they are serious as far as the group is concerned. Any infringement of the socially accepted way or value of life may be a crime among the Bhils, however small it may be in the judgment of law. The Bhil idea of crime can be easily understood in the light of their concept of sin, *pap*. To commit as well as to omit something will be a *pap*, and therefore a crime in the social context, because the tribal code against which it goes is inviolable.

Civil Code

Let us look at the existence of a civil code among the Bhils. They have a large body of civil laws, a system of rights and obligations in all spheres of life, economic, social and religious, which are fulfilled very scrupulously. In each of these fields what is one man's right is another man's duty;

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8. Mr. Vanikar also writes the same thing about the Bhils of the Panch Mahals. (op. cit., p. 19.)

9. Some social workers among the Bhils say that the former is so big an evil that unless very strict measures are taken—including whipping and rigorous imprisonment—they will not give up this crime-begetting crime. (See J. J. Contractor in the *Gram-Vikas Weekly*, October 11, 1947.)

each is ready to submit to this because it is to his own advantage too. This is not owing to any instinctive or intuitive impulse or mysterious group sentiment but only because if one does not do one's duty neither will others recognise one's rights.

This principle of give and take or inter-individual reciprocity pervades all sectors of the Bhil life. Let us take a few examples. In marriages, it is the duty of all the relatives and friends of the bride's father to give her some money as *chanlla* or present. It may be a mark of the auspiciousness of the ceremony or it may be a matter of custom, but more than these it is a consideration of repaying what he, the bride's father, had given to each of the invitees when the latter had some occasion at his place. That is why before giving a present the guest particularly ascertains what was given to him by the host; and he repays the same amount as a rule.

To give another example, drinks in marriages must be adequately provided. Each invitee must have a reasonable share of the liquor; otherwise, a taunt will be levelled: 'He drank profusely from us; but now when it is his turn he wants to dismiss us with a drop—the miserly man!' There are often quarrels also between the two patries on this as will be described later in this chapter.

This reciprocity obtains also in the sphere of mortuary obligations. From presence at the cremation to giving of gifts to the bereaved family all the customs are governed by give and take. If I was present at the death of somebody's relative, he will surely come to mourn with me whenever I am bereaved. If I was reluctant to joint some one else in his mourning, he also would be unwilling to, though willy-nilly he may, join me at my mourning.

This is more apparent in the economic affairs of the Bhils. There is a system of co-operative undertaking which prevails among them during harvesting. It is called *lah* or *madakho*. In it all the village people join to do some agricultural work in one person's field and then in another's and so on. The same *madakho* operates in the building or repairing of houses also. If one Bhil who has been given

such a *lah* is unwilling to join others after his own work is over, he will be abused by others; he may be socially very much derided and some penalties may also be sanctioned against him (e.g. he may not be helped again or he may not be invited to a general feast.) Those who fulfil their duties with extra enthusiasm get better recognition, are praised and when time comes people do their work without failure.

Similarly, in the customary barter rates for baskets in terms of grains if a Bhil is unwilling to pay the prescribed rate, either because he is stingy or because he wants to higgle, the basket-sellers may not sell to him, may not go to him another time. Or, when they work as labourers in his fields, they may also higgle and quarrel with him.

The religious field is also pervaded with this idea of give and take. It is the duty of the *Badwa* to go and help anybody who wants his services. It is the right of the laity to ask him to give them super-natural relief. If the *Badwa* does not give them help he will lose his magical powers: this is a super-natural sanction; he will not be given any money or grains by the people: this is a worldly sanction.

An analysis of their quarrels shows that there is surely a civil law among them and that it is the violation of it that leads to these quarrels as an inevitable result. Quarrels arise on many occasions, the chief of them being marriages and deaths, festivals like the Holi and fairs. In all these liquor works as an instigating force.

In the celebration of a marriage when both the parties get mixed and dance to mark the end of the wedding they are dead drunk. Some of them are bent on defeating the other party in dance by hook or by crook. They dance and, either consciously or unconsciously, somebody tramples on the foot of a man from the other party or tears his clothes and this begins a quarrel; first start abuses and then *mar-pit.* I was a witness to such a free fight between two marriage parties in Newalda in May 1948. Quite a good deal of blood was shed. The old men gathered there told me, 'This is bad. It must not have been done. It is not allowed. But then we are Bhils, you know'—meaning thereby that these things

do happen in their community, they being an unenlightened people.

Such quarrels also occur while drinking at the death of somebody. Some one gets too small a share of *horo,* or somebody insults some one else in a tipsy mood; and then there is a quarrel. Holi is a festival when they literally sling mud on each other and abuse as profusely as possible, and on this occasion they would also drink as much as, or even more than, their purchasing power would allow. This festival, therefore, is a potential source of quarrels and breach of the peace.[10] The same is true of fairs when quarrels may take place on account of too much drinking, insult to a woman, or some such alleged offence. After they are free from intoxication, one of the parties, (generally the offender) would ask an old man to create a rapprochement between him and the offended: 'You will drink liquor worth a rupee from me if you do this,' he will say. Thus peace is easily restored, of course, and all of them drink together, forgive and forget.

All this will show that breaches of the peace, none too negligible, are present in this society and it must not be supposed that these primitive people live in a completely peaceful heaven of fully harmonious society relations as some romantic anthropologists have said of other tribes.

Thus a certain civil law has a place in Bhil life. It is not a seperate system, but it pervades all their activities. It is kept in force by the kind of reciprocity which works as we saw above and also by the publicity inherent in their social system.

Sexual Irregularity

Sexual irregularity is also considered as *pap* because it transgresses the norm of social conduct and this irregularity invites not only social stigma but also divine wrath. Auto-

10. Of course, this seems to be so everywhere in India. Once, for instance, about 500 people were arrested in Holi quarrels by the Calcutta police; and in Allahabad the matter went out of hand and great mischief was caused by the Holi-revellers. (See *Amrit Bazar Patrika,* March 19, 1949.)

erotism is known and practised by the Bhils. A Bhil boy told me at Chinchpada in April 1945, 'When somebody gets excited and does not get a girl, he goes to a river, digs a hole there in the mud, then puts his penis into it and goes on labouring, repeating the name of the girl he likes most till he discharges.' Bestiality is also known but rarely practised. A goat is the common object in such practices. I could not collect much data as to the extent of homo-sexuality among these people, though Dungario of Dediapada told me that there may be a few cases of this in the Bhil world. 'It is not common, but when nothing is available why not that?' he said. This and such *galis* (abuses) as *'gan marvi'* (to bugger), which are largely current among the Bhils, may also speak of their knowledge of this perverse form of sex satisfaction.

Sexual aberrations are horrible crimes in the eyes of the Bhils. If somebody is caught masterbating or indulging in such abnormal sex activities, he feels so much downcast that he will hide himself for life in order to avoid the sense of shame which he would thenceforth feel in society. Even suicides are committed in order to atone for violation of the accepted sex norm. A Bhil boy from Sindkheda, West Khandesh, is said to have gone away for good since ten years ago he had been caught 'mounting' a goat. Another young Bhil of Juna Rajpipla hanged himself in 1936 after he was caught masterbating in a river. The most important aspect of this case is that he was not told anything by anybody even after the matter had gained publicity; but he is said to have expressed that he was being overwhelmed by something; he felt as if he had gone all black. This then is the sanction behind this category of sex crimes. Not only the fear of social censure or of super-natural anger but also some tacit assumption on the part of the individual about the 'right' sex code makes him seek these courses as punishment to his own person for these crimes.

Adultery

Crimes such as adultery or violation of the prohibited sex taboos are also committed because of an outburst of

passion or because of uncontrolled desires or just unknowingly. When people come to know of such an incident both the partners are excommunicated for their very presence would bring divine vengeance on the whole village.

But a more practical way is found by the Bhils to overcome this super-natural difficulty and also to atone for this crime. They make the parties swear before the *Panch* that they are brother and sister and they will not do such a thing any more; the boy also pays a fine decided by the *Panch*. Jabni, the daughter of Panjari, a widowed Bhil woman (from a village in West Khandesh) was loved by one Vedya. One day he met her in the fair at Pati and asked her to accompany him home. On the way he had an interecourse with her by force near the Tapti. He repeated this whenever Jabni would be alone in the forest. One day one Pandya saw them thus together and reported it to the *Panch*. The *Panch* sat and found that they were kins, belonging to the same *kul*. They were, therefore, sworn as above and the boy was fined twenty rupees.

Inter-caste Marriages

Marrying in another caste is also a taboo and therefore anybody who marries a girl belonging to a 'different' people is at once put out of the Bhil 'caste'. Bhils marrying from lower castes like the Goris or the Kotwals are reduced to these castes and they are not invited to any caste dinners, community drinks or festival dances. I saw an example of this in Indra-Varna, Rajpipla State. A Bhil boy as he could not get any Bhil girl had married a Kotwal girl and therefore the Bhils of his village had cut off all social relations with him thenceforth.

Pre-marital Sex Relations

Pre-marital sex relations are frequent, though the parties concerned when caught red-handed are given a good beating. These become crimes if the parties are not accepted as bride and bridegroom by the respective parents and the *Panch* after

the relations have become public; if they are accepted by these authorities, they enter a married life. Pre-marital sex relations which do not result in marriage are punished with a fine on the male partner. The guardians are also responsible for the payment of this fine in default of the guilty boy paying it up.

Gujara Bhil had a daughter named Mala who was well grown-up. A boy, Velji, used to go to Gujara's house quite often. One night, the father asked Mala to bring some *juwar* plants from the field for his cattle. Velji heard this; and when she went out he followed her in the dark and overtaking her in the field satisfied his desires. Thenceforth they began to love each other and had nightly meetings also. In the meanwhile her maternal aunt smelt this and she talked of this to Mala's parents, who thenceforth kept a strict watch on her. One night when, under the pretext of going to answer nature's call, Mala went out and met Velji, the father followed her and beat her in Velji's own house. There was a lot of noise and people gathered round. After two or three days the *Panch* sat; and though the girl said that she would be willing to marry Velji, her father and other relatives refused to strike this match. Velji had fled away by this time and was not seen thereafter. The *Panch* fined him twenty-five rupees, and as he was absent the money was collected from his brother.

Sex relations are also cirminal if they are forced on a woman against her desire. In this case she can shout out aloud so that people gather together and the offender is severely beaten; then she can sue him before the *Panch* for the loss of her *abru,* which though literally means prestige also includes modesty. For this crime against the modesty of a woman, the man is fined from twenty-five to fifty rupees. Once the fine is paid, there is no stigma on her or him unlike in many advanced Hindu castes. Not only Bhils but anybody can be thus sued by the *Panch,* as the following case from West Khandesh will testify:

One Gopal, a Gujar by caste, engaged a Bhil woman, Nandu, in his fields as a day labourer. When both of them were alone he had an intercourse with her against her wishes.

After sometime people came to know of this and a *Panch* sat. The woman told them that it was done by the Gujar against her wish. The *Panch* fined him twenty-five rupees for this crime.

Making 'Sansar-Bhang'

Another crime which is very often committed is running away with another's wife. The wife may go away from her husband for any reason; may be both of them cannot pull on very well; or the woman has some other man in view; or she is mercilessly beaten by him and he does not care for her. Yet such elopement involves criminality on the part of the man, whom she marries afterwards; the charge is that of breaking the first man's family life, making *sansar-bhang;* and he therefore appeals to the *Panch* (or nowadays to the authorities) to set it right. The *Panch* know that the woman will not go back to her husband and therefore they break the quarrel between the two by asking the other man to pay the husband whatever expenditure he (the husband) had incurred in marrying her plus other incidental expenses. The new lover agrees to pay it up, they drink together and there is thereafter no *jhaghdo* between them.

The case cited below, which is a reproduction of an application to the Collector of West Khandesh requesting him to ask his wife's paramour to return his marriage expenditure by a Bhil, will clarify the nature of this type of crime:

Date: 23-5-1945.

To
The Collector Bahadur,
West Khandesh.

Applicant: Hodlya Moylya Mawchi, village San Khadki, Taluka Nawapur.

Sir,

My wife, named Bodi, of village Kanj (Baroda State), twenty-five years old and fair-coloured, was married to me in 1941. She had come of her own accord. I had told her, 'I cannot keep you as I have no money', but she said, 'Why worry, I will get on very well.

Even if you kill me, I will not go.' I then sent a message to her parents that their daughter had come to me. They came and persuaded her to go back, but she wanted to stick on to me. Then the parents decided to give her to me by the *jhaghda* way; but I said, 'I am very poor and I cannot pay the *dawa*. You may please take away your daughter.' But they did not listen to me and put down the *dawa* amount at Rs. 130|-. I had to give them all that: Rs. 40|- cash that I had plus a bullock which they valued at Rs. 90|-. Bodi stayed with me for two years.

One day she had gone to the market at Songadh from where Radtya Jatya Mawchi of village Vanjari forcibly took her away. When she did not return from the market for a day I searched for her and came to know of the above matter. I then went to Vanjari myself and asked from Radtya my wife back. He did not listen to me and said, 'I can give double the amount you have spent on her. Take the money, not her.' I came back. Now though it is three years since Bodi has gone to him, he, in spite of his boast, has not given me a single pie. I request Your Honour to ask him to give me back either Rs. 130|- being the money I spent on her or my wife. Please take suitable action against him for making me *sansar-bhang.*

(Left-hand thumb impression of)

Yours faithfully,
Hodlya Moylya.

Other criminal cases of a similar nature, but where the initiative is taken not by the woman but by her parents also come before the *Panch* or the law courts. A case came to my notice in West Khandesh in 1945.

Hariram, a Bhil of Lunkheda had a daughter named Shanti, who was given to a Bhil boy from Dhekwad. The marriage was celebrated but the girl's father did not send her to Dhekwad. Thus the marriage was not consummated. She was kept at Hariram's house and after some time was given away to a son of the Patil of Fulsar. For three months they lived together. The Dhekwad boy filed a complaint against his father-in-law in the Nandurbar Mamlatdar's court for making him (the Dhekwad boy) *sansar-bhang*, that is, for snapping his family life.

In a nut-shell it can rightly be said on my own field experience and on the testimony of people who have spent their lives among the Bhils that their attitude to sex is essentially Indian: sexual relations are sacred, being limited only to and between the married couple; the relations are not for

pleasure only but for a higher purpose. Exceptions there are, but they are looked down upon as made clear above.

Malevolent Sorcery

Some of the diseases of men, women and children and also of cattle are traced by the Bhils to *dakans,* evil-spirited women who practise black magic, which they use for vengeance on anybody against whom they have a grudge. The *dakan* takes the form of a cat or a serpent as described in an earlier chapter, or she turns into a pig or a calf; and in any of these forms she goes to the house of her victim and eats him or her or inflicts illness on that person. She can also eat bullocks, buffaloes, etc.—not to mention milk, curds and such other things. The Bhils consider her a great anti-social element.

Theft

There are some cases of theft, cattle-lifting or crop-cutting in the Bhil society from among themselves though they are very few and the Bhils as a body are very honest. A Bhil may do this if he is extremely poor and exasperated or he may do it out of spite against somebody. When I had camped at Sagai (Rajpipla State) in 1948 I heard that from the house of a Bhil of that village some household materials like a crowbar and an axe were stolen by someone when the members of the household had gone out to the forest. There are cases of stealing fowls also.

But their attitude towards thieves is very strict as can be known even from their proverbs: 'When the master wakes up, the thief has to run for life'; 'The thief's mother has to weep keeping her face in a mud-made store'; 'The thief's pot is never hung and will never be hung' (i.e. he can never be of an easy and free heart).

III

Oaths

As an accused also the Bhil is very honest though some people differ on this point of view. Mr. Prescott said that a

Bhil would lie as freely but not as cleverly as anyone else. In South Gujarat, according to Mr. Fakir Bhai, the only oath which could effectively bind them was that on the cushion of their Chief God, 'Baba'.[11] To swear in a Bhil thus, he is set facing the sun, with a handful of grains bound in the hem of his dress and a handful of dust held in his hand. He is then made to move two or three times round the horse-image of God Baba and swear by the god's cushion. In the Panch Mahals though as accused the Bhils were in many cases honest enough to confess their guilt, Bhil witnesses often lied and swore the life of an accused against whom they had a grudge.

In the Rajpipla State and the Khandesh District, the common expressions and subjects of oath are:

(a) 'May the tiger eat me!'
(b) 'May Paryo Put take me away!'
(c) 'May my child die!'
(d) 'May a *dakan* devour me!'
(e) the oath of the king;
(f) the oath of the sun;
(g) the oath of fire in one's hands; and
(h) the oath of grains or green vegetables near one.

Given these oaths, the Bhils are generally expected to tell the truth. A forest ranger of Rajpipla once said, 'I made them confess guilt many a time as far as the forest laws were concerned by giving them these oaths.'

Ordeals

If a Bhil is suspected of any intra-group crime like theft or adultery which he does not confess even after giving him the above-mentioned oaths, he is brought before the *Panch* and the following tests are given him:

(a) The iron point of the plough-share is heated red hot before the *Panch,* and the suspect is asked to pick it up with his hands. If he is not guilty, it is believed, he will not burn his hands; but if his hands get scalded, he is taken to be an offender.

11. *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency,* Vol. IX, Part I, p. 300.

(b) On a Sunday, a vessel filled with ghee is put on fire till the ghee boils and a two-pice coin dropped in it. The suspect is then asked to take out the coin. They say that he can do it easily only if he is not guilty and not otherwise.

(c) The suspect is taken to the shrine of Hanuman or Gorakhnath (a local godling). He is asked to touch the god and say whether he committed the crime in question. If he tells a lie, the god becomes angry with him and visits upon him miseries in the form of diseases or causes his death, they believe.

The offender therefore confesses the truth in most cases.

For tracing the sources of any inexplicable fatal illness in a village, all the wise men of the place gather together, wave some *juwar* grains over the diseased and go to a sorcerer with these grains. The sorcerer takes a handful of the grains, counts them by fours on every family's name in the village. The remainder after this quadruple division suggests the family which he announces as housing the criminal.

Sometimes these *juwar* grains are taken to the *Badwa* who drops them in a vessel full of water. He utters the names of the families one by one: that family at whose name the grains settle down at the bottom of the vessel is announced as the criminal's.

To find out whether a woman is a real witch or not, people take her out of the village and subject her to various ordeals. She is generally hung by the arms or by the heels to the branch of a tree and rocked this way and that. While she is hanging, if the branch breaks or she sustains some injuries like the dislocation of an arm or the breaking of the leg bone she is not considered a witch but a normal mortal being. But if the branch does not break or she suffers no injuries, she is considered a witch. Sometimes the woman is blind-folded and asked the name of the person standing before her: if the name she gives is correct, she is believed to be a witch. Sometimes she is thrown into a fast-running stream: if she is not carried away by the current but comes safely to the opposite bank without much exertion she is

considered to be a witch. Of course, if she apepars to be sinking, the men on the bank jump into the stream and save her.

Such 'witches' are subjected to a lot of harsh treatment. The *Panch* gather together and decide how she should be treated. Sometimes the witch is driven away into the forest to die there of hunger or to fall a prey to some wild animal. Or she is taken to the outskirts of the village and whipped, or chillies are put in her nose as this is supposed to divest her of her evil powers. In the Panch Mahals there are two cases on record, one wherein a witch was burnt to death and another in which a witch was cut to pieces by the sword. The Toranmal Bhils used to thrust chillies in a *dakan's* private parts.[12]

In this way crime in the Bhil society is of a varied nature. As Malinowski says of the Trobriandors, 'It is sometimes an outburst of passion, sometimes the breach of a definite taboo, sometimes an attempt on person or property (murder, theft, assault)'. Sometimes as Sellin says it is born of the law of another cultural group extended to them. Sometimes it is an alleged misuse of a supposed supernatural power against society and at other times it is an abnormal sex activity. The punishments for all these crimes are also varied, ranging from gentle reproof to death.

12. This fear of malevolent sorcery, a dread of the wizard or witch, is not an unusual cause of murders and man-slaughters among primitive peoples elsewhere also. Warner refers to such practices among the Murngin, Elwin cites cases from Bastar, Grigson corroborates Elwin and Malinowski also holds the same opinion.

CHAPTER XI

LANGUAGE OF THE BHILS

I

The Bhili dialects form a continuous chain between Rajasthani and Gujarati and Khandeshi and Marathi. In most cases, says Dr. Grierson, 'The Marathi influence is only of a superficial kind and the general character of the dialect remains Gujarati.'

Though the dialect remains Aryan even today, there seem to be some non-Aryan elements in it. Certain words, for example, do not appear to be of Aryan origin. Thompson says that about six per cent of the Bhili words are non-Aryan.[1] Some of them seem to be Munda: *Tahi,* a cow; *boto,* back. (Compare Mundari *tahi,* to milk a cow; and Kharia *bod,* back.) But it is not very safe to push this hypothesis very far.

There are a few points of Bhili grammar which apparently show some connection with Dravidian forms of speech: (a) Soft aspirated letters are commonly hardened: *kodo,* for *ghodo* (a horse) and *phai* for *bhai* (brother). A similar hardening of unaspirated soft letters also occurs in some Bhili dialects. This can perhaps be compared with the hardening of initial soft consonants in Dravidian: *karamu* for Sanskrit *gharma,* heat. (b) The neuter gender is sometimes used to denote female beings as in the case of Telugu or Gondi. Thus: *bairu,* a wife. (c) The pronoun *ha,* this, has the same form for the feminine and neuter genders, just as is the case with demonstrative pronouns in Telugu. (d) Finally take the suffix *n* of the past tense. It is of course quite possible that the suffix is identical with the Aryan *l*

1. I find that 60 per cent of these non-Aryan words given by Thompson are related to agriculture and 20 per cent to hunting and ornaments. Does this in any way show that the Bhils had an agricultural tradition earlier than is generally taken for granted?

in Marathi and other languages. On the other hand, it can be compared with the Dravidian suffix *n*. Compare: Tamil *odu-nen*, I ran. The Dravidian suffixn *n* has, in other dialects, a very wide use and this fact can perhaps be adduced in order to explain the *n* suffix in Bhili in other tenses than the past.

'But' says Grierson, 'they are not of sufficient importance to furnish a conclusive proof. We should however remember that the Bhils belong to Western India where we might reasonably expect to find remnants of the old Dravidian population and such strong grammatical characteristics as have just been mentioned make the supposition more plausible that the Bhils have once spoken a Dravidian dialect. It is even possible that their original language was a Munda form of speech which was in its turn superseded by a Dravidian tongue.'

II

Words and Sentences

A few common English words and simple sentences are given below with the Bhili equivalents and renderings; the Gujarati and Marathi equivalents are also given so that Bhili can be compared with both these languages.

WORDS

English	Bhili	Gujarati	Marathi
I	*ai*	*hu*	*mi*
Thou	*tu*	*tu*	*tu*
He	*to*	*te*	*to*
We	*amo*	*ami*	*amhi*
You	*tumi*	*tame*	*tumhi*
They	*te*	*te*	*te*
Mine	*ma*	*maru*	*majha*
Your	*tu*	*taru*	*tujha*
His	*to*	*tenu*	*tyache*
Ours	*ama*	*amaru*	*amache*

English	Bhili	Gujarati	Marathi
Your	*tuma*	*tamaru*	*tumache*
Their	*tiha*	*temanu*	*tyanche*
Hand	*ath*	*hath*	*hat*
Nose	*nak*	*nak*	*nak*
Mouth	*modhu*	*modhu*	*tond*
Head	*mundko*	*mathu*	*doke*
Chest	*chhati*	*chhati*	*chhati*
Foot	*pog*	*pag*	*pay*
Eye	*doa*	*akh*	*dola*
Tooth	*dat*	*dat*	*dat*
Lip	*chhudbdi*	*oth*	*oth*
Gold	*sonu*	*sonu*	*sone*
Iron	*lodhu*	*lodhu*	*loh*
Silver	*chandi*	*chandi*	*chandi*
Copper	*tabu*	*tabu*	*tabe*
Man	*mahu*	*manas*	*manus*
Woman	*theyee*	*stree*	*stree*
Child	*Poyro*	*poyro*	*porga, mul*
Son	*dikoho*	*dikara*	*putra*
Servant	*nokar*	*nokar*	*nokar*
Cultivator	*khedut*	*khedut*	*shetkari*
God	*dev*	*dev*	*dev*
Devil	*Putado*	*bhut*	*bhut*
Sun	*dih*	*divas, suraj*	*surya*
Moon	*chando*	*chando*	*chandra*
Star	*chandudya*	*taro*	*chandne*
Sky	*jug*	*akash*	*akash*
Fire	*ag*	*ag*	*ag*
Water	*pae*	*pani*	*pani*
House	*koo*	*ghar*	*ghar*
Tree	*chad*	*jhad*	*jhad*
Cow	*gavado*	*gay*	*gay*
Bull	*tadiyo*	*balad*	*bail*
Horse	*kodo*	*ghodo*	*ghoda*
Dog	*huno*	*kutro*	*kutra*
Cat	*binado*	*bilado*	*majar*

English	Bhili	Gujarati	Marathi
Cock	*kukdo*	*kukdo*	*kombada*
Camel	*utano*	*ut*	*ut*
Bird	*chido*	*chidi, pankhi*	*pakshi*
Go	*janu*	*javu*	*jane*
Sit	*bohnu*	*besvu*	*basne*
Beat	*denu*	*devu, marvu*	*marne*
Die	*moyi janu*	*mari javu*	*marne*
Run	*gugdhi janu*	*dodvu*	*dhavne*
Eat	*khahnu*	*khavu*	*khane*
Come	*avnu*	*avva*	*yene*
Stand up	*ubhu uthnu*	*ubhu thavu*	*uthne*
Give	*apnu*	*apvu*	*dene*
See	*palnu*	*jovu*	*pahane*
Up	*upo*	*upar*	*var*
Down	*pui*	*niche*	*khali*
Near	*paho*	*pase*	*javal*
Far	*chheto*	*chhetu*	*dur*
Before	*agol*	*agal*	*pudhe*
Behind	*fachal*	*pachhal*	*mage*
Who	*kono*	*kon*	*kon*
What	*kay*	*shu*	*kay*
Why	*ke*	*kem*	*ka*
When	*kodihi*	*kedi, kyare*	*kevha*
And	*ne*	*ne*	*ani*
But	*pan*	*pan*	*pan*
If	(Not used)	*jo*	*jar*
Alas	*hay hay*	*hay hay*	*hay hay*
Yes	*o*	*ha*	*hoy*
No	*naha*	*nahi*	*nahi*
A good man	*haro mati*	*saro manas*	*changla manus*
A bad boy	*nagu poyru*	*nago poyro*	*vait mulga*
Better	*kota haru*	*kartan saru*	*peksha changla*
Best	*haram haru*	*saraman saru*	*sarwottam*
High	*ucho*	*uchu*	*uch*
Higher	*kota ucho*	*karta uchu*	*peksha uch*
Highest	*ucham ucho*	*uchma uchu*	*sarvat uch*

SENTENCES

What is your name?

Bhili: *To kay nam?*
Gujarati: *Taru nam shu?*
Marathi: *Tujhe nav kay?*

How big is your horse?

Bhili: *To kodo kovdo hay?*
Gujarati: *Taro ghodo kevdo chhe?*
Marathi: *Tujha ghoda kevdha ahe?*

How far is that village from here?

Bhili: *To gam ahi dekhi koto seto podi i?*
Gujarati: *To gam ahithi ketlu chhetu pade chhe?*
Marathi: *Te khede yethun kiti dur ahe?*

How many sons are there in your father's house?

Bhili: *Tuma behka kooma kota hà dikaha hay?*
Gujarati: *Tara bapna gharma ketla dikara chhe?*
Marathi: *Tujhya vadilachya ghari kiti mulge ahet?*

I walked very much today.

Bhili: *Aj to ai jabbar chanyu.*
Gujarati: *Aj to hu jabbar chalyo.*
Marathi: *Mi aj pushkal chalalo.*

My uncle's son has married that man's daughter.

Bhili: *Ma kaka dikoho tya dikihi eri vehval koi he.*
Gujarati: *Mara kaka na dikarae teni dikari sathe lagna karya chhe.*
Marathi: *Majhya kakachya mulane tya manasachya mulishi lagna kele.*

There is a saddle of the white horse in my house.

Bhili: *Ma koom pando kodo jin hay.*
Gujarati: *Mara gharma dhola ghoda nu jin chhe.*
Marathi: *Majhya gharat pandharya ghodyache khogir ahe.*

Put the saddle on its back.

Bhili: *Ya boyda pe jin tek.*

Gujarati: *Ena barada par jin muk.*
Marathi: *Tyachya pathivar khogir basav.*

I have beaten his son very much.
Bhili: *Aj me pelan dikan jabbar dido.*
Gujarati: *Aje me pelana dikarne jabbar maryo.*
Marathi: *Aj mi tyachya mulas far marle.*

He grazes cattle on the top of the hill.
Bhili: *Holo dogo pe dogro sare.*
Gujarati: *Pelo dungar par dhor chare.*
Marathi: *To dongarawar gure charto.*

His brother is taller than his sister.
Bhili: *Tiya pavoho tiya boyi hi kota ucho hay.*
Gujarati: *Teno bhai teni ben karta uchho chhe.*
Marathi: *Tyacha bhau tyacha bahinipeksha unch ahe.*

He is sitting on the horse under the tree.
Bhili: *To chado thule kodo po botho hay.*
Gujarati: *Te jhad niche ghoda per betho chhe.*
Marathi: *To jhada khali ghodyawar basla ahe.*

Its price is two and a half rupees.
Bhili: *Ya kimat ben rupia ath ana hay.*
Gujarati: *Eni kimat adhi rupiya chhe.*
Marathi: *Tyachi kimat adhich rupaye ahe.*

My father lives in that small house.
Bhili: *Ma bakko hala hanna pogam rohe e.*
Gujarati: *Maro baj pela nana jhupda ma rahe chhe.*
Marathi: *Majha bap tya lahan gharat rahato.*

Give this rupee to him.
Bhili: *Ya rupiyu tyan ap.*
Gujarati: *Aa rupiyo tene apo.*
Marathi: *Ha rupaya tyala de.*

Bring those rupees from him.
Bhili: *Tya po rupiya magi ni av.*
Gujarati: *Teni pase thi rupiya magi layi av.*
Marathi: *Tyache kadun rupaya magun ghe.*

Beat him properly and tie him with a rope.

Bhili:	*Tyan de ne doada koi bad.*
Gujarati:	*Tene mar ne dorde kari badh.*
Marathi:	*Tyala changla mar de va dorani tyas badh.*

Draw water from the well.

Bhili:	*Kuva mai dekhi pae kadh.*
Gujarati:	*Kuva ma thi pani kadh.*
Marathi:	*Vihiriche pani kadh.*

Walk before me.

Bhili:	*Ma agol chan.*
Gujarati:	*Mari agal chal.*
Marathi:	*Majhya pudhe chal.*

Whose son is coming behind?

Bhili:	*Fachal kodo poyro avehe?*
Gujarati:	*Pachhal kono poyro avechhe?*
Marathi:	*Magun konacha mulga yet ahe?*

From whom did you buy this?

Bhili:	*Ye koda po vesato nid no?*
Gujarati:	*Aa koni pasethi vechatu lidhu?*
Marathi:	*He kona kadun vikat ghetle?*

From the shopkeeper of the village.

Bhili:	*Gamo dukandar dekhi.*
Gujarati:	*Gam na dukandar pasethi.*
Marathi:	*Khedya varil dukandara kadun.*

Father and mother have gone to worship God.

Bhili:	*Yahkin bahko devom goye ha.*
Gujarati:	*Ma ne bap devama gaya chhe.*
Marathi:	*Ai vadil devpujas gele ahet.*

He eats and also gives to me.

Bhili:	*To khahe na man be ape he.*
Gujarati:	*Te khay chhe ne mane pan ape chhe.*
Marathi:	*To khat ahe va malahi det ahe.*

The following is a specimen of the same dialect collected by Dr. Grierson:

Ek	*matina*	*ben*	*poyra*	*uta.*	*Ne*	*ta*
a	man	two	sons	had	and	them

vaina *hannae* *baycha* *kayo* *ke,* *bah* *milkatno*
of younger to father said that father property of

panchanti *bhag* *ma* *apa.* *Ne* *tiyo* *tiyona*
just share me give and he his

milkat *vati* *api.* *Ne* *thoda* *diha* *pa* *hanna*
property divided gave and few days after younger

payrae *badho* *tolo* *kayene* *chheto* *deh* *ma*
son all collect did distant country in

guyo; *ne* *tiya* *chhela* *ma* *pota* *punji*
went and it luxury in his property

udavi *taki.* *Ne* *tiyo* *badho* *vapari* *takyo.*
spent did and it all spent did.

Jaha *phachal* *te* *dehma* *moto* *kal* *podyo;*
It after that country big famine fell

ne *tiyan* *apda* *podva* *nagi.* *Ne* *te* *jaine*
and he difficulty fell begin and he going

tiya *gamchamena* *ek* *ne* *tiya* *riyo.* *Ne*
of that village in of one to him stayed and

tiyo *pota* *khetme* *bhunde* *varna* *haru* *tiyan*
he his field in swine guard for him

moknyo. *Ne* *ji* *hinga* *bhunde* *khatna* *ute*
sent and those nuts swine eating were

tiya *ma* *rekho* *pota* *ded* *poyna* *tiyan*
that in of own belly to fill he

marji *uti.* *Ne* *kadabi* *naha* *apiu.* *Ne* *te*
desire was and ever not gave and he

chetan *huo* *taha* *tiya* *kayo* *ke* *ma*
awoke was then him said that my

baycha *kohta* *majurane* *jakha* *mada* *he,*
father how many labourers many loaves of bread is

pan *ai* *to* *bhukhe* *mou* *hu.* *Ai* *to*
but I hungry dead am I get-

uthi *ne* *ma* *baycha* *ta* *jahi* *ne* *tiyan* *kohi*
ting up my father him will go and him will tell

ke *baycha* *me* *jugichhi* *ne* *to* *agan* *pap*
that father I deliberately your before sin

koyu *che.* *Ne* *amu* *to* *poyro* *kehna* *jeho*
did is and I your son to be called like

ai	*naha.*	*To*	*majura*	*na*	*jihdo*	*man*	*ek*
I	am not.	Your	labourers	of	like	me	one

gan.
consider.

III.

Grammar[1]

Below are given the declensions of some verbs in tenses. In all the examples, as in the first, the English form is followed by the Bhili equivalent, and then the Gujarati and Marathi ones for comparison in each horizontal line:

Different Tenses

PRESENT TENSE

To be:

English	Bhili	Gujarati	Marathi
I am	*ai ahaya*	*hu chhu*	*mi ahe*
Thou art	*tu ahay*	*tu chhe*	*tu ahes*
He is	*to ahaye*	*te chhe*	*tu ahe*
We are	*ami ahaye*	*ame chhiye*	*amhi ahot*
You are	*tumi ahaye*	*tame chho*	*tumhi ahat*
They are	*te ahaye*	*teo chhe*	*to ahet*
To beat:			
I beat	*ai deho*	*hu maru*	*mi marto*
Thou beatest	*tu deho*	*te mare*	*tu martos*
He beats	*to dehe*	*tu mare*	*to marto*

1. Dr. T. N. Dave gives the following morphological facts about the dialect:

In morphology, Bhili dialects are most closely related to Gujarati.

(1) The loss of neuter differentiates it from Gujarati but there are cases of neuter.

(2) In nouns, like Gujarati, Bhili has two types: the strong which differentiates gender and number and the weak which does not.

(3) There are four cases: Direct—(a) Subject (b) Object
Instrumental
Locative
Oblique

We beat	*ami detaha*	*ame mariye*	*amhi marto*
You beat	*tumi detaho*	*tame maro*	*tumhi marta*
They beat	*te detaha*	*teo mare*	*te martat*

To go:

I go	*ai jaho*	*hu jau.*	*mi jato*
Thou goest	*tu jaho*	*tu jay*	*tu jatos*
He goes	*to jahe*	*te jay.*	*to jato*
We go	*ami jataha*	*ame jaiye*	*amhi jato*
You go	*tumi jataha*	*tane jao*	*tumhi jata*
They go	*te jataha*	*teo jay*	*te jatat*

Continuous Present

To beat:

I am beating	*ai dehe e*	*hu maru chhu*	*mi marto ahe*
Thou art beating	*tu dehe e*	*tu mare chhe*	*tu marto ahes*
He is beating	*to dehe e*	*te mare chhe*	*to marto ahe*
We are beating	*ami dehe e*	*ame mariya chhie*	*amhi marat ahot*
You are beating	*tumi dehe e*	*tame maro chho*	*tumhi marat ahat*
They are beating	*te dehe e*	*teo mare chhe*	*te marat ahet*

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(4) To express other relations post-positions almost identical with the Gujarati ones are freely used.

(5) Dative *ne* is there; but there is *no, na, ni, nu.*

(6) *Ai* differs from *hu.* It can be derived from the Sanskrit word *aham,* I.

(7) Numerals are Gujarati; two is not *do* as in Hindi-Marwari; but *ben* as in Gujarati.

(8) Verbs almost similar to Gujarati are found. Future and present tenses are there; it has also created the continuous present and the perfect past as Gujarati has done. Mixed verbs are also there. (Ref: *Journal of the Gujarat Research Society,* Vol. X No. 1, January 1948).

Most of my findings, in most details, do not differ from Dr. Dave's.

Past Tense

To be:

I was	*ai athu*	*hu hato*	*mi hoto*
Thou wert	*tu athu*	*tu hato*	*tu hotas*
He was	*to atho*	*te hata*	*to hota*
We were	*ami atha*	*ame hata*	*amhi hoto*
You were	*tumi atha*	*tame hata*	*tumhi hota*
They were	*te atha*	*teo hata*	*te hote*

To beat:

I beat	*me didhu*	*me maryu*	*mi marle*
Thou beatest	*tu didhu*	*te maryu*	*tu marles*
He beat	*tya didhu*	*tene maryu*	*to marla*
We beat	*ami dido*	*ame maryu*	*amhi marle*
You beat	*tumi dido*	*tame maryu*	*tumhi marlat*
They beat	*te dida*	*tene maryu*	*te marle*

To go:

I went	*ai goya*	*hu gayo*	*mi gelo*
Thou wentest	*tu goya*	*tu gayo*	*tu gelas*
He went	*to goyo*	*te gayo*	*to gela*
We went	*ami goya*	*ame gaya*	*amhi gelo*
You went	*tumi goya*	*tame gaya*	*tumhi gelat*
They went	*te goya*	*teo gaya*	*te gele*

Continuous Past

To beat:

I was beating	*ai dednu*	*tu marto hato*	*mi marat hoto* .
Thou wert beating	*tu dednu*	*tu marto hato*	*tu marit hotas*
He was beating	*to dednu*	*te marto hato*	*to marit hota*
We were beating	*ami dedna*	*ame marta hata*	*amhi marit hoto*

You were beating	*tumi dedna*	*tame marta hata*	*tumi marit hota*
They were beating	*te dedna*	*teo marta hata*	*te marit hote*

PAST PERFECT

To beat:

I had beaten	*ai dednu*	*me maryu hatu*	*mi marle hote*
Thou hadst beaten	*tu dednu*	*te maryu hatu*	*tu marle hote*
He had beaten	*to dednu*	*tena maryu hatu*	*tyani marle hote*
We had beaten	*ami dedna*	*ame maryu hatu*	*amhi marle hote*
You had beaten	*tumi dedna*	*tame maryu hatu*	*tumi marle hote*
They had beaten	*te dedna*	*temne maryu hatu*	*tyani marle hote*

To beat:

I will beat	*ai dehi*	*hu marish*	*mi marin*
Thou wilt beat	*tu deho*	*tu marshe*	*tu marshil*
He will beat	*to dehi*	*te marshe*	*to maril*
We will beat	*ami dehu*	*ame marshu*	*amhi maru*
You will beat	*tumi deha*	*tame marsho*	*tumhi maral*
They will beat	*te dehi*	*teo marshe*	*te martil*

From the above declentions it transpires that the terminations for most of the verbs in the following tenses are:

(1) Base in the singlar=the root—the final *nu*=the second person singular impersonal.

(2) Base in the plural=Past participle.

(3) Base=(1)+*t*.

PRESENT TENSE

Person	Singular	Plural
1st	(1) + *ho*	(2) + *he*
2nd	(1) + *ho*	(2) + *ha*
3rd	(1) + *he*	(2) + *ha*

The *no* suffix is also used occasionally in the present tense.

CONTINUOUS PRESENT

1st	(1) + *he e*	(1) + *he e*
2nd	(1) + *he e*	(1) + *he e*
3rd	(1) + *he e*	(1) + *he e*

PAST TENSE[2]

1st	(1) + *yu*	(1) + *ya*
2nd	(1) + *yu*	(1) + *ya*
3rd	(1) + *yo*	(1) + *ya*

CONTINUOUS PAST

1st	(3) + *nu*	(3) + *na*
2nd	(3) + *nu*	(3) + *na*
3rd	(3) + *nu*	(3) + *na*

PAST PERFECT TENSE

It is the same as the continuous past tense above.

FUTURE TENSE[3]

1st	(1) + *hi*	(1) + *hu*
2nd	(1) + *ho*	(1) + *ha*
3rd	(1) + *hi*	(1) + *hi*

2. In the *Linguistic Survey of India* it is correctly said of the Bhili past tense: 'The past tense is usually formed as in Gujarati. As in that language and in Eastern Hindi a suffix *no* or *mo* is used as well as the ordinary suffix *yo*. *Lo* is often substituted for *no* just as *l* and *n* interchange in the suffix of the dative.'

3. The future, the verbal noun and the conjunctive particle are formed as in Gujarati.

The imperative is formed in the singular second person by taking away the ultimate *nu* from the root of the word. The past participle is formed by adding *ta* to (1).

Declentions of the noun *bap*, father, and the pronoun *ai*, I, are given below:

Father:

Case[4]	English	Bhili	Gujarati	Marathi
Nominative	Father	*bahko*	*bap*	*bap*
Objective	To father	*bahkan*	*bapne*	*bapala*
Instrumental	By father	*bahkae*	*bape*	*bapane*
Dative	To father	*bahkan*	*bapne*	*bapala*
Ablative	From father	*bahkapo*	*bapthi*	*bapakadun*
Genitive	Of father	*bahka*	*bapnu*	*bapacha*
Locative	In father	*bahkam*	*bapma*	*bapat*
Absolute	O father	*bahka ho!*	*bap re!*	*O bap!*

I:[5]

Case	English	Bhili	Gujarati	Marathi
Nominative	I	*ai*	*hu*	*mi*
Objective	Me	*man*	*mane*	*mala*
Instrumental	By me	*me*	*me*	*mi*
Dative	To me	*man*	*man*	*mala*
Ablative	From me	*mapo*	*marathi*	*majhyani*
Genitive	Mine	*ma*	*maro*	*majha*
Locative	In me	*mame*	*marama*	*majhyat*

4. Dr. Grierson gives the following case termination: *poyara-e*, by the son; *majura-ne*, to the servants; *poyario-thi*, from the daughters; *milkat-no*, of property; *deh-ma*, in the country; *kheta-me*, in the fields.

The past-position *dekhe* means from. All these except *e*=by and *dekhe*=from seem to be incorrect for all of them are Gujarati terminations; and they do not agree with those given by me. This discrepancy can be explained by the fact that he collected the specimens from literate persons who might have deliberately brought in Gujarati usages.

5. Grierson is not right here when he says, 'The personal pro-

Other personal pronouns are (only some forms):

Thou	*tu tu*
By thee	*tue*
Thy	*to*
You	*tumi*
To you	*tuma tuma*
He	*te, to, tio*
By him	*tio, tia, tie, tiane*
To him	*tian (e)*
His	*tia, tian*
They	*tio*

The following table gives the singular and plural forms of some Bhili words:

Word	Bhili Singular	Bhili Plural
Horse	*kodo*	*kode*
Cat	*Binado*	*Binade*
Bird	*chido*	*chide*
House	*koo*	*koe*
Girl	*poyri*	*poyrya*
River	*khadi*	*khadya*
Mother	*yahki*	*yahkya*

IV

Pronunciation

Stops

As the other Indo-Aryan languages Bhili has all the five classes of stops in full activity and their pronunciation is very clear and unambiguous. They have a well designed quality which is not much

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noun of the 1st person usually forms its nominative singular as in Gujarati, *hu*, I, with several slightly varying forms.' The form is *ai*.

affected by the surrounding vowels and consonants. Their places of articulation are more definite than even those of the stops in Gujarati (SG). Thus the palatalization of a consonant, which is almost regular in Gujarati (SG) when a palatal vowel or a palatal semi-vowel follows or finally in case of many feminine nouns which had *i* in old Gujarati, is totally absent in most of the Bhili centres.

Thus SG (ākh) = Bhili (ãkh)
SG (rāt) = Bhili (rāt)

Nasal Stops

In the Bhili dialects only two nasal stops are in regular use, the dental (n) and the labial (m). The retroflex nasal (ṇ) occurs uninitially as in SG but is pronounced so weak that it is often not heard at all. It uniformly nasalizes the preceding vowel, as

SG (Pānī) = Bhili (Pãĩ) = Water.

The really fully vital nasals are therefore only (n) and (m), which come in all positions.

Semi-vowels

In the Bhili centres (y) is pronounced so closed that a contact or a friction between the tongue and the hard palate is clearly heard; consequently in the vicinity of a palatal sound it is heard as the consonant (j) thus:

SG (kariye) = Bhili (karije) = (let us) do.

In Bhili (v) is bi-labial but it tends to become dento-labial fricative voiced when followed by an (i), as in Bhili dovhi = a laddle.

Liquids

The 'liquid' (r) is uniformly the same in all the dialects; it is a strong and rolled variety and differs from the corresponding SG sound which is a tapped one. The (l) is often confused with (n); otherwise it is the same as in SG. There appears to be some definite drawback among the Bhils with regard to the pronunciation of the (l); otherwise there appears ro be no reason why it should be confused with (n) with which it has but few common points. The SG (ḷ) tapped retroflex, lateral, voiced is totally absent in all these dialects.

Sibilants

The genuine SG sibilants are absent in all these dialects. The genuine dental sibilant (s) is changed to (h) unvoiced. The cerebral sibilant (s) of Sanskrit is pronounced in Bhili as (kh) in one available word *akhad*. In Samot, the palatal (s) is affricated and often pronounced as the dental sibilant (s).

The voiced aspirate pharyngeal fricative (h) is totally absent among the Bhils.

The Glottal Stop

A very interesting sound is the GS. It is an unvoiced sound. It is created by closing the glottis completely for a short time and pressing in from behind with the breath collected in the windpipe from the lungs. It is remarkable in sharpness and is called the GS. It is used to avoid the hiatus created by the dropping of an intervocalic consonant. It is shown by the symbol (?) in the following examples:
(be? yã), sisters; (ja? ã), men and (mā? ā), mine.

The Vowels

The vowels are thoroughly well defined both in quality and quantity and are easily distinguishable from one another, except perhaps at the end of words, where (ɻ), (ʊ), and (ɔ) show some confusion. Genuine diphthongs are very few and that helps to keep up the chastity of the vowels. The vowel (ʌ) = 'a' in stressed position is pronounced as (ʊ) short (as in Bengali but shorter), with the colour of the back vowel. Thus: pag is pog; ghar is koo and Magan is Mogon.

The vowel (i) is pronounced clearly in the interior of the word but it opens up considerably, is shortened and is confused with (ɛ) finally, as:

Nadi, river = Bhili (NAdɛ)

The final (ʊ), a back vowel is closed to (ɻ) as

SG (ghoṛs) = Bhili (koṛu)

Nasalization of Vowels

The vowels (i), (u), (ʊ), (ɛ), and (ā) are generally nasalized in the Bhil dialects. But the nasalization is very weak; but its four different shades can be distinguished in these dialects:

(I) The maximum nasalization is found generally in vowels (i), (u) in the interior of the word as (ũt).

(II) The less marked nasalization is found in (i), (u), (ɛ) and (ɔ); e.g. avahi̯, jahi̯, khahadu̯.

(III) The minimum nasalization is of (ɔ), (ɛ) and (ā) generally, finally and internally in the less predominant syllables.

(IV) There is no nasalization or there is just a colour of it in (a) in all positions, but practically finally as in (tsoka).

In all these grades, the nasalization is strengthened when a nasal consonant follows, as in (kan), an ear.

The loss of nasalization is a characteristic of the Bhil language. One of the practical results of the loss of nasalization in final position in Bhili is the confusion between the m and n forms of strong nouns and adjectives which perhaps played a role in abolishing the third gender from the Bhili dialects.

Treatment of Sounds

In the following word-examples the first words are Bhili and the last Gujarati:

(1) Vowels: SG (ʌ) = Bhili (ɔ), e.g. doh for dash, pog for pag, goyu for gaya.
= Bhili (d), e. g, a v d t y ɔ.
= Bhili (a), e. g. badda (all) for baddha.
= Bhili (i), e. g. tin for tran.

(2) Consonants: SG (n̤) = Bhili zero, e. g. pae for pani.
SG (l̤) = Bhili (l), e. g. agol for agal.
= Bhili (r),
= Bhili zero, e. g. doā for dola.
SG (l) = Bhili (n), e. g. nida for lidha (Some l words are pronounced clearly e. g. kale).
SG (s) = Bhili (h), e. g. hat for sat.
SG (h) = Bhili zero, e. g. ar for har, athi for hathi.
SG (r) = Bhili zero, e. g. koo for ghar, may for mori.
SG (jh) = Bhili (ch), e. g. chad for jhad.

(3) Devoicing of voiced stops: This is widespread but not universal, e. g.:

SG (g) = Bhili (k)
SG (gh) = Bhili (k) as in kodo for ghodo.
SG (d) = Bhili (t).

(4) Voicing the unvoiced stop, e. g. :
SG (motu) = Bhili (modu).

(5) Disaspiration :
SG (kh) = Bhili (k), e. g. soka for chokha.
SG (gh) = Bhili (g) = Bhili (k) as in koo.
SG (chh) = Bhili (ch), e. g. fuchdu for puchhadu.
SG (dh) = Bhili (d), e. g. kadya for kadhya.
SG (th) = Bhili (t)
SG (dh) = Bhili (d), e. g. dida for didha.
SG (bh) = Bhili (b), e. g. jib for jhibh.

(6) Aspiration of the Unaspirated stop, e. g. :
Bhili fachal for pachal.

CHAPTER XII

SPECIMENS OF ORAL LITERATURE

In this chapter I have given some Bhil songs sung on different occasions, about a hundred interesting riddles, *janaga*, and five folk-stories current among them. Five plays enacted by the Bhils, *sawangs*, are also given in this chapter.

I

Songs

Nursery Rhymes

These songs together with others given in chapter V are sung while putting a baby to sleep:

(1)

I swing thee baby,
Sleep, baby, sleep.
I tie pearls to thine cradle,
I tie *vinchhaya* to thine cradle.
The good baby sleeps.
Your father has gone out
With an axe on his shoulder;
He has gone to the forest.

(2)

O child! Your mother has gone out;
Sleep, baby, I swing you.
Your mother has gone for fishing;
Sleep baby, I swing you.
Your father has to wander
To bring you some *mamra* —
He brought *mamra* from the city;
Eat them; O baby, I swing you.

Love Songs

These songs, called *chhalia,* are sung on two different occasions. Firstly, before the Holi festival for many nights the Bhils dance, men and women together, and sing these songs. Secondly, these are sung in the folk-dramas which the Bhils enact. The *chhalia* are always in the form of a dialogue between a boy and a girl.

(1)

Boy: As you had promised in childhood,
So do come now, O girl!
Girl: You dare not demand me, O fool!
B.: Come soon to the tavern of the Parsi.
You were given liquor together with flowers,
Just a cup and you went tipsy!
The leaves of *kevada!*
And with a pot of water on your head
Come soon, O girl!
Let not your promise be forgotten;
Bid good-bye to your married one;
Wait for me in the forest.
G.: You dare not take me in your house, O boy!
And if you are brave come straight on!
B.: A waving of a silk handkerchief —
Let your married one lie where he is,
And let us go away!

G.: He will come to find me out.
B.: Then bid adieu to him from a distance.
G.: Buck up, you eunuch!
If you have a heart, come soon.
B.: The leaves of *kevada!*
We stayed for a night in the banana garden,
A banana plant came down and we were fined.
G.: Pay up the fine, O boy!
It took a lot, a lot of time for us to start thence.
Let us have the noon-rest in the *bungla.*

B.: I forgot my watch;
So wait at the station!
Or come to the fair of Chenburi, O girl!
See the wind is blowing the skirt of your clothes,
How you bend down and you get up!
The girl escaped by the high road!
You were kept in a bad house.
We planted a *mashru;*
Your bangles are shining
And you are so playsome, O girl!
The *mashru* goes on making a noise,
We have to go to the other side of the river.
Your bangles have something in them;
And where is the starlet adorning your forehead?
And the *surma* in your eyes,
Whose is it?
Many have come for *dava,*
Pay up their *dava.*
The train started and you began weeping;
You had been to the *urus,*
Otherwise where did you bring the clothes, dear?
Come to me before you get married.
Stop the ferryman and wait for me.
G.: The ferryman wants money.
B.: Then you have to pay if you want to go!

(2)

Boy: I fell in your love when young,
When young, O, I fell in your love.
Let us eat, drink and be merry, O girl.
Girl: What do you seek, O boy?
B.: If you want to go, let us go
And cross the Rewa.
Whose bangles you have put on?
The bangles are glittering very much —
Where should I wait for you?
G.: Wait for me on the road to the grazing grounds.
The night is dark;

So stay with me for the whole night.
B.: If you want you can stay.
I will give you whatever you want.
What a wonderful thing I got in you!
Ask for two hundred and I will give you
rupees three hundred.
Which is the village you come from?
G.: What's the use of asking my name?
If you are brave, do the work, O boy!

(3)

Boy: Where, O where, girl, you go so silently?
When you were young I tied you a thread.
Now if you volunteer, I will pull on with you,
Else by force, take you I will.
Bid good-bye form a distance.
But for today I hold up your skirt,
Come if you so desire!
The Narmada is lying across,
Where shall we cross it, O girl!
Don't deceive me;
Such a thing will react on you as well.
O friend, when do you start?
If we start, both of us start.
I kept you for nine nights in Navsari.
Girl: Bring a forest girl, O boy!
B.: Meet me on the river or at the *ghat,*
And then return home, O girl!

(4)

Don't worry about this, O dear,
I will give my life if you worry, O dear,
If you desire tell me.
The *Sarkar* has called us two, O dear,
Our name is on the *Sarkar's* paper.
Our name is known to the *Hajur;*
I will give my life for you, O girl.

Don't be afraid about that.
Let's eat, drink and be happy.
Let us go to the other bank,
O flower-coloured girl!
Turn behind and look;
The star is rising!
If you want to go
Let's to the fair,
Crossing the streamlet at Niklu.

(5)

Boy: A coloured bird! well are you prisoned in a cage!
Who is the *pinjarawallah?* Your husband?
A rose *gajra* adorns your hair knob;
What did he bring? Any of these?
Girl: No, nothing.
B.: You have put *surma* in your eyes,
And your bangles of sun and moon;[1]
O Dubli, your bangles shine very much!
Why do you hesitate like this, O girl?
You have come now in the street.
There is a mirror in your front room,
A box in your lap.
And a comb in your pocket,
A comb of *kachakda,* O girl.

(6)

Why did you not tell me beforehand,
O friend of mine!
I should have gone away with you,
O friend of mine!
Go to the fair of Sukal Tirth,
O friend of mine!
If we go, both of us shall go,
O friend of mine!

1. Sun and moon must have been painted on her bangles.

(7)

O dear! let's elope!
I will come soon.
I also will come, O my pearl dear!
O dear, I was sleeping,
You don't walk the straight road!
And you take a wrong road.
You are unknown to me;
Where otherwise should I walk?
O dear, I have a blouse,
I had seen it.
If you wish, O my pearl, dear!
Let me take it.
But you are a big man.
Let's go to the market;
And you buy me a blouse, O dear.
But a single blouse will cost
One rupee and four annas.
Wherefrom shall I bring it?
But then I gave it, O my pearl, dear!
You bought me a blouse;
Now I want *wankadas.*
Buy me those, O my pearl, dear!
Alright, I bought you those also.
How shall you get pleased? O my pearl, dear!
Why are you so obstinate, my pearl?
Now my desires are satisfied.
Girl: And we took the high road;
Boy: O we took the high road,
Don't wait anywhere.
G.: But we sat down to smoke, O pearl, dear!
We took the high road, and returned home.

(8)

To gossip with you I called you on the Divali,
O *merali.*
I did not allow you to go away for a single night,
O *rodali*

I invited you one day and then did not allow you
to go, O *merali.*
But then I left the shameless one! O *rodali.*
Let's go to the Selamba fair,
You brought me to the Selamba fair, O *merala.*
The sign at night is a yellow *dagali!*
You invited me, O *merala.*
There is nothing on the way, O *merali*
We have left the village and the home, O *rodali;*
And stopped in Kundi-Amba, O *merala.*

(9)

The officer calls me!
And they brought me at midnight, O *merali;*
The clerk reads out my name:
Where do you live?
I am of Pipri Division, O *merali*
They left in Kundi-Amba, O *merali;*
So we stopped here in Kundi-Amba;
And stayed in the *Sarkari* quarter, O *merala!*
The clerk reads out our names, O dear.

(10)

Let's go away dear, let's go,
You called me here, how big you are!
I left you in Kundi-Amba.
Then you reached the Big State,
Now you are in the Big State.
Let's go away dear, let's go.
We stopped here in the Big State.
And the police may write down our names!
I won't come further, now
Where have you brought me?

(11)

I was sleeping in the *juwar* field;
You jumped over the fence.

And I invited you, dear.
I recognised your steps,
When I was sleeping in the shed in the *juwar* field.
You jumped over the fence.
And I invited you, dear.

(12)

Boy & Girl: I drank in the Korai fair
And fell down tipsy on the road.
B.: They come to take you home;
They take down your name.
G.: Where do you take me, *roda?*
I fell down tipsy,
Who is it that comes to get me up?
It's my sister's husband, Oh!
I don't go with him, *joda.*
Let's go away, *merala.*
My famous *merala!*

(13)

Boy: You do not attend to the boy who comes
But you try to fish for another!
He gave you a *paser* of liquor;
You fell down drunk.
He measured a *paser* of liquor
And by that bought you up.
While going, you walk, then you sit down.
We went to see the Holi
But said not a word, O dear.
After the rainy season you left him also
And fished for another.
You want a *phetawala*
And you also say,
'I want the old friend too.'
Him you also left
And signed to a cap-wearing chap, O dear!

(14)

Girl: My famed lover will get a name.
We have reached the *raj;*
The Sagbara people are fishing now.
It is a great country, dear.
You deceived me in Pipli.
Boy: You wept, therefore, aloud
And the old man sat down.
G.: Then came Ramsing
And took down our names;
He brought us to Dediapada
And kept us in the Police Thana.

(16)

I have *kavach* on my blouse,
I am burning, Oh!
Though I have a horse, I can't go further;
We are going to see the Holi in Taloda.
Taloda is a big city and we reached there.

(17)

To see the city you left your cook-wife!
And reached Sagbara.
You stopped there.
I met you in the *raj.*
If you murder anybody here
The police will take you away.

(18)

Old Rewlo calls,
He has a musical gourd.
Rewlo has an axe on his shoulders.
He has a *tonki.*
Let us go, Rewlo,
Let us go very far;

Let us go to the market.
Let Rewli *dosi* stay alone,
We will go to Jambiapada.
Rewlo has gone.
We'll go, O Rewli *dosi,*
A small boy follows us, O *dosi,*
He does not leave us!
He wants puffed rice.
O man! take a long route,
Walk faster.
Let's go to the market.
We reached Akkalkuva,
There we met a Mussalman.
Good-bye! O Mussalman!
How are you here, Rewlo *dosa!*

(19)

Boy: I can't do without you even for a moment;
If love has to be made, we shall love each other.
Why can't I do without you, my *chhel?*
Girl: Useless you shall loaf about, O fancy one!
There is nothing in me, O beautiful one!
B.: Not all are my friends, you only are my life.
Don't go away, O my *chhel.*
G.: Do entreat me if you desire, O *chhel.*
B.: We stayed for the night in the banana garden;
The plant broke down and we were fined.
G.: Keep away form the road, O girl!
Make a seat in the open fields and wait there.
B.: The *Panch* wants fine,
And your *dej* has to be found.
G.: Why worry about that?
Pay that up and join me soon, O my *chhel.*

(20)

I don't like anything without you, O girl!
Let's go away to some other village.

We took the road and had some money;
Money got exhausted and our love disappeared!
The nights are barren without you, O girl!
This is my *Ram-Ram* for the last time, dear.

(21)

Boy: Let's go away if you so desire;
But where do we go?
We will go to the other bank of Rewa
And go passing many ghats.
Girl: Speak with one voice, boy,
You can't do anything.
B.: What is it that you have said?
There is no interest without you, girl.
G.: Speak with one tongue, boy.
Where did I see you alone?
B.: What's your wish girl?
G.: That which is yours, O boy.

(22)

Give me a promise;
But you give a false pormise!

(23)

Let's go away, *rodali*
Why tarry, O dear?
Let me yoke the bullocks
And let's fly, O *jodali.*

(24)

Let's see the Kadio Dungar
Let's go to the Kadio Hill.

(25)

O my dear, I give you *bidi* leaves;
Give me water. It's very hot.

Give me water and let me cool my inside;
O dear! I give you *bidi* leaves.

(26)

The police Dungryo called me at midnight
And brought me here.
I fall at your feet, Damania;
Don't take me there.
He will write down our names
And take us before the *Saheb lok.*
What have you brought?
'Empty-handed, Sir.'
That is no *gentmin* in Kundi-Amba.

(27)

Come here at midnight,
We will go away.
Saheb, I will lead your horse.
We are poor folks!
Let's go.
Come here at midnight.
And we'll go away.
Night will be lighted for us
And we have come as far as this village.
If he asks our names we'll give an apt answer.

Marriage Songs

INVITATION

Before a marriage is celebrated, relatives have to be invited. The following songs are sung at the happy house which invites the kins:

(1)

This side flows the Ganga; on that runs the
Jamna deep,

My dear little sister sits in between and reads a letter!
O dear, your brothers are all away, how do you feel?
You invite them, riding on horses; how do you feel?
O dear, your sisters stay in foreign lands, far away!
You invite them and seat them on *patala;* how do you feel?
Don't worry and eat your heart; surely will your brothers come;
Don't be worried, dear, your sisters too will come.

(2)

Yoke the new cart, O brother,
And drive it with speed, O brother!
Let the ropes break, O brother,
Yoke the new cart and let me sit for a distance, O brother!

(3)

Men from your town, O *ben,*
Have not arrived as yet?
I look at your booth!
They are all rogues,
The men from your town, O *ben!*
I look at your booth.
Bells are heard echoing in the hills;
Brothers, methinks, are coming,
The bells are jingling in the hills.

RUBBING OF TURMERIC

After the relatives have come, the bride and the bridegroom (at their respective homes) are rubbed with turmeric and curds, when the following songs are sung:

(1)

The yellow and green turmeric
Is milled in the hand-mill.

The 'boy' turmeric
Is pounded in a mortar;
We sisters apply
The yellow and green turmeric;
We apply turmeric
To our brother.
The foolish girl
Is rubbed with a donkey's urine.

(2)

Turmeric is alone,
It is stored on the attic,
It is applied to the bride;
It is weighed in the *takada.*
Turmeric is alone,
It is quite alone.

(3)

O dear sister! get turmeric from Tolgam;
Mix the turmeric with water, sister.
Get *sadis* from Tolgam, sister;
Get blouses from Tolgam, sister;
Get ornaments from Tolgam, sister —
O sister dear, get all these from Tolgam .

(4)

Turmeric is being powdered,
The hand-mill is moving;
It is your marriage, brother!
Turmeric is being powdered.
The girl's marriage, brother,
Is no marriage.
Powder the turmeric, rub it to our brother,
It is his marriage!

MARRIAGE

Then the actual marriage with a number of ceremonies comes. The first of the following songs is sung when the bride is danced by her relatives and the second and the third when ornaments and clothes (brought by the other party) are put on the bride:

(1)

Slowly, O *ladi,* step slowly,
Pebbles will prick your feet!
Ride your brother's back;
Ride your *mama's* back;
Ride your uncle, *ladi*:
Go slowly, my *ladi* dear;
Pebbles will prick your feet,
Ride your brother's back.

(2)

O *wevan,* what have you put round the neck of our sister?
O *wevan,* give her a necklace of *kidia* for her neck.

(3)

He went to the cloth market
And brought me a short cloth, O *Veriu!*
He brought the short cloth,
And how can I tuck it up?, O *Veriu!*
If I tuck it up on the front
The end at the back falls short, O *Veriu!*
If the back is tucked up right
The front one goes amiss, O *Veriu!*

JOKES AND ABUSES

Then follows a shower of abusive songs from both the parties which try to vie with each other in abusing each

other. Here are some songs which show the variety of epithets used:

(1)

The boy brought a second wife.
The boy married a second wife —
He wanted a second one, (as)
He had married a sick girl.
Now see how he dances!
He has married a second wife.

(2)

Brother went to see the girl, *Rano jurtudi,*
The girl was blind, *Rano jurtudi!*
We went to see the boy, *Rano jurtudi,*
The boy was lame, *Rano jurtudi!*
He went to see the groom, *Rano jurtudi,*
The groom was lame, *Rano jurtudi!*

(3)

Why try to run away, O girl,
Your father is a great miser,
Why do you want to run away?
Girl, your brother is a big miser!
One full pot of liquor we'll take;
Why do you try to run away?
Your brother, girl, is a big miser.

(4)

The girl is going.
But why did you allow her to grow so big?
Where had you kept her?
Perhaps you had hidden her in a box.
The girl has twelve fathers,
She has thirteen fathers;
The girl is going.

(5)

We will go to crush the girl by night,
We have seen the girl while dancing.
We want two rupees and a half,
We will go to Nanded to drink;
Her pockets are filled by others,
But we are not afraid, O girl.
That's a matter of custom —
Put it like that, brothers.

(6)

The foolish one is driving
The horse brought by my brother.
The slave one is driving
The horse brought by my brother.

PARTING

After dances and other ceremonies are over, the bridegroom's people take leave of the bride's party and go home with the valuable trophy. The relatives of the bride are very sorry to send her to her *sasra* and they sing the following songs. The last song of this set is sung by the bridegroom's party in reply, perhaps, to the other's grief:

(1)

O cuckoo of the mango tree! where are you going?
The cuckoo who invites sisters, seats them on *patalas;*
She who invites her *mama,* who comes on horseback;
She who invites brothers, who ride good steeds;
O cuckoo of the mango tree!
Where are you going?

(2)

Mother, dear, now bid her good-bye.
Let *kumkum* be brought,

Let ghee of cows be brought,
Let us bid her good-bye.

(3)

Gujari dear had to leave her father's lap;
O, how she weeps!
She took to the *sasu's* lap
How much she weeps!
Gujari dear had to leave her brother's realms
She has to settle in her *sasra's* realms!
How much she weeps!
How much she frets!

(4)

We shall take her away, O man, we shall
Keep weeping, O women, keep weeping.
Come to console us, O women, to console us;
Stare at us with open mouths, O girls!
Come to take her, O boys, to take her
Weep, O girls, keep on weeping.
We will have to weep, brothers!
Do take her, O brothers.
Keep her as you keep your son, O brothers!

AT THE HUSBAND'S HOUSE

The new wife does not feel at home in the strange surroundings and amidst the 'different' people for a few days. Her feelings are well depicted in the following songs:

(1)

I go to my *sasra*: my mother-in-law does not speak with me.
I emerge from the house, the afther-in-law becomes mute!
I go to my *piyar;* and O my mother, how much she talks to me!

As I go out from the house there, my father calls
out for me;
In my *sasra,* the *jethani* will not speak with me;
I go out and my husband's brother stares mute at
me!

(2)

A neem tree near my house stands
In the horribly hot summer;
The neem blossomed sweet.
Parent's love is incomparable:
I searched out the whole city,
None like my mother and father could be found;
The neem blossomed sweet.
We searched out the whole city,
None like my uncle and aunt was found;
The neem blossomed sweet.
We searched out the whole city
None like my brother and his wife,
None like my sister and friends could be found;
The neem blossomed sweet.

(3)

While coming thorns hurt my feet;
While going I am knocked down.
May you die, O cursed one,
You have given me in such a miserable place.

Festival Songs

WORSHIP SONGS

The following song is sung while worshipping a goddess:

(1)

O boys! go where the chain is flung,
O boys! go where the Kamli is beaten,

O boys! the pot borke when the end struck it,
Go where the chain is flung! O boys!

When somebody is ill the *Badwo* sings songs like the following in order to cure him. These are called *mandol* in the Panch Mahals:

(2)

I bow to the Virgin Land,
I bow to the Sun, the Moon,
I bow to the Auspicious Star,
I bow to the Lilagar Dungar,
I bow to the Kasumbor God,
I bow to Soran and Moran;
I bow to the One-Footed Country,
I bow to the Country of a Hundred Queens,
I bow to the Mahisagar River,
I bow to the Sitala Mata,
I bow to the Field of Rupa Bai.

* * *

Mine is golden slab.
Call Narji, the goldsmith;
The bellows were blown,
The hearths were red hot,
The slag became liquid;
It was poured through a strainer.
Let miseries be strained!
Straining was over;
An idol of Ganges was made.
O lady, my feet are godly,
O lady, my ears are big.
O sister, white are the legs,
And monkeys of Fyana
And horns curved up,
My youth is raw.

Holi Songs

The following songs are sung on and before the Holi Day.

(1)

Holi Bai has now started, O Thakur,
Her husband is Mashru Dev, O Thakur!

(2)

A *bawa* has ascended the hill,
And sits covering his face;
We gave him a seer of *khichdi;*
The *bawa* liked it.
We gave him a seer of *dal,*
The *bawa* liked that also.
We gave him a seer of vulvas,
The *bawa* intercoursed for the whole night.
Holi has a *motho* on her back,
The boy does not sit down,
Holi will speak with fire,
The boy will swing his hips.

(3)

Come, O Holi Bai, come!
Ascend the long mountain and come!
Diwali wants a he-buffalo or a goat;
Holi wants a coconut only.
The plaiting is as big as a rope,
The leaves as big as a hut.

(4)

O friend, let us cut *hedi,*
The chillies have ripened.
While cutting *hedi* the hand was cut.
The chillies have ripened.
The man went to silence Holi,

He met a *vepari* and sat talking there?
Cold or dirty or mad,
I like the *vepari.*

(5)

The *ber* tree of the Parsi is ripened,
It was sold away by a Bhangi.
In between the Bhangi's buttocks are *rekya;*
Boys picked them out to eat:
One's name is Hirlo Gondu,
The naughty boy is still standing there.

(6)

The *Mewasi gher* has come,
The starlet has shown.
The *Mewasi gher* has come,
Thakur has gone to the *raj.*
What shall he bring?
He will bring many things,
The *Mewasi gher* has come.

(7)

She is very beautiful,
As white as milk.
Enough! Your rice has already been washed.
How beautiful is she?
That man will sleep with you;
He will break you.

(8)

Green is the plant and green is the tree;
She is a buffalo, *lilo jhalaria.*

(9)

Where from the *gheriya* come?
They ask for water.

Where from is a horse let loose?
It has bells round its neck.
It goes on running,
It is from Chindi, and goes on dancing.

(10)

Something fell in water
And water became turbid,
O you foolish girl!
Your mother pats her curves and corners.

(11)

The horse is tied to the branch of a mango tree,
The horse got lose and ran into the field.
The bridle is caught by that girl, the green bridle!
Let the horse remain tied under the booth;
The girl was gone under the booth to sleep with me.
You had promised to sleep with me;
But instead of that where had you gone?

(12)

The plant is bitter and sweet is the paddy;
That girl wants the sweet paddy;
Our brother gives her the sweet paddy
And that girls accepts the sweet paddy.

(13)

Once in a twelve-month has come Holi Bai;
She has come and immediately will go away.
She tells her sister Diwali,
'Let us, sister, divide our days:
You go in winter and early summer I go.
You take sugar-cane and *vatis* do I take;
Gogu is your music and mine is *talo;*

You will drum and I will pipe,
Once in a twelve-month has come Holi Bai.

(14)

Holi Bai prepares a silver pole
And she makes a golden flag.
I will get you a cart and in it will be put the silver pole.
Take these chickens, O Holi Bai;
Take the silver pole, O Holi Bai;
I get you the pole in your cart;
I put the flag in your cart.

(15)

If you eat too much you will fall ill, *Pipi lol,*
That girl asks for grains, *Pipi lol.*

(16)

Bitter are the pieces and bitter is the plant,
The plant had climbed the booth —
The plant of the garden goes straight in the garden!

(17)

We have sown the *galka* seed in the garden;
Now they have sprouted in the garden.
We have sown *bajri* in the Tapti basin
And it has begun sprouting.

(18)

The *ber* tree is ripened —
No, it is not ripened.
That is an old woman —
No, that is not an old woman.

(19)

Let him be coloured,
Fell her in the river and sleep with her.
Somebody sleeps with that girl;
Let him sleep.
See how both of them sleep!

(20)

The tall horse has fled,
The boy got angry;
He took that girl
And slept with her.

(21)

The tom-tom beats,
Come for a round of dance in the cool night.
My brother has gone for shikar, O! he is alone,
That girl went in the cattle-shed.
My brother fell in love with her, he was alone.
My brother fired a shot, he was alone!

(22)

My brother tied a swing to a tamarind tree;
That girl was sitting on it,
It broke,
She broke her buttocks too!

(23)

O you damned girl,
Don't cross my way,
If you want to bring me fifty pots of water.

(24)

A piece of betel,
See her gait.

She is enjoyed by a boy.
But how funny is her private part!

(25)

She asks all trees to observe Holi and Diwali;
The *wevan* will come and what will she give you?

(26)

Holi has a *motho* on her back,
The boy does not return;
Holi has a *buzaru* on her back,
The boy is enjoyed by the *buzaru*.

(27)

What is the first thing to be done?
Let the horse be saddled first.
What must be done next?
Let the seeds be planted then.

(28)

In the sands the *dhangri* has been lying.
O Thakri, your vulva is very good.
O dyer, let her be dyed.
Who is the dyer in this village?
Thakur is the dyer in this village.

(29)

The *ber* tree is not sown,
It has not grown also.
One *ber* tree is sown,
No, none is sown,
Four are sown; none is sown.
Five are sown; none is sown.

(30)

We had gone to the other bank
And we have come back,
We have come putting on a petticoat;
We have also put on a *dadni* and a *panjari;*
Gahde and *boihi* we have put on and we are here,
We have *rel* and *pijna* and *bachkya* and we are here.

(31)

The girl had gone under a tree,
The daughter-in-law was coming,
And she was looted on the way.

(32)

Small is the *mirhiri*
And large are its leaves.
The girl was coming here;
She was held up by the cow-boys.

(33)

The *jinjava* plant of the village,
The *jinjava* of our village
Has blossomed;
The vulva of that girl
Has blossomed too.

(34)

A horse as good as silver
Was tied under the tamarind tree;
On it sat our brother —
The horse was under the tamarind tree.

(35)

The *khakhar* is a-blossom and other trees have flowered,
The *samor* has borne some buds.
The flowers of *samor* are red, O Mother Holi,
The days are so dear now.
Diwali wants buffaloes and calves,
And Holi wants only coconuts.
The colours of Holi and *Dhuladi,*
O Holi Ma, they are very good.
The tom-tom beats gagam gagam!
The Bhils danced a dance;
The Patel's wife has fasted,
She goes to worship the Holi,
She got hungry and
She went on eating *daria.*

(36)

A chilly plant was planted on the hill.
It has very tiny leaves,
The leaves are tiny,
And the *gherias* danced very slowly!
While on the way to Pansoli
We came across a tavern.
O Parsi, give us your liquor.
Let us taste it,
I desire to taste it;
O, I long to go tipsy!
I want to go tipsy and I want to dance,
Put your ornaments in mortgage,
But let us drink, O *gheria!*

(37)

Holi is going to her father-in-law's place:
Clean her hair,
The mango tree has blossomed in the *raj,*

Let us clean her hair
And fill *sindur* in its parting,
The mango tree has blossomed in the *raj.*
A star is twinkling on her forehead
And a streak of collyrium is in her eyes;
The mango tree has blossomed in the *raj.*
Let us dress her in a *chundadi,*
Let her *jhanjar* tremble slow!
The mango tree has blossomed in the *raj.*
Let us send her now to her *sasra:*
O Holi Bai, come soon next year!

(38)

The *khakhar* has blossomed red,
The *Wania* goes to the *Mochi* street;
My house is just near theirs,
The *Wania* goes to the *Mochi* street;
O *Vasawo,* come to see this!
The *Wania* goes to the *Mochi* street.

Ras

Following are two songs called *ras* which are sung by the Bhils in praise of some great personage of the past or some mighty deed.

(1)

The first one commemorates the valour of the Bhils and the Rajputs who fought against Bahadur Khan of the Suba of Baroda when he invaded Rajpipla in 1700 A.D.

The streets of Bhilod are very narrow,
In it was ensnared Bahadur Khan.
The Sondachiyas were so brave
That fallen on the ground
They would shoot arrows!
The Golachiyas, the lords of Gola,
Dealt blows on the back.

The Khers were strong as the stumps of the
kher tree;
They cut down the camels of Bahadur Khan.
The Fichwadiyas were so firm of hands
They cut at a stroke the spines of his horses!
The Fichwadiyas from the trees
Attacked him with stones thrown from the slings.
On the road to Pantalawadi
Bahadur was enjoying a horse-ride:
(But said he) 'Let me go alive from Bhilod.
If I come back I will eat a swine!'

(2)

The second *ras* speaks of the strength of Damji, the Bhil chieftain of Sagbara who actively helped the King of Rajpipla, when the then British Administration in India tried to take the latter into custody:

Damji was the *Vasawo* of Sagbara
And Bahadurio his *Vaji;*
Damji came to see the King,
His Horse was greenish in colour;
It was shining wonderfully,
It had a silvern saddle.
He took it a little back
And pressed his heels against it.
The horse jumped three jumps together.
In front of him and behind him
Crowds of Bhils were marching;
Damji had a golden ring.
A note came from the Government,
In Damji's house there was a copper pot.
There was a call to him from Ratanpur.
Prepare bricks, both *kachha* and *pucca,*
And build a hundred bridges;
Damji had a silken thread in his house.
Put that man's daughter in jail;
Damji had a rope for his elephant;
Tie tightly that man's wife.

'I will cut out forests and trees and construct roads
along the hills.'
He took five guns with him
And gunpowder was getting ready together with it.
'O Mother Karjan, I fall at thy feet;
I am thy servant.
O you hated one, take off your hat!
Otherwise I will auction your corpse!'

Rain Songs

The following songs are sung by the Bhils, inviting the rains to come:

(1)

For you the temple of Mahadev!
Play, Ambaji!
For you which god plays on his flute?
Play, Ambaji!
For you Hanuman plays on his flute,
Play, Ambaji!

(2)

O Clouds, bring us rains!
O Rains, drizzle in tiny drops,
O Clouds, bring us rains!
O Rains, come to the wells,
O Clouds, bring us rains!
O Rains, come to the banks of tanks,
O Clouds, bring us rains!
O Rains, look at our cows,
O Clouds, bring us rains!
O Rains, look at our goats,
O Clouds, bring us rains!

(3)

The rains are in the black clouds,
And the lightning is in the white ones, O dear!

There in a remote corner
Rains are heard thundering, O dear!
The rains have come murmuring,
The waters in the *khadis* are running noisily.

II.

Bhil Dramas

Sawangs

The *sawangs* are Bhil dramas where story, song, dance and music are combined. They are not very long pieces; each lasts for about a quarter of an hour. Any Bhil can take part in the *sawang,* wherein both the men's and women's parts are played by male actors. These are secular plays which can be enacted anywhere at any time. I got some of them arranged to see them myself. They have still a religious significance also. It is believed that the *songadia,* as the actors are called, were born from the left side of Panud, the goddess from whom all things had taken birth. In each fair, the *songadia* have to be present and enact before the god or the goddess. A Bhil sometimes takes a vow also to the effect that if a particular desire of his is fulfilled he will get the *songadia* to act before the deity. He pays for their food and drink and also meets other expenditure.

Though the *sawang* can be enacted any night, a moonlit night is preferred because there is natural light; otherwise it mgiht be performed in the light of the fire or small hurricane lamps. It does not require a stage and can be performed in any open place where the actors will get a circular ground of about 15 feet radius. Round this circle sit the spactators, women and children in one block, men in another and the guest, if it is a special show for him—in a third block on a *charpai.* There is no much of make-up. The actor who plays the role of a woman, of course, dresses like a woman even as an 'old man' will tie a head-scarf round his head. In most cases actions and shapes will convey the meaning and the dramatic character. I give below some *sawangs,* as little modified as posisble, in a written form.

1

(Enter a boy and his father)

Boy: Father, I will go to the bazar to sell *til* there.

Father: No, you shall not go.

Boy: I must go and get some money by selling it.

Father: All right, but don't get deceived. Bring home *marcha* (chillies) and a *bandi.*

Boy: Sure, father.

(Exit the boy and the man. Enter a girl and her father).

Girl: Father, I will go to the bazar to see the fair.

Father: No, there is work at home.

Girl: Father, I will come very soon.

Father: Go then.

(Exit both of them. On the way to the bazar the girl and the boy meet).

Boy: I bluffed to my father.

Girl: I told lies to mine.

(They reach a town).

Boy: Let us go to the liquor shop.

Girl: Yes, let us go.

(There they drink quite heavily and go tipsy and dance and then go round the shops.)

Boy: *Seth,* Give me a *bandi.*

Shopkeeper: Here is a *bandi.*

Boy: Give me *mari* (black pepper).

Shopkeeper: Here you are. Give me ten rupees.

Boy: I have this much. Take your money.

(The shopkeeper takes all the money, and the boy and the girl go. They dance on the road and the girl falls down. The boy goes to her father and sings:)

Boy: O *Mama,* come, your daughter
Has fallen down tipsy
On the road to the Korai fair.

(The boy and the girl's father go and bring her home. The boy's father comes.)

Father: How much money did you get for the *til*?
Boy: This much. (Shows his three fingers.)
Father: Where is it?
Boy: The *Bania* took it away.
Father: For what?
Boy: For this is the *mari* you asked me to bring.
Father: (Beating him) I wanted *marcha,* you fool.
Boy: (Dances) Don't beat me father. Here is the *bandi* you wanted.
Father: (Still beating him) I wanted a *bandi.*

(They dance and go away)

(2)

(A Bhil woman is ill. Enter her father-in-law and his son, her husband.)

Father-in-law: Wave this *pudi* round her head.

(The son does so.)

Father-in-law: Now take it to the *Badwa.* He will find out what is wrong with her.
Son: Yes, father.

(He goes away. After some time enter the *Badwa,* shaking, and the son)

Son: *Bapji,* look into this *pudi.*
Badwa: I know, I know.

(He goes on shaking more and more)

Son: Tell me *Bapji.*
Badwa: This is an animal.....Er.....
Son: N.....
Badwa: Yes, it is on a human being, a woman,....
Son: Yes, father, How well divined!
Badwa: Your moth.....
Son: N..... *Bapji*
Badwa: It is on your wife, I know.
Son: Yes *Bapji.*

(And the *Badwa* shakes still more)

Badwa: She is young.....She had gone to the *khadi*.. and there....

(The son goes on saying 'yes' every time)

Badwa: I can tell you the name of the woman who has cast an evil eye on her. You have some suspicion and the woman who is your neighbour to the....

Son East, *Bapji?*

Badwa: Yes, that is what the gods tell me. (Shaking) Kalo Waro, Kalo Puvan, Dharti Mata, *Dakan khai.....*

(The son looks aghast and awe-stricken).

Badwa: You will give me two fowls.

Son: Yes, father.

Badwa: And seven bottles of *horo.*

Son: (A little out of his wit) That will be too much for me, *Bapji.*

Badwa: Then the *dakan* will not leave your wife.

Son: I will give, father.

Badwa: And a buffalo calf.

Son: I will, that too.

Badwa: And I will sleep with your wife.

(The son is bewildered. At this time a *dakan* comes and attacks the *Badwa.*)

Dakan: I will eat your nose, I will eat your head, I will eat your buttocks too. I will tear your clothes, I will tear off your skin. I am not a fool; *Badwa,* you cheat people.

Badwa: Leave me, I will not do it again.

(The *dakan* and the son dance and the *Badwa* looks on.)

(3)

(Enter a boy and a girl grazing their cattle.)

Boy: Let us dance.

Girl: Yes, let us.

Boy: See how strong I am.

Girl: It is very good.

(They dance round and round. A tiger comes.)

Boy: O, I am afraid.

Girl: I am not. It's a dog.

(The tiger roars)

Boy: O, it will kill me. Let me hide between your legs. (And he tries to enter in between her legs.)

Girl: (Goes on moving about trying to thrust him aside) You fool, you coward, my *mama's* son, you impotent one!

(She gives him many more *galis*. The tiger goes away; and they dance.)

(4)

(Enter a Bhil. Then several Bhils, one behind the other, holding one another's skirt, follow him.)

Bhil: I am going beyond the Tapti with these twelve carts to sell *adad*.

(He moves on. Enter a man.)

Bhil: *Haga*, I want some firewood.

Man: These palm trees belong to me. You can take them if you like. But they are very strong. I don't think you will be able to cut them.

Bhil: Oh! That is nothing. I won't require even an axe. My penis is very strong; I can fell them with just a stroke of it.

(He enacts it.[2])

Man: Where can I keep these trees? My carts are all full. Right, I will carry them on my penis.

(He enacts it; goes forward and reaches the Tapti.)

Bhil: How to cross the Tapti? Yes, yes, my private part is sufficiently long and strong. I will place it on the banks and the carts will easily go over it.

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2. Though actual felling with the penis is not shown, the action is such as to convey this meaning. The spectators easily understand it and laugh. In all the subsequent actions similar acting takes place.

(He enacts it; then moves on. He comes across a marriage party, all in a scramble to get seats.)

Bhil: Sit down here.

(They unknowingly sit on his penis. He then raises it suddenly and all of them fall down.)

One of the party: Whence this fall?

A second one: You pushed me.

A third one: Oh no, perhaps we have drunk too much.

A fourth one: No, no! It is that fellow's old man[3] which fell us!

(Then they depart.)

(5)

(Enter a man and his wife, dancing.)

Man: Wife, who is the strongest man in the world?

Wife: How do I know?

Man: Eh! He is standing before you.

Wife: You, the strongest man in the world?

Man: Yes.

Wife: I will see.

(Wife goes. Enter some friends).

Man: Friends!

Friends: Yes?

Man: If you wink at my wife when she goes to fetch water, I will beat all of you.

Friends: So strong!

Man: O, yes.

Friends: We shall see.

(Enter the wife at the *khadi* and a man with his friends whistling and winking at her; the wife cries. Enter the man; he beats them all.)

Wife: Very good.

---

3. Slang for the penis.

Friends: You are very strong.

(Exit all. Enter the man and another person busy with something.)

Man: What are you doing?

The other man: I am squeezing the stones to get water.

Man: Will you fight with me?

(They fight and the second man is defeated. He goes. Enter a third man.)

Man: What are you doing?

Third man: I am drawing all these twelve carts myself.

Man: So very strong! Will you fight with me?

Third man: Sure! Let us fight.

(They fight and the third man is defeated. He goes. Enter the wife.)

Wife, who is the strongest man in the world?

Wife: The man is standing before me!

III

Stories

(1)

Once there was a king and he had a son. When the prince grew up to be a young man he began to have relations with many girls. The father wanted him to marry, but he refused. The reason was soon found out. In the horse-stable, there was a maid-servant and he was in love with her. The king told his wife, the queen: 'Let us drive him out.' But being the mother, she was not agreeable to this. So the prince was allowed to stay with the maid-servant, who became his wife. They were given a small house and three servants.

The prince used to buy novelties from the weekly market. One day he came across a *Mathwari* Bhil with a parrot, a *Garudi* with a serpent and a carpenter with a cat. He offered for the parrot, the serpent and the cat more money than the owners demanded and bought them. He taught the

parrot and it turned out to be very clever; it imbibed all the learning, including the seven *kalams*. It gave fifty eggs every day for the serpent, which grew robust and shining in health. The cat was also very good-natured and they lived together very happily.

One day the queen came to see her son and saw that the house was all unswept and unclean. So she began to sweep it, when the serpent hissed at her from a corner. She was very much frightened and ran to the king and complained to him about what their son's serpent had done to her. The king was furious at this. He gave the prince a severe beating and said; 'If you want to stay here, kill your serpent; otherwise go all of you away.' The prince did not want to kill his serpent and so he started to go away. He did not take his wife, his cat and his parrot with him even though he wanted to. That would have been too burdensome. Taking his serpent with him, he parted from the others with a heavy heart.

On his way the serpent said to him: 'Let me go away in a *rafda*.' But he did not like to part with the serpent. After some time the serpent explained to him, 'Master, leave me now to myself for I am too much of a burden to you. I will leave you now but whenever you want me I will be at your service. Now follow me and leave me where I tell you.' So they walked on till they came to the Mountain of Serpents, where there was nothing but serpents. Some were hissing, some wriggling and some raising their hoods vomiting poison. Here the serpent gave the prince a ring which would give him anything he wanted and bade him farewell.

Bereft of all company, the prince walked on till he came to a city. While looking around, he misesd his way there. He was hungry but could find no eating-house. So he took out his ring, burnt *dhup* before it and requested it to give him two *ladus* (sweet balls). They were immediately produced before him. At this juncture two Brahmins, the Good and the Lame, came where he was. The first had enough to eat; but he would not share it with the second, who complained of it to the prince. Taking pity on him, the prince

gave the lame man one of the *ladus*. The man took it to his home and to return the kind act also took the stranger (the prince) with him. He was a shopkeeper and because of the lucky presence of the prince he earned much money that day. So he continued to keep the prince with him and finally adopted him as his son.

The king of the city had a beautiful daughter who was as light as the *genda* flower. She was quite youthful but the father would not give her in marriage unless the prospective son-in-law could build a seven-storeyed palace of gold in a single night. So many had tried to achieve this feat but all of them had failed and the princess continued to remain unmarried.

The prince came to know of this, and he sent his adoptive father to tell the king that he could get the palace built as he wanted. The king gladly let him also try; but he was warned that if he failed he would be crushed alive and lamps fed with his blood would be lit. The prince agreed and, by magic, built the palace.

The princess who had been longing for a husband saying all these days, 'Today he will come; tomorrow surely he will be here' found that at last there he was. She took some *mando* and a silver pot filled with cold water and went to the seventh storey where the prince, dressed as a common man, was swinging merrily on a swing. He was afraid lest she should be some witch; but she told him, 'I am your wife, the princess.' They were glad to meet; they sat down together and swung. After some time she went away. Next day he dressed himself as a true prince. He had a golden horse and a servant with him. The princess was wonderstruck to see him—for a moment she took him to be somebody else. Then she recognised him and was happy.

Her mother happened to come there at this moment and she was very much jealous of seeing such a prince there. She wanted to invite him to a dinner and serve him food and curry of poisonous serpents. The prince said, 'I am fasting for these three days; so I can't come.' The queen was thus not successful in her evil design.

The prince stayed in the palace for many days and he

got tired of such an idle life. So one night he decided that he would go and work in the forest from the next morning. The princess, his wife, had taken off the ring from his finger, but he did not know this. Next day when he went to the forest he lost his way. Searching for his ring, which helped him in difficulties, he found it was missing. However he climbed to a hill-top and saw where his palace was; and taking that direction, he managed to reach his palace.

On the very morning, the princess went for her bath in the milk-pond near her palace taking the ring with her. While bathing she kept it on a stone. She forgot to take it when she returned home. A fish swallowed it. In the meantime the prince asked her about it. At first she said she did not know anything about it; but when he gave her an oath she told him what had happened. So the prince engaged three hundred *bhoyis* and got them fish the three hundred cart-loads of fish in the pond. Every fish was cut into two to see if it had swallowed the ring; but none was found to have it.

When the *bhoyis* started to go home, one of them was found missing. He was found drowning in the pond; they cast a net to bring him ashore but the net was broken. They cast two nets together but they also gave way. Then when they tied all their nets together and cast them, the drowning man was lifted out. With him in the nets was also a fish, as big as a hillock. It was also cut open, but how could a small ring be found in such a big fish? So they returned disappointed.

A hungry old woman who was passing by that way saw this mountain of a fish. She felt very glad and she took away all the pieces of the fish to her home and went on eating them for many days. One day in order to prepare curry, she was slicing a piece of the fish when she found the ring. 'This will fetch me an *athya* of grains,' she thought and went to the city. The *seth* said that that was a high price for a worthless ring and drove her away. She came to the golden palace and, when she said she wanted to sell a ring, the prince went to her and recognising his good old ring gave her a thousand rupees and bought it from her. The

old woman went home very much pleased.

The prince longed to go home and accordingly one day he and his wife sat in two boats and started. He had given the ring to his wife to keep. While they were sailing in the sea, the princess caused her boat to hit against his and deliberately drowned him along with the boat. She then sailed on until she came to the shore of a country where she stopped. The king of this land was greatly pleased with her and he wanted to make her his queen. But she said that she had a vow and unless it was fulfilled she would not marry anybody. The king asked what the vow was. 'Make me seven eggs and seven fowls, seven goats and seven buffaloes, all of pure gold; and then my vow will be at once fulfilled,' she replied. The king set out to get them ready and in the meantime she was kept in a separate palace.

Fortunately, the prince was carried by the waves to the very shore and after some time he came to himself. He scraped his chest to get some dirt and from this dirt he made a crow. He wrote a note to the cat and the parrot and sent it with the crow to the place where they were living. The crow carried the note to the cat. The cat opened the parrot's cage and the parrot read the note. On coming to know that their king was in distress they all wept and decided to go to him. The parrot and the crow flew and the cat walked in their shadows and they all reached the prince before long. They looked after him, giving him many fruits which the birds gathered daily. He regained his health in a few days. They then decided to bring back the princess.

The cat promised him that she would do it in no time and immediately started on the task. On her way she saw the marirage party of a mouse going. She seized the bridegroom so that the mice were afraid and fell at her feet requesting her to save him. 'I will spare him only on one condition,' said the cat. 'All of you must dig an underground tunnel from the princess's new palace to here in the forest.' When the mice bored the tunnel she went to the princess by it. The cat called her a donkey, a faithless fool and many other names for deserting the prince; the princess felt

sorry and went with the cat to the prince and sought his pardon.

The prince then called his first wife also here, as well as the serpent. They all lived together happily thereafter.

(2)

A certain Bhil woman was very kind. Every day she went to a *khadi* to wash *kodri* and while washing it she would give half a seer or even a seer of it to the fish in the streamlet. The fish knew her so intimately that they would come to her and play near her feet. The woman would kiss them and say with a sigh, 'How nice you all are! But how sad! You'll all be eaten away one day by somebody.'

One day a big fish came to her and said: 'You have saved my children so long and given them food. I will therefore tell you a secret. The world is going to be drowned in a deluge shortly. Prepare a big water-tight chest. Fill it with whatever things you require to last you for five years, and get into it along with your husband.[4] You will be saved.' The chest was prepared. The woman and her husband got into it with all the provisions. Soon there was a deluge, in which everything was destroyed from the face of the earth. But the chest was floating on the water and the Bhil with his wife was safe inside. When the waters subsided, the chest was marooned on a rock.

The gods came down to see the result of the deluge and saw the chest. At first they took it to be a stone; but on scrutiny they found it to be a chest. They opened it and were surprised to find two human beings inside. They took mercy on the two and gave them some earth and said, 'Wherever you will place this, it will increase and spread and then you can stay on the land.' Saying this, the gods went away. The Bhil and his wife came out, put the earth on the water and soon they had a big piece of land, on which they lived and from which the grains sprouted. They had many children, and these populated the world afterwards.

4. According to another version, the woman is asked to get into the chest along with her brother.

(3)

A carpenter had fifty-six crores of rupees but his son squandered away all of it. So the father wanted to kill him. Being afraid of his father, the son went away to another country where he stayed as an apprentice to an old carpenter. As he worked well, the old man kept him as his *ghar-jamai.*

Every day the young man would go to the market and bring excellent wood for making cabinets. One day he prepared a beautiful cot out of flawless timber and decorated its four legs with four dolls. Besides, the cot was so designed that it could itself mention its own price and whoever slept on it got immediate sleep. The old man went to sell it. The king of the city admired this marvellous piece of furniture and bought it for one and a quarter lakh of rupees. He presented it to his daughter and the princess was overjoyed to have it.

On the first night she went to sleep on it, one of the dolls said, 'Hear my story and then sleep.' The princess was surprised at this; but she listened to the story, which ran as follows:

(a)

'There was once a king who always gave food to a pig. One night some thieves came to the palace and stole away his daughter and kept her in a secret place. The pig had seen the thieves running away with the master's daughter, and so followed them and seen the place where she was hidden. Returning, it told the whole thing to the king. The king immediately went there and killed the thieves and brought his daughter back. That was how kindness was returned by the pig.'

The princess then prepared to sleep but the second doll stopped her and said, 'Hear my story and then sleep.' She was told the following story:

(b)

'Once there was a *Bania.* One day he saw an old serpent being burnt by some children. The serpent appealed

to him to be saved from the children. 'Please let me hide in your mouth. If you will thus oblige me, I will give you much money,' it said. The *Bania's* 'mouth watered' (greed was roused) on hearing the name of money. He drove away the children; and the serpent entered his mouth. Even though he had no fear, the serpent would not come out from the *Bania's* mouth.

'A girl too had a serpent in her stomach and she was in search of a *karigar* who would bring it out. As he had gone to the *Bania's* shop, she went there. Strange enough, both the serpents knew each other! The serpent in the *Bania's* stomach said: 'It is easy to take you out. Let the *karigar* pour some hot oil on you and you will at once come.' The serpent from the girl's stomach said: 'Enough of your wisdom. I know where your hidden treasure is. If somebody pours seven tins of oil under that mango tree, he will get your treasure. In order to kill you let the *Bania* only drink hot *kadhi.*' The Bania was glad to hear this. He drank the *kadhi,* but while coming out the serpent died and the Bania also died on account of its poison spreading in his body. The girl was saved and secured the serpent's treasure. That was the result of the greed which made the *Bania* make friends with a dangerous creature.'

After this the third doll began its story in a similar way:

(c)

'A Banjara had a very good dog which was given by him as a security to a Gujar from whom he had borrowed a thousand rupees when in dire need. One day some thieves entered the Gujar's house; but the dog caught them and fought with them till he bled and the thieves had to run away empty-handed. The Gujar was so much pleased with the courage of the dog who saved his life and property that he released him to go to the Banjara with a note tied to his neck to say that he had released the Banjara from his obligations because of the dog's deed and had also returned the good dog to him. The dog ran to the master, who on seeing him thought that it had turned faithless and escaped from

the Gujar. No use of such a dog, he said to himself. He killed it then and there without further thought. But when he read the note tied to its neck he was much repentant and in a fit of penitence committed suicide. That was what haste did.'

Then the fourth doll began its story, which was as follows:

(d)

'A king had a pet parrot which he loved very much. He took it along with him wherever he went. One day the king went hunting and lost his way in the jungle. He came to a country where there was nothing to eat and nothing to drink. He sat down under a banyan tree and sent his servant to see if he could find some water anywhere. The servant walked a hundred miles to the Little Sea but there was no water. He trecked a thousand miles to the Big Sea and secured ten drops of water. He brought that water and gave it to the king. When the king put it to his lips, the parrot beat its wings against the vessel and spilt the valuable liquid. The king got angry at this and killed the bird. Then, for want of water, the king and the servant also died. That was fate.'

After hearing these stories the princess lay down and in an instant fell fast asleep.

(4)

Once upon a time there were seven Bhil brothers. Six of them were married, but the seventh, the youngest one, was unmarried. The six would go for hunting and the seventh would work at home. One day all the seven went for a tiger hunt. The youngest brother was kept on the watch and the six kept on shouting. Unfortunately the tiger as also many other animals escaped. They could kill only a stag. They asked the youngest brother to take it home and went away. While going home this brother lost his way in the jungle. After much wandering he came to a village, whose *Vasawo* was ready to keep him as his *ghar-*

jamai. So he stayed there. He had to subsist there only on fruits from the forest, because his mother-in-law did not give him anything to eat. One day he was asked by the in-laws to do his own farming; 'We can't feed you if you do not do any work,' they told him.

So he went to the forest and sat down to think how he should begin his cultivation. There came a *bhut,* which became very friendly with him. When he told his story to the *bhut* it said, 'Why do you worry? I will engage for you my nine times sixteen plus nine ghosts to cut down this cotton-tree grove and there will be a wonderful *jhimta* ready.' By the time the boy had finished smoking his pipe, the *bhut* had prepared the *jhimta,* twelve *gau* by twelve, burning down all the cotton trees.

They had no seeds to sow; therefore, they gathered some bran and sowed it in the ashes of the trees. After the rains, a fine crop grew up there. The leader of the ghosts collected all his ghosts and they harvested the crop and also threshed it for the young Bhil. With such fine crops and able friends he soon became rich and married the *Vasawo's* daughter. The couple spent a very happy time in the golden and silvern palaces built by the ghosts. After staying with him for a few days the leader of the ghosts departed giving him a magic rope and wand. The rope could bind whomever and whenever he would wish and the wand beat the object.

An official of a neighbouring king, who had come to this city, saw the glory of this Bhil. He talked of it to his master, who immediately invaded the city. The young Bhil took out his *jiv* and put it in his sword and then stood against the odds calmly. He ordered his rope to tie all the men of the invading army and the stick to beat them soundly. When they were beaten sorely the invading king begged of him to let them all go. The defeated king gave him half his kingdom in return for this favour, which was granted.

The Bhil's wife asked him when he returned home where he had kept his *jiv,* because all the time it seemed to her as if he was standing lifeless and even when she was talking to him he looked different to her. The husband tried to evade the question and said, 'Why, it was in my stomach.'

She did not believe this and said, 'If you won't tell me the truth I will die.' So he had to tell her the truth.

One day when he went for a shikar his wife, out of curiosity, took the sword which contained her husband's *jiv* and burned it; and the young Bhil died. His ghost friend and other *bhuts* took him to the burning ground. There they tied his horses and his elephants to the pyre and placed on it all his ornaments and his rich clothes. His wife who was weeping over her folly also sat on the pyre. The ghost chief did not know what to do. But one thing he would not do: he would not allow the pyre to be kindled. So they all sat there, hungry and thirsty, unable to do anything.

The six brothers, who had long lost the youngest brother, had felt that they must find out the neglected brother. So they took two horses, one of which could identify by smell any road used by a person and the other which knew the roads to any place. With the help of these animals they reached where the ghosts and the wife of the youngest brother were crying over the death of their master and they immediately recognised him. They asked the sister-in-law to withdraw as all these brothers of the dead man were *jeth* to her. Then they sprinkled nectar on him and he rose up as if from sleep.

Thenceforth the seven brothers and their wives stayed together and led very happy lives.

(5)

Years ago there was a boy whose name was Poslya. He had a sister called Posli and both of them were living in a village near Chandanpur. Poslya wandered in the forest with his bow and arrows, killed sparrows and brought them home for food. The sister worked as a maid-servant in many houses and earned rice and other grains. She cooked these and both of them ate them with the curry of the game. Thus their days passed on.

One day Poslya, while wandering in the forest, saw a honey-comb. He drove away the bees and took the honey home. There were some dead bees in the honey. He asked

his sister to count them. She counted them thirty. 'So henceforth call me Tismarkhan and if anybody asks you the reason tell him that I killed thirty tigers,' he told her. From that day he was called Tismarkhan by his sister.

The king of Chandanpur had a grown-up daughter and the father was very much anxious to get her married. But the princess did not like to marry. One day the king said to her, 'Daughter, there are people of seventeen castes in my city and all of them are not alike. We cannot trust all. You may be the cause of the loss of my *abru* and therefore you must soon decide on getting married.' The princess was in a fix. Then she thought of asking her father to find out a man with a very strange name with the hope that such a boy would not be found and thus her marriage would be avoided. She told her father, '*Baba,* find me a man named Tismarkhan. He may be old or young, diseased or healthy, and I will marry him. The only condition is his name must be Tismarkhan.'

The king sent his messengers to the four corners of his kingdom and they found out Poslya. They asked him to see the king the next morning. When he presented himeslf at the court, the king sent him to his daughter. The princess had to accept him as her husband though she was not very willing to do so. So she decided to get him killed. She told him, 'You can stay with me only if you bring me a living tiger.' So Poslya went to the forest and came to the hut of an old Bhil woman. 'Mother!' he shouted to her. 'Yes, my son,' answered the old woman, 'come in.' He then asked her, pointing to a tiger prowling nearby, 'Aren't you afraid of these tigers?' 'No my son,' she said, 'I am more afraid of *thapka* than of these tigers.' The tiger heard her and began to wonder who that 'Thapka' could be; 'It must be stronger than me,' mused the beast.

Poslya then went behind the tiger and held him tight by his ears. The tiger thought that it must be the 'Thapka' that had held his ears tightly and so he became as mild as a lamb. Poslya rode him and took him to the princess, his wife, and put him in a big cage. The princess saw the tiger and was sorry that her husband was not killed.

After some days she said to him, 'Take the tiger to the forest,' thinking he would be eaten away by the tiger on the way. The boy took him to the forest, gave him a sound beating and left him; the tiger ran away for life. As it was dusk by this time, Poslya thought of spending the night on a tree.

Seeing the tiger running in such a fright, a bear asked him 'O king of mine, what is it that you are afraid of?' The tiger told him of his experiences. 'O, it must be a man! Let's go and see,' urged the bear. So the two beasts came to the tree where the boy was sleeping. The bear began to climb up the tree. The boy was very much afraid and he lost the grip of the branch he was holding: he came down tumbling on the bear. At this the bear was also frightened. 'This is no common man but the Garbad-Gota (Confusion),' it said and began to run. It was hastily followed by the tiger. Seeing them running away in this manner, the boy pursued them for a distance and impressed on them that he would kill them if they tarried or returned.

Then, to take a little rest he waited in the hole of a fox who was out in search of food. The fox saw the tiger and the bear running and out of breath. He stopped them and asked: 'O mighty animals! Whither so fast?' When they told him about the strange creature they had met, the fox said, 'Oh! it must be just a man. Let's go and find out. I will first leave these bones in my house and then all of us will go together.'

The fox thrust his mouth into his hole to put the bones inside. The boy who was within caught hold of his ears and began to pull them. The fox shouted to his friends to hold his legs and pull him outside; 'Inside there seems to be Khencha-Tani (Push-and-Pull) who has held my ears very tightly' he said. The tiger and the bear tried to pull him outwards while the boy pulled him inside and soon his ears were uprooted and the fox also ran for life. All the three thus gave up the hope of finding the man out and hid themselves inside the forest.

Poslya went back to the princess who then agreed to stay with him, being pleased with his cunningness and cour-

age. Poslya also sent for his sister to come and stay with him. And thenceforth they lived happily eating, drinking and making merry.

IV

Riddles[5]

1. One trunk, twelve branches and three hundred odd leaves.
2. (a) Is there no water as good as that of the Rewa?
   (b) Is there nothing as lustrous as the sun?
   (c) Is there no pair-partner as good as brother?
3. A white tent has no door.
4. Above is all roughage; underneath are bones;
   Then there is flesh and last of all is water.
5. Sidi hurts and Babni closes the door.
6. The handle is on the upper side and the *chamar* at the lower end.
7. Bamboo and copper,
   Wood and iron —
   All have but one name.
8. A streamlet is all curved but its water runs straight.
9. A couple was yoked and there was a sound in the hills.
10. A handful of sesame,
    Neither you nor I can count.
11. A stone floats on water
    (Water on, stone *tale*).
12. The hold is above and the eggs below it.
13. A brother's shadow is not seen.
14. It went, it came.
15. It wanders over countries and immediately comes to us.
16. Eggs in an eye.
17. Small above,
    Inflated in the middle,
    Big at the bottom;

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5. The solutions for these riddles are given in Appendix II.

It drinks milk with its tail.

18. Red are the contents
And black is the lid.
19. All eat from the defecation of a toothless old woman.
20. A calf of the black cow cannot be controlled by you and me.
21. A grazing cow goes forward and
Its black calf follows sucking it.
22. The whole forest burns down,
But the *bawa's* loin-cloth remains unburnt.
23. A brother has no bones.
24. When there are leaves there are no flowers,
When there are flowers there are no leaves.
25. Leaves remain for the gods,
But flowers are swept away by the wind.
26. First the thread, then the leaves and then follows the tom-tom.
27. A calf gets afraid whenever it comes to water.
28. A brother does not see whether it is hot or cold,
But jumps in.
29. A woman loafs from corner to corner.
30. A brother winds round the hands
As soon as he gets up.
31. A bird hops on a treeless hill.
32. There are young ones of peacocks in every streamlet.
33. The bird dies if its bottom is removed.
34. A red jar is filled with fire.
35. Empty-handed she goes, comes out filled in.
36. A brother has a child on his hip,
And he remains standing for months.
37. A dark dog barks and all people gather together.
38. When it is a child it puts on a loin-cloth,
But it is naked when it grows old.
39. It neither eats nor drinks,
Sits as if contented;
Its miseries are unending,
But it does not know that.
40. A tree has thirty-two names.
41. Drops of blood in the pasture land.

42. A green bird swings from the tree.
43. Forty brothers speak with one voice.
44. A bullock has twelve nose-grips (*nath*).
45. A white field has black flowers.
46. Three are restless,
    Two are standing and
    Two are seeing.
47. Standing while walking;
    Standing also while sitting.
48. Straight goes the stick,
    Bulging at the end.
49. While you go, you tie it at the end of your cloth;
    While you come, you bring it in your ears.
50. A brother wanders for the whole day in the forest;
    When he comes home he sits occupying a very small space.
51. A black thing
    Goes over countries and comes from countries.
52. A small girl lights a hut.
53. An earthen calf and a wooden cow;
    And the man who milks the cow has chains in his legs.
54. A pipal tree is only a foot high;
    It has a handful of figs.
55. When it is hanging, it's like a *ser;*
    When it is blown, it is as big as a threshing floor.
56. The whtie cow goes on delivering;
    The black calf moves on dying.
57. After driving away all the cows
    The cattle-shed is milked.
58. When the girl is pressed on her back
    She laughs, 'Ha ha!'
59. The daughter-in-law goes crying
    And also comes crying.
60. Bundles of bamboos
    On the mountain.
61. A sorcerer in every *khadi.*
62. A bundle of *adad*
63. Four fishes beneath a round stone.
    On each mountain.

64. Only one pole in the whole field.
65. A person has no seed.
66. A person does not sleep at all.
67. Don't bring a widowed one nor an unmarried raw one,
But come married.
68. A brother eats for the whole day,
But is never satisfied.
69. A walking-stick has twelve feathers.
70. A small thing fills the whole house.
71. *Vilayati pan,*
Rocky milk and hard stone.
72. Only one gets married to her,
But ten persons use her;
When she is in menses only one washes her clothes.
73. Who has the greatest teeth?
74. When the cock crows
With its legs apart,
If one labours for some time,
Something white comes out.[6]
75. The white hen scatters;
The black one gathers.
76. A woman could not be controlled by ten,
But then five got her and threw her down.
77. Sharp at the end
Is the red red one.
78. (a) Which is the flower of all flowers?
(b) Who is the king of all kings?
(c) Who is the husband of the earth?
79. Who is the husband of man?
80. The mother is burnt and the daughter is boiled.
81. Who is the happiest of all?
82. O you crooked one, let's to the field!
Sure *Mama,* let go.
83. A small girl renders the King crownless.
84. Inside the house and also outside,
It is neither father nor mother,
Neither daughter nor son;

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6. This appears to be obscene; but really it is not so.

But it does not go hungry, nor does it go thirsty.

85. The head in the field,
The bones in the river,
And the skin is brought home.

86. Four ears and a head in between.

87. If it flies on seeing you
Even twelve carts cannot bring it back.

88. She suckles her son at night,
But throws him away by day.

89. One brother enters the house;
Two wait outside.

90. There is a sea in a box;
On the sea is a pillar;
On the pillar is earth;
On the earth are stones;
On the stones is fire.

91. Every house has old men buried in it.

92. A cow gives birth to a bone;
The bone gives birth to a calf.

93. First it earns, then it is eaten.

94. It goes out to eat when it is early morning;
It comes home to rest when it is dusk.

95. In the morning two legs, at noon four and in the evening three.

96. When it gets tired, cut down its head and it will walk again.

97. Every house has *bawas* in rags.

98. One is sweet inside, another is sweet outside.

99. The king dies and the minister is enthroned.

100. Every day a *sepoy* follows you.

101. Half a loaf of bread and many pickles.

V

Dances

The Bhils have been known to the Sanskrit writers among many other things for their dances. Modern dancers like Uday Shankar have very well presented Bhil dances on many stages throughout the world.

(1) Holi is one of the chief festivals of the Bhils and during these festivities they dance many dances. One kind of dance is by Bhil women who hold one another at the waist with one hand and move forward in a semi-circle towards the drum-beater (who keeps in the centre), and at every third step each strikes the anklets in her legs against one another, thus producing a rhythmic, somewhat hollow sound. They go on singing simultaneously.

(2) The other Holi dance is also by women who move round and round slowly, this time without anklet-ringing.

(3) The third Holi dance is that of men. They move with vigorous steps quite speedily towards the drummer. They also sing songs in reply to the girls' singing in Dance (1) mentioned above.

(4) The *Gosai* dance is also one danced during these days. It is accompanied by an orchestral variety: one of the party rubs a bamboo chip against another bamboo piece and produces a musical sound, a second plays on a *pavri,* a third beats a tom-tom, and a fourth shouts out intermittently, 'Ti-ri-ri-ri.' All the *Gosais* then shout out 'Uru-ru-ru' and dance in a semi-circle with fast-moving steps.

(5) Sometimes the whole village joins en masse in another kind of dance just after the Holi. Some play here at snatching the *gofno* and others—men and women—drink and dance. The candidate for the *gofno* is attacked by the dancing women. Bishop Heber has written in his narratives of such an 'attack dance' of the Panch Mahals Bhils.

In the spring of 1825 he was visited by a party of Bhils, men and women together, who came to his camp with bamboos in their hands. They had a drum, a horn and some other rude minstrelsy. They drew up in two parties and had a mock-fight, the women with slender poles and the men with short cudgels. At last some of the women began to strike a little too hard, on which their antagonists lost temper and closed in so fiercely that the poor females were put to the rout in real or pretended terror.[7]

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7. *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency,* (op. cit.), from Bishop Heber's *Narratives II,* p. 72.

(6) The festival of Divali is preceded by a picturesque dance when some men put on the *falu* of women as they do their *dhoti,* don the womanly bodices, tie bells, *ghughra,* round their ankles and take two small sticks, *dandyas,* in their hands and dance. They play in a circle inside which the drummers go on beating the tom-toms. To the tune of these drums each dancer strikes his sticks against those of another, then jumps on to another and strikes against his sticks; thus round and round they go. The movement is quick, the sticks strike with a thud and the *ghughra* jingle with one sound. The multi-coloured dancers present a beautiful scene.

(7) Of the marriage dances (*vorad nach*), the most important one is that which is danced before the groom's and the bride's parties mix to sanction the completion of the marriage. One of the bride's party carries her on his shoulders and, swaying and jumping, he goes round and round the tom-tom-beater and the flute-player. A few steps behind him follows a group of three women with their arms round one another's waist. They move two steps forward, go back one and then once more move forward by two steps. Keeping the same distance between them three other women follow dancing in the same manner. Then follow several other trios in a similar way. All this time, they go on singing a song.

(8) Men have another dance at this time. It is danced in a chain-group of ten to fifteen persons. They rush forward three steps towards their tom-tom-beater vigorously and forcefully—and then the whole chain gets back suddenly by one step, then once more goes abruptly three steps forward and two backwards. Thus they continue the dance for a long time.

(9) The above dance, a little slowed down, is also danced by a mixed party of men and women who form a chain and proceed with it.

(10) A *sawang* is another form of dance which has been described earlier in this chapter. Between the pauses when the dramatic personae in the *sawang* tarry a little, two persons, one dressed as a Bhil girl—she is the beloved, *jodi,* and

the other dressed as her lover, *joda*—dance and sing simultaneously. The dances are good pieces of quick movement and symbolic representations of various emotions.[8]

(11) I have also seen a dance in which a mixed party of men and women represented the whole year's agriclutural operations symbolically—the sowing of seeds, the sprouting and then the harvesting.

The preceding discussion is of only a few dances. There are many more dances, which I have not been able to describe here. In fact every important phase of Bhil life, be it a marriage or a death, a religious rite or a harvest operation, is blended with song and dance. On account of their intense emotional value, dances enter into all these situations of life that go with intense emotional reactions. The dances, in their turn, heighten the effects of these emotions. Thus it is that of all things religion offers numerous occasions for music and dance, which are in part an expression of the excitement inherent in the situations and in part a means of exciting the passions.

8. About a Bhil dance of this kind in Rajasthan, Devilal Samar says: 'The original idea in this dance seems to be the representation of God Shiva, who is depicted here as a dancer.....The dance goes on for about ten minutes and is followed by dramas and once more there is the dance.' *Sodh Patrika,* (Udaipur), Part I, No. 6.

CHAPTER XIII

BHILS IN TRANSITION

I

In the preceding chapters various details of Bhil life (including their material culture, economic activities, religious beliefs, mythology, language and songs) have been described. All these together may be termed as Bhil culture. One of the earliest authors to use the term in this broad meaning was Tylor, who referred to culture as 'that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by men as members of society.'[1] Kroeber calls it the cultural content, 'the sum of the items of which it (culture) is composed: things present in it—whether present or lacking in other cultures.'[2] He also believes that 'eidos', which is the appearance of a culture 'would primarily coincide with cultural content as just discussed.'[3]

But each of these items or traits fulfils an important function in culture—the more so if it is a simple society. Religion and mythology, as shown before, give a sanction to the existing economic institutions of the Bhils. The family functions as an educational institution also; and kinship determines the social rights and obligations of these people. This aspect of culture was emphasised by Malinowski, who says: 'Culture is essentially an instrumental reality which has come into existence to satisfy the needs of man in a manner far surpassing any direct adaptation to the environment. Culture endows man with an additional extension of his anatomical apparatus, with a protective armour of

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1. E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture,* (London 1871), p. 1.
2. A. L. Kroeber, *Anthropology,* (London 1948), p. 292.
3. Kroeber, op. cit., p. 293.

defences and safeguards, with mobility and speed.'[4]

The analysis of culture does not stop here. The concept of pattern has also been introduced here and culture has been taken to mean that arrangement or system of internal relationship which gives to any culture its coherence or plan and keeps it from being a mere accumulation of random bits. Kroeber distinguishes between many patterns. Firstly there is the universal pattern proposed by Wissler which is a general outline that can more or less fit all cultures. It consists of nine heads: Speech, Material Traits, Art, Knowledge, Religion, Society, Property, Government and War. It is like a table of contents of many books.[5]

A second kind of pattern consists of a system or complex of cultural material that has proved its utility as a system and therefore tends to cohere and persist as a unit. Any one such systemic pattern is limited primarily to one aspect of culture such as subsistence, religion or economics.[6]

The economic pattern of the tribal people, including the Bhils, living in the Rajpipla and the Dangs forests is the same: agriculture being the main source of livelihood and collection of fruits, *kabadu* etc. being the subsidiary. Thus, this pattern is not limited to one particular area or one particular culture; it can be diffused cross-culturally from one people to another.

Then there is the total culture pattern when the whole culture tends to be integrated. 'A culture like an individual is a more or less consistent pattern of thought and action.'[7] The specific items of the culture concentrate in some peculiar way to form the spirit or the genius or the configuration of the culture. The Greek word 'ethos' also connotes the same thing. With reference to a people it means their ways or customs; it means what is sanctioned and expected. It refers to a culture's total quality, to what would consti-

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4. Malinowski, 'Culture', *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, Vol. IV, p. 626.

5. Kroeber, op. cit., p. 312.

6. Kroeber, op. cit., p. 213.

7. Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, (Mentor Books, New York 1948), p. 42.

tute disposition or character in an individual, to the system of ideals and values that dominate the culture. 'It includes the direction in which a culture is oriented, the things it aims at, prizes and endorses and more or less achieves.'[8] Then it also seems much more likely that every culture is psychologically characterizable. Like an individual, each culture has a psychological physiognomy of some kind corresponding to cultural physiognomy.[9]

The culture of the Bhil area studied so far in detail shows a consistent pattern of thought and action. Geographically it is one compact area away from, and approachable only with difficulty by, other peoples. The Bhil area as referred to in an earlier chapter is surrounded by hills and there are no good roads to reach it; therefore there is naturally a social isolation which gives the Bhils a kind of uniqueness and unity. There is nothing very subjective or metaphysical in a culture being a unit because different geographic areas tend to develop integrated cultures different from each other, at least in some traits.

Historically, and in historical experience too, the Bhils have distinctive traits, different from those of the neighbouring cultures. They show, as some of the foregoing chapters will have revealed, relics of a ruling tribe which had its sway over a great part of Gujarat and Rajputana. They were ill-treated by the Marathas, they fought against and at times were vanquished by the Muslims and they rose against the British authorities too. All this history was mostly one not shared by other castes and tribes.

Integration in response to regionalism and due to historical forces is further strengthened by a recognition of homogeneity or a consciousness of kind, and this has made the Bhils, or for that matter any other tribe or caste in India, a closely-knit cultural unit 'different' from others. The idea of social stratification appears to be rooted deep among the Bhils; as casteism was in the air in India, it must have profoundly influenced their notions of social distance. I asked

8. Kroeber, op. cit. p. 304.
9. Kroeber, op. cit., p. 323.

a Bhil, Gamia by name, why I should consider him different from Jamia, a Tadvi, who was known to both of us. Immediately his answer came: 'Our *jat* is different.' Thus this idea of *jat* or group-consciousness provides the basis of social cohesion and solidarity to the Bhils and naturally common traits are shared by the Bhils of a geographical region. So the Bhils' 'we group' is different from the 'they group' and this recognition helps to cement ties within the tribe and keep them to their moorings.

Once it is granted that the Bhils have a distinctive culture, integrated more or less in response to their geographical and social needs, it is but natural to expect that there will be a particular type of cultural setting and inter-relation of the parts that constitute this culture. Thus, the Bhil institution of marriage is totally different from the orthodox Hindu marriage or the Bhils' behaviour towards outsiders will be quite different from that of the Dublas or of any other tribe. But in their own culture these find such an accommodation that they do not look strange or bizarre.

Take for instance the case of *jhaghdo bhangvo*. The Bhil idea of realising a part or whole of the *dej* from the second husband of one's wife looks to some Hindus as if they (the Bhils) were selling their own wives as unscrupulously as one sells a cow or a buffalo. (A Mamlatdar, the administrative head of a taluka and a man of position, once had a very heated argument over it with me.) Marriage is secular for the Bhils; for the orthodox Hindus it is sacramental and hence the former's ideas are not tolerated by the latter. Even then the institution of marriage works very well in the Bhil society. They see nothing wrong with it as would any other man who does not exercise a value-judgment on the institutions of other people but only a function-judgment. Because of such deviations from the usual patterns obtained in other tribes and castes, the Bhil culture appears to be in a considerable degree a distinct pattern, representing an altogether different thought process and scale of values.

With regard to the pattern approach to the Bhil culture however the anthropologist is not on very sure grounds, when he is faced with the problem of the integration of cultures.

As Dr. C. G. Seligman has put it, the approach suggests a definite quality of symmetry or an all-round integration which most cultures do not show. No complex is completely integrated, neither is it describable in terms of one pattern. The Bhil culture also is not fully integrated; there are so many traits and institutions in their culture which cannot be explained unless we rationalize them. Consider the instances of the dread of witches, the use of liquor on all occasions, the rubbing of turmeric to the bride and the bridegroom and the keeping of the hearth facing the east—to take only a few cases at random.

The reason is, though all the cultures have quite a good number of institutions which work integrated as in a machine, yet a culture is not a machine in the sense that the non-functioning parts are omitted as was the horn in the gramophone. Similarly, it is not an organism also, in the sense that the non-functioning limbs are weeded out as the appendix in the human body. In cultures, the non-functioning parts may go on for centuries and stick to them as historical adjuncts known in sociological literature as 'sacred cows.'[10] It is here that the study of history of a culture becomes inevitable if we need to comprehend its spirit and function fully.

There is also a second difficulty. It is almost impossible to locate the 'ethos' or 'the culturally standardised behaviour' of a culture, for within the group there are class differences and zonal differences; there are also families which will not behave one like another; and lastly, there are individual differences also. Thus, individuals within a society should not be conceived as dove-tailed to a cultural organisation as a series of natural phenomena are, which behave in a particular manner at all times unless they be impeded by other forces or factors.

Thus the culture pattern school which aims at the discovery of the spirit or configuration of a culture must be faced with a significant hurdle in the field and, when they find it difficult to locate or decipher it, they have to be con-

10. Even the human body has many anatomical lags which are called by E. A. Hooton as our 'original biological sins'.

tent by an introspective search for the missing link.[11]

Yet the concept of 'ethos' is important and cannot be discarded altogether from comparative sociology as a valuable tool in cultural analysis. It is useful for the description of the core of a culture and also the attitudes, inhibitions and fulfilment of that culture. In our estimate of the Bhil culture, we have found how they show varying phases or degrees of both the Dionysiac and Apollinian qualities, and therefore it is difficult to nail down the Bhils to anyone of the categories detailed by Dr. Benedict. No people, as has been pointed out by anthropologists, are wholly extraverts or wholly introverts and the Bhils also answer both the types. Kroeber also recognises this and maintains that 'sound formulations (of a people's psychological characteristics) are likely to involve various sets of concepts. Multiple-term characterizations, though less incisive, will in the long run be applicable to far more cultures and are likely to be fuller and truer discriptions than the occasional instances in which a culture is so specialized that nearly everything in it can be disposed along one conceptual axis expressible in a single word.'[12]

For these reasons, I have used the word pattern in a rather loose sense, that is, in that of a culture-area where, because of the interplay of the historical, regional and sociological forces, the Bhil culture has developed into a sort of

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11. This is realised by many. See for example M. Fortes who, while reviewing Dr. Margaret Mead's *Sex and Temperament in Three Privitive Societies*, says: 'To what extent Dr. Mead gives an objective account of her cultures is a problem. One sometimes feels that having seized by intuition or inspiration upon the fundamental ethos of each of her cultures, she writes to justify her imagination, not to describe them.' *Man*, Vol. 36, July 1936, Art. 173.

12. Kroeber, op. cit., p. 324.

But Linton differentiates between the real culture of a people, which consists of the actual behaviour and so on of its members including a vast number of elements no two of which are identical, and the culture construct which is a mode of the various real cultural traits. 'The model derivative' he says, 'may be termed as a culture construct pattern.'— (Ralph Linton, *Cultural Background of Personality*, (London 1947), pp. 29-30. In this sense we can think of a single pattern and a consequent unique psychology for a culture.

a unit in which all the components are inter-dependent in form and function. The Rajpipla and Khandesh Bhil regions thus constitute a single culture-area. It appears that the term pattern, if replaced by an indeterminate word 'mosaic', may serve to describe a culture more thoroughly than the appellations we referred to above. A mosaic may exhibit well-defined patterns or it may be a mere scatter of multi-coloured tesserae; moreover the tesserae are held together by a matrix and I believe that in studying the so-called patterns of culture, attention should be paid to an element comparable to the matrix of a mosaic.[13]

II

This configuration or pattern of a culture remains stable so long as the group or tribe is a closed one. But when it comes in contact with other cultures it undergoes transformations. The culture of this group changes in many ways; it takes up many traits from the impinging culture and undergoes transformations in its set-up for good or for bad.

As far as the Bhils are concerned, the main sources of contacts have been administrative, religious, economic and social factors. Some of the main consequences of such contacts will be discussed here; but it should not be taken to mean that the consequences dealt under a particular factor fall solely under that. Society never allows such hard and fast compartments as one set of causes giving rise to one series of effects, and another set to another series. The compartmentalization here is solely arbitrary with only one criterion: if an effect is apparently due mostly to one factor, it is attributed to that factor.

The Moghuls, the Marathas and the Britishers had gone to the Bhils as administrators, because the Bhils and their areas could not be left alone for political reasons; they had to be annexed to the larger units of the domains of these rulers and as a result some outstanding changes were bound to take place.

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13. *Man*, Vol. 36, July 1936, Art. 150.

As has been mentioned before, the Bhils were kingly tribes ruling over parts of Gujarat and Rajputana. As a result of this, a sense of superiority that 'We are brave, we are courageous, we are the kings of the forests, we are the children of tigers' (as they sing)[14] was bound to be produced in them. They would not brook any outside interference in their own affairs as any other people with a sense of dignity and pride. So many times did they mention it categorically —whether it was Naik, Kuvar Jiva Vasawo or Damji—that they did not like outsiders in their own country; and if attempts were made to subdue them they opposed them with all their might. That is why it took long and difficult years to bring them under control; but however brave they were they had to bow down before the mightier arms of the Marathas and the Britishers. The superiority complex of the Bhils, their sense of pride and glory were all repressed and there were no lawful channels, no wisely planned outlets, for their expression. The natural consequence was a deflection of the original nature whereby they began to defy the established authority now and then and commit crimes against its personnel and property, and thus fulfil their repressed desires. We can explain the crime pattern in the Bhils on this ground more fully than on others.

The decision to rehabilitate the Bhils by raising a special army from amongst themselves was for this reason a step in the right direction. That gave them some outlet at least to express their valour and martial spirit. A well-planned promotion system with chances for petty exploits and heroics can be a good substitution for such an ancient glory when other modes of recognition are not available.

A second result, mainly of the British administration, was the changing of the structure of Bhil economy. So far it had been shifting, but now it was changed into a settled one. As shown in earlier chapters the Bhils could have as much land as they could by the *dadh* or the *jhimta* technique take possession of. Therefore, they had no scarcity of food.

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14. *'Shur amu, mard amu,*
Jonglo mena raja amu.'

But now as each of them was given only a limited piece of land they could not produce enough food. So they had to starve or to run into debts to satisfy hunger. With this, money as a medium of exchange also found a place in the Bhil economic life. This had both its good and bad results. On the credit side, we can put down an increased facility of contacts with the outside world, a command over a wider range of necessities and a greater simplification of the daily rounds of economic exchange. The disadvantages have however been greater. As these people confuse economic and socio-religious motives they have a tendency to overlook the economic and monetary sides of any issue. They thus began to get into indebtedness; they spent disproportionate sums of money on marriages and other social ceremonies; they indulged in drinks on which a considerable part of the budget was lost.

To pay off these debts they lose their lands and consequently become poor. This sets up a vicious circle out of which they never can get out. The alternative is to take some money as advance loans from the forest contractors, with the promise to work exclusively for them during the next season. But because of this they get seven rupees per cart trip less than otherwise. Moreover, they have to go for the contractor's work whenever the latter wants, leaving the agricultural operations hanging and thus entering into further difficulties.

The third result has been to make some of the landless Bhils *halis*. This has occurerd in Dharoli, Boridra, Gumandev and many other villages of the Valia Taluka of Rajpipla. The landless Bhils take some money on loan from the landowning castes like the Kanbis or the Rajputs and in consideration of that sign a contract to serve them for as many years as will be required to repay the loan by means of the wages. The daily wages are so low—two seers of paddy or six annas—that such a Bhil cannot pay up his dues in his life-time. In many cases, he dies in debts, which he bequeaths to his sons. If he tries to escape from his master, he is pursued wherever he goes and is brought back, being beaten if necessary. The treatment he receives from his

master is not enviable either.

In this way the old economic independence of the Bhil is gone and wherever he still continues independent on his land he is hungry; elsewhere he is in the chains of the *sowkar*, the forest contractor or the big landlord. Most of the economic hardships of this primitive are therefore due to the administration and uncontrolled contacts with the outsiders whose only aim in going to him was exploitation, either of him or of his land.

Another result followed the new contacts. Sociologically, any administration is an institution which is a unitary complex and therefore it is always established not in parts but as a whole. So the British Administration too took to the Bhils not only its political divisions and officers but also its laws and law courts. The Bhils also had, and still have, some indigenous administrative machinery for their own purposes. The new authorities being stronger did not care for the indigenous machinery. The result was that the Bhils ceased to care for their rule through their own institutions, which were allowed to decay. They gave themselves up to the foreign administrative machinery, however less efficient it proved to be in their case. The Village Panchayat, for example, is gone from the villages where the Bhils have come in contact with the above authorities. With its disappearance a potent social control agency has vanished and the solidarity of the tribe has been greatly liquidated. They have become more individualistic both as regards rights and responsibilities; they now seek the law courts ignoring the Panchayat in civil or criminal cases, and do not care for the tribal leaders who, as a result, have become scarce in these villages. There is a waning of interest in common enterprises too. When I went to Ruswad in July 1947, I saw one Bhil sitting idle at home, two in their fields and one in the forest, each not caring for the others. Public opinion in such villages is also not feared; and there is no initiative for new works in the people.

Religion is the second contact factor. Hinduism as a body of beliefs, customs, taboos and superstitions has so much in common with the religion of the Bhils that they

consider themselves to be Hindus. Even the remotest villages show that the Bhils have a belief in Hanuman, a Hindu god. In these villages we find religion as one complete unit being inter-woven with other institutions, living and functioning, but as we approach the western boundaries of the Bhil areas where they are in greater contact with outsiders, a very interesting but different phenomenon is observable. They are forgetting their gods, the lower ones in the heirarchy being forgotten first, those on the next higher rung then, and so on. In Dharoli, Thawa, Netrang and Gumandev, I found that the Bhils remembered their chief gods but they had completely forgotten the names of the sons and daughters of these gods. Instead they had taken to the Hindu gods of the lower strata, a local goddess or some territorial god. Yet the Hindu mythology has hardly been absorbed by them. They are innocent of the names of Rama, Sita and Laxmana; nor do they know the stories of the Pandavas or of Krishna, from which much of the religion of the low-caste Hindu is drawn. The Bhil is totally ignorant of the core of Hinduism, at least as far as Rajpipla and Khandesh are concerned.

We may make from all this a fairly valid generalisation that when two cultures of varying degrees of superiority come in contact, (i) the less impotrant traits, e.g. the smaller gods, their biographies, etc. in the religion of the less powerful culture begin to be forgotten and (ii) the less important features from the more powerful culture are taken by the other, because both have a greater chance of sentimental similarity.

In this way a coherent religious view, a complete mythology and a full understanding of the physical phenomena due to super-natural influences have been absent from the Bhil culture. The Bhils in contact with others do not have the self-confidence born of a full knowledge of their own pantheon; they look dull and also feel dul, because they have no convincing explanations for the things around them.

A change has come in their outlook in another way also. Among the Bhils of West Khandesh a Bhil named Gulia (who was later given the reverential title of *Maharaj* —a saint—by them) started a reform campaign of a more or

less religious nature a few years ago. He lectured to them, gave them religious sermons and asked them not to drink liquor or *tadi*. His meetings had at times gatherings of fifty to seventy thousand persons who sang songs in praise of him. Influenced by him, many of the Bhils became teetotallers. But as the drink-sellers went into loss due to this, one of them got him murdered, the Bhils say.

Another reformatory movement was initiated by one Viswanath Maharaj among the Bhils of Rewakantha. It is said that he gave the Hindu sacred-thread, *janoi,* to seventy-five thousand Bhils, who all became *Bhagats,* devotees. They took vows not to drink *horo* and *tadi*, not to eat meat, not to drink tap water and not to eat food prepared by a non-*Bhagat* even if it were one's own wife! I know one such Bhil in Juna Rajpipla, who used to cook his own food over a separate hearth in his house. These devotees used to go to the *Maharaj's* headquarters once a year on foot and take *prasad* from him with great reverence. After the death of this man however the Bhils relapsed into their old habits.[15]

This sort of conversion is a socio-psychological phenomenon, the need for which arises from or is strengthened by a troubled feeling of sin or guilt, or unworthiness and incompleteness, both of which are attributed by the religious leaders to sin or guilt. A recoil from a life of indulgence is not uncommon as a phase of conversion. The religious leaders mentioned above must have proved to these credulous and suggestible folks that they (the Bhils) are 'bad', 'immoral' and 'fallen'. They (the *Maharajs*) must have then promised them super-natural rewards if they turned away from the old tribal way of life to that of abstinence and 'morality'.

This type of reformation is no real reformation, as it starts with the hypothesis that the tribal norms, including

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15. In the Panch Mahals also according to P. G. Vanikar (op. cit., p. 24) many Bhils have become *Bhagats* because of the influence of one Govind Guru. They don't even touch liquor and meat, and take their bath every day, cook their food themselves and sing sacred songs.

even the most harmless food pattern, are bad. It has to be dismissed as an irrational movement based on wrong principles, started by a psychopathic upstart for his own otherworldly benefits. Secondly, as the movement depends very much on the personality of the leader, it cannot go very far after his death (even if it were to have in it some good principles.) That is why its effects are very temporary and the converted persons soon show atavistic tendencies. Such movements have not been able to lay their hands on the quintessence of tribal life too. They just touched the externals and left the real life that matters as it was. Therefore, in the rehabilitation and reform (if we are allowed to use this word for a time) of the tribal people such conversion cannot be used as a tool.

Muslim religion has also influenced the Bhils, as we saw in an earlier chapter. The reason for it may be this: the super-natural is not idolised by the Bhils. As a result, there is no idol complex among them as in Islam, so that an Islamic trait here and there could be easily accepted without any total change in the Bhil religious institution as a whole. The worship of tombs or *Pirs* can be explained on this ground.

The reverse process, giving rise ultimately to cases of bilateral exchange, also was there. Some interesting instances can be cited on this point. There are two Muslim pockets in the heart of the Bhil land; one is of some Habsis (Negros) in Ratanpur in the Rajpipla territory and the other of a few Makranis near Akkalkuva in West Khandesh. The Habsis, though they have kept up some of their racial characteristics, have changed their dress, language and beliefs. The Bhils on their part, hold the tomb of a *Pir* in Ratanpur called the Ghor of Babadev in very high esteem. The Makranis are Muslims from Makran, a part of Baluchistan. They have settled down in West Khandesh, married Bhil women and have changed completely. Their women-folk do not observe the *purdah* and most of them speak Bhili; their names are also Bhilized and their blood-groups also have a very large percentage of B which is almost the same as that of the Bhils.

Some of the Bhils have married their daughters to Muslims also. I saw a Muslim in Juna Rajpipla who was married to a Bhil girl, the daughter of the village *Vartanio,* whose family nevertheless had all contact with the daughter's new family. The village also did not bother about this. Though some of them did feel some resentment, they would say: 'We have to tolerate it. Who obeys us? She found bread there and therefore she has gone.'

Some of them do find some interest in Christianity which offers them material advantages, as I saw in the case of the headman of Toranmal, who daily attended the prayers of some Christian missionaries. He told me, 'I find peace in their prayers. They give my children some money also.' But there is no religious fervour for conversion. No one seems to have been sufficiently impressed by Christianity or to have understood the teachings of any mission well enough to feel called upon to repudiate the older points of view; and they remain Bhils at heart even when converted.

Religious life also has thus undergone a change. Religion, which was giving them a sense of security in all the crises of life when the economic life was not so hard, has gradually proved ineffective in one of its primary functions. The Bhil, in former days, worked in his fields with confidence in the help of the super-natural; but today the economic conditions are beyond his control and he finds his Pandhar Mata or Raja Pantha cannot do anything for him. Ritual or magic is slowly going away as an agency of production but no new factor is coming to take its place. The Bhil is, therefore, at a loss to know where to turn to.

Economic contact is the third force of the new change. The agencies of economic contact have been mainly these: markets, traders, railways, roads, fairs and factories. The area occupied by this people is a fertile ground of economic products like timber and coal-wood. Naturally the outsiders have a great economic interest in this area. The main effect of this contact has been to change the direct economy of the Bhils into an indirect one. So far the Bhils had produced to consume; now they began to produce to sell. They have now been linked up with the Indian (and so the world) mar-

ket to register all the shocks and to receive all the benefits of the larger economies.

That is why we now find so much change in their material culture. The Bhil men, who either went naked or had only a *langoti* and a head-scarf as a complete set of dress, and women, who managed with as little dress as possible, are now taking to the dress of the neighbouring Hindus. A Bhil young man near Dediapada could be seen in a shirt, a short coat and a *dhoti*. Gandhi caps are sold at their market places and also in fairs. Mercerised *dhotis* have also reached the Bhils. For Bhil women mill-made *sadis* and city-cut blouses are coming in daily and they take to them very favourably. The children can be seen in half-pants and shirts or coats. Tennis shoes or *chappals* are also being used by many Bhils.

A large number of other things found in the cities and daily used by the Hindus and other plains-people have also gone to the Bhils. Decorative materials, plastic combs and cheap mirrors; ear-rings, nose-studs and trinkets; and *kumkum*, hair oils and bangles. Aniline blue and soap from Bombay or Gujarat can be seen with all the people here. Household materials, unknown and unused before, like *rajais*, blankets, buckets, soda-water bottles, hurricane lanterns and money bags can also be found now with the Bhils. Refined sugar and patented tea packets have entered the Bhil house; while manufactured *bidis* are used by a majority of them cigarettes are not uncommon with a few fashionable ones. In fact the Bhils now know and have begun to use everything that an average Indian living in a village knows and uses.

Their houses are also undergoing a change. Instead of the thatch on the roofs, some of them have tiles and they also know how to make tiles. In Dediapada, I met a Bhil boy who was preparing tiles for his own use. Some of the Bhils in Kukadada, Sagbara and Rudeudi have brick walls for their houses. Wells are also being dug out near the houses. One such I saw in Samawal, West Khandesh.

In spite of all these changes in his material life, the Bhil has remained essentially the same; in a sense, these traits have come to him without bringing their complexes—the

associated values and usages—with them. Thus though the half-coat and the shirt have come to the Bhil, he does not wash them, because he cannot afford to have two pairs at a time. The houses have become tiled and walled, but the sanitary position did not improve. In fact, the old-time neatness and simplicity of construction having gone and the new toilet outfits being just curiosities or used as objects of cheap show, it has really deteriorated.

Because of the social contacts with the neighbouring castes and tribes they have also imbibed some traits of Hindu society. The idea of caste and the superordinate-subordinate relationship therein, which are very much prevalent among them, are mainly Hindu. The idea of untouchability is also found among them, as when they consider the *Kotwal's* or the *Gori's* touch to be polluting. Bhil women who had never known the *purdah* are now at times seen covering their faces; they who had always used 'the red red robes' can now be seen wearing the white mill-made *sadis,* which they once loathed as having no colour.

From this contact with outsiders another social result has flowed. Most of them pick up both Gujarati and Hindusthani. The adults, even in the remotest villages, understand Gujarati. Children and women as a matter of course do not know this language for they never come in direct contact with outsiders. I know some Bhil servants of the Forest Department who frequently use Urdu words like *haisiyat, khairiat, ettafak, intajam, erada, havala kabil* and *munssib*—to name only a few. English words also have entered their vocabulary though they are not many. Some of the common English words used by them are: train, railway, station, engine, pencil, table, motor, guard, ranger, forest, office, notebook, road, and contractor. Thus, contact with outsiders has fostered a degree of bilingualism and sometimes poly-lingualism.

In the very few schools that are among them there is no definite policy for teaching the Bhils a particular language. The schools in the Surat District and the Rajpipla State teach them Gujarati but those in West Khandesh teach them Marathi. It is not recognised that these Bhils are a cultural

unit and therefore they cannot be thus turned into a house divided against its own self, which will be a suicidal policy to be adopted for them.

In brief, it can be said that their attitude towards their own institutions is undergoing a change in the reverse direction. Those who have already seen the ways of the plains-world or those who have attended the primary schools do not take part in their own dances, do not sing their own songs, do not know their mythology and despise their own ceremonies. They laugh at, instead of joining, their brothers' dancing. I witnessed this sorry state of affairs in many places. This apathy towards their own indigenous culture is born of a sense of inferiority complex which they feel in the presence of the foreigner. This is definitely doing a great harm to them.

Thus the new modes of life that they pick up from the outsiders throw them out of the old tribal paths which they had followed for centuries. This makes them lose that element in their life which in older days made for joy; they lose the courage to live on. They do not find any interest in the daily rounds of life—in the repairs to their thatch, in stitching their own torn clothes, in keeping things clean and in order or in tidying up their babes. The new life does not bring any of its many advantages to them; it makes them poorer in all the ways and offers no creative or favourable motives of action.

III

Because of the disintegration of tribal organizations which looked after and promoted the general welfare of these people and because of the higher culture introducing its own utilitarian traits that bring a new societal reaction pattern, there arises a need for general legislation to be enforced through the agency of some established order like the State. It has been now definitely known and proved by many anthropologists (and it can also be seen from the discussion above) that (a) with uncontrolled contact there is a rapid acceleration towards conditions of social and individual disorganiza-

tion (which a controlled situation could have greatly minimised); (b) uncontrolled selection tends to produce a stable society more slowly than the controlled one; and (c) the reaction pattern shows that uncontrolled selection tends to accelerate conflict-stimulating factors.[16]

It is also necessary for us to do something for the tribal folk having for 'hundreds of thousands of years not done our duty to them'. S. C. Roy once said of the tribal people, 'Have they not for centuries been ground down under the oppression of the rich and the powerful and groaned under the various economic and social evils, not the least of which is the cruel stigma of untouchability?' It is natural, therefore, for the anthropologist, like every serious worker in whatever sphere, as Westermann puts it, to make his work serve his fellowmen. One will be excused if one were to say as Terrence says that only those who bring scientific curiosity to bear on human affairs with a generous desire to help remove conflicts between human beings (and among cultures) truly deserve the name of men. What then shall we do for the Bhils?

While recommending rehabilitative measures for the Bhils we need to realise that their cultural level is not very much different from that of other Indian villagers; the difference, if it is there, is not one of kind but of degree. Economically also, the problems of the Bhils are similar to those of other rural folk, though the stage in which we find the Bhils has many tribal traits not found among the latter.

The more basic and fundamental way is to advance them —as all other Indians—rapidly in the economic and educational spheres so that they will stand on their own feet. It must be at once recognised that the Bhil economic uplift is easier and can be sooner achieved than the Indian plainsmen's. The greatest stride in their advance that can be made in the direction of makng them economically better off is to give them more land as directed by Government Resolutions.[17] More land from the cultivable forest areas

16. T. T. Paterson, *Man*, Vol. XI, May 1940, Art. 89.

17. No. R.O. 4702|24 of February 26, 1926; January 24, 1927 and January 6, 1928.

or village *kharabos* must be given to them so that they can get some more food to eat. All of them say that they were better off in the olden days when they had as much land as they liked. A liberal policy with regard to giving them land, as cheaply as possible, is therefore the first requirement of tribal advancement.

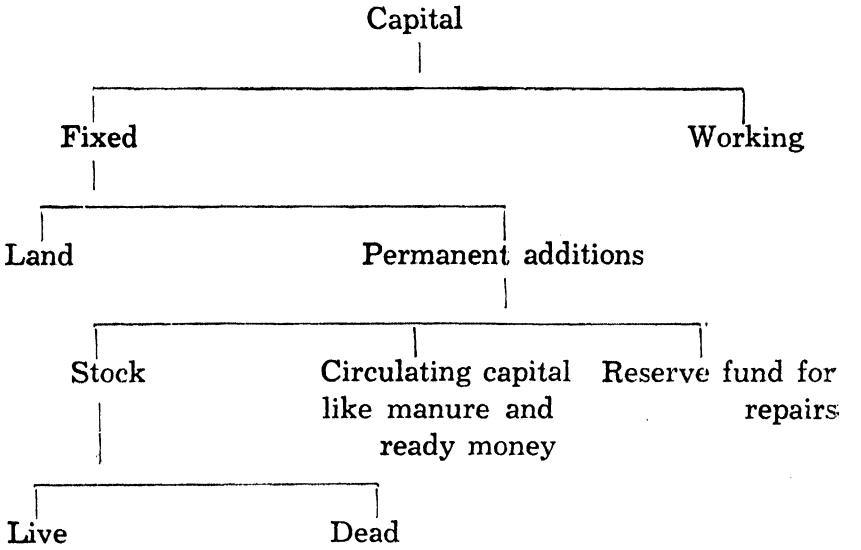
Lands which have passed from their hands to the aliens must also be given back to them. And henceforth in the Bhil areas (a) as a rule, no outsider should be allowed to have more land than an ordinary Bhil, and that too, only when he lives on his land; and (b) in cases of indebtedness, neither the Bhil's land nor his agricultural equipment like cattle and farm implements should be permitted to be taken away by the *sowkar*. The Bhils must also be stopped by law from splitting their lands into fragments.

Even though a more liberal land policy may be followed, this land cannot produce anything more than a miserable yield per acre because of the nature of the soil; it is rocky and uneven and full of stones. Moreover the only water the Bhil gets for his crops is the rain water which is very uncertain. In view of these difficulties, the Bhil must be taught to till the soil deep and manure it adequately and properly. The State must help him to dig wells big enough to irrigate crops even when the rains fail or in other seasons than the monsoon.

In a long-term economic planning for the tribal people we can also recommend co-operative farming, after sufficient training has been imparted to them in collective effort through work in other spheres. Collective farming, with expert advice as to the best crops that can grow in their soil, and better irrigational facilities can raise their economic level much higher than it is today.

But in the short run, the Bhils and also the Government must recognize that with land reforms and digging of wells there will also be the need for healthy bullocks and cows. The Agriculture Department of the Government can help them by giving each village a stud bull and by teaching them how to tend, house and feed their cattle properly. The rehabilitation of the Bhils will be impossible unless they are

provided with some reasonable equipment, which can be put down as follows:



But as was shown in the chapter on their economic life even if they produce a fine crop on an economic holding they would always be in need, indebted inextricably as they are to the *sowkars*. Simultaneously, therefore, with an enlightened land policy the following steps should be taken to free them from the *sowkars'* clutches:

(i) A special licence should be prescribed for money-lending transactions with the Bhils. Even Backward Class members must not be exempted from such licences.

(ii) Account forms, borrowers' pass books etc. must be prescribed; and measures to check touts and bullies must be enforced.

(iii) Recoveries of debts, old and new, except in cash should be prohibited and penalised; and

(iv) Food-grains required for maintenance and seeds must be made non-attachable in execution of a civil court's decree.

Subsidiary industries have an important place in an agricultural economy as that of the Bhils. They have a number of economic side-activities as was said in the chapter on

their economic life. Their pastoral activities can be well developed as they have sufficient knowledge of the milch cattle and there is enough fodder in the forest. If they can be taught to store this properly they can very well, and on a greater scale, exploit the animals which not only will make their agricultural work easier and their food more nourishing but also their budgets more balanced. The Agriculture Department can help them by giving them aid in this direction also. Poultry farming, which is also known to them, can be developed into a paying economic activity, given sufficient training and some finances to have good poultry.

Gathering of minor forest products like gum, honey, *bidi* leaves or tree-cotton can be developed along economic lines with a little planning of the time and method of their collection. Instead of the contractors being given the *ijara* or monopoly of these, they must be made the sole property of the village concerned. The collection activity can then be done by children and women at any time and by men when they have no other work. If the principles of co-operation are followed here, the Bhils would reap more advantages from the activities.

Fishing provides them food; they know a dozen varieties of fish and cook six different preparations of it. But the quantity of fish they catch is extremely small. In June 1948, in a *doyaro,* in Dediapada, I weighed the catch of about fifty women; it was a total of only eight seers of fish, and that they said was a bumper catch! It means that if they have to develop this very important source of livelihood, they must start fresh-water fish cultivation after surveying the potential sources of fish in their area. They can be taught simple fish cultivation and thus the occupation can be made easier and less expensive.

Co-operative societies should be started to provide multiple facilities to the Bhils. What is wanted is some positive organization for the joint pursuit of common aims through which new ties of mutual duties can be formed. This may be an organization co-extensive with the village community, or even two or three villages so that all the villages can be active partners in it. This kind of a co-

operative experiment will do away with most of the exploitation of these people.

The co-operative movement has taken a foothold among the Panch Mahals Bhils thanks to the efforts of a band of selfless workers like P. G. Vanikar, L. M. Shrikant and D. J. Naik, all trained by Thakkar Bapa. There are 268 primary societies, 8 purchase and sale unions and 8 forest labourers' societies working in the area. The number of members in the primary societies was 15,452. Many of them are self-supporting. The number of members in the sale and purchase unions is 7,378. Efforts are made to link credit with marketing of agricultural produce in Baria and Santrampur.

The Central Financing Agency is working with a share capital of Rs. 1,46,000/- and a working capital of Rs. 10,57,000/-, and it earned a profit of Rs. 12,530/-. During the year 1952-53, all the forest co-operative societies worked 28 coupes whose negotiated price was Rs. 2,56,027/- and the material exploited from these coupes was valued at Rs. 7,35,000/-. The profit earned in 9 out of 12 societies was Rs. 81,140/-. The societies have been able to eliminate to a large extent the forest contractors and their unscruplous exploitation of the tribals. They now get fair wages for their labour. The working of all these societies is mostly done by trained tribal workers. The number of members in all of them was 4,636.[18]

Symington also spoke very highly of the co-operative movement in this area: 'The movement.... has been successful here compared with the Partially Excluded Areas in other districts. Purchase and sale proceedings are carried out to a great extent, which is a particular advantage. Government grain stores have also been very recently started with funds allotted by the Commissioner from the profits of similar stores in the Thana District..... There are now six stores in Dohad and seven in Jhalod.'[19]

But in West Khandesh the movement is not doing well.

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18. *Annual Report, Bharatiya Adim Jati Sevak Sangh (BAJSS)*, (Delhi 1954), pp. 68-69.

19. D. Symington, op. cit., p. 62.

Symington said: 'The co-operative movement has failed in the Bhil tract of West Khandesh and under present conditions is doomed to continued failure—both on account of its intrinsic complications and difficulty of working and on account of the overwhelming hostile competition of the *sowkars.*'[20]

Even the private agencies, in spite of their best efforts, are not very successful. One grain bank at Shelvay in the Taloda Taluka is being run by the West Khandesh Bhil Seva Mandal, Nandurbar. Grains of various kinds are distributed through it to the members for sowing. The Mandal has opened 8 forest labourers' co-operative societies but one was withdrawn on account of insufficiency of work. Out of the remaining seven, only five are functioning properly.[21]

The co-operative experiment must be carried on at least for making the Bhils' wares and for contracts of the forest coupes. It will give them better wages and higher carriage charges. They will be such as to provide sufficient funds when in the first few years there will be no dividends, as any profit they may make will have to go to form a reserve fund. Co-operative credit societies may not be worthwhile in the first few—say five to ten—years, because they have no money to build up the initial share capital. But the co-operative experiment should be made not only in the credit field but in all social fields. These societies will have to be assisted by expert advice and guidance. In fact for making them strong enough in the competitive field the Government will have to grant them priorities in all forest contracts, in selling or in buying goods and the secretaries of the societies will have to be supplied by the Government, preferably from enthusiastic and trained social workers. Gradually, through such societies improved methods of agriculture, purchase of better ploughs and cattle and efficient preparation of the produce for the markets could be introduced.[22]

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20. D. Symington, op. cit., p. 18.
21. *Annual Report, BAJSS,* p. 92.
22. This idea is not new and hence there is no fear of its being impractical.

A more practical type of credit society could be organised by following the scheme for a co-operative society suggested by Symington. He says that this agency should perform the same functions on fair terms as are now performed by the *sowkars* on unfair terms. The main features of the scheme are as follows:—

(a) Branches of the society should be established at convenient centres within reach of all Bhil villages.

(b) Arrangements should be made for the prompt preparation of the credit statements of all applicants. The formality of membership may be done away with.

(c) Loans should be given to individual applicants not in lump sums but in small and prompt advances in cash or kind, preferably in the latter, to meet requirements as they arise, including reasonable requirements for ceremonial purposes. Steps should be taken to see that the cash advances are spent for the stated purposes.

(d) The above-mentioned loans should be made on the security of the next succeeding harvest and should not exceed a prescribed percentage of the reasonable expectations of that harvest.

(e) Every village of importance should be provided with a produce depot to be the property of the society. Cultivators who have taken loans on the security of their crops should be bound to bring into these depots a sufficient part of their crops to meet their obligations. In addition encouragement should be given to every one to dispose of his produce through this agency whether he has taken a loan or not. A large proportion of the food crops deposited in the depots will be retained for re-issue to borrowers.

(f) The village officers should be made responsible for seeing that borrowers deposit their produce at the depots.

(g) In due course of time the Bhils should be made to join as members. And,

(h) The management and direction of this scheme should be vested in the Co-operative Department.

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23. D. Symington, op. cit., pp. 19-21.

This agency should also take to the other activities described in the foregoing paragraphs.

The idea of working jointly is not new to the Bhils. In fishing, in house repairs and building and in agricultural operations they work jointly. From this co-operation is just a next step and can be taught to them, given proper interest and enthusiasm on the part of the Government and social welfare agencies.

Education is of course the third eye of man and without it he is blind. But nothing was done in this matter till very late. The first committee appointed in 1928 under the chairmanship of Mr. Starte observed:

> 'The education of the aboriginal tribes is the hardest problem which the educationalist has to solve in the Presidency and it is the one in which least success has been obtained hitherto..... We consider that compulsion forms the final solution for the education of these people and though on financial grounds general compulsion may not be possible at present throughout the Presidency, very valuable experience might be gained in the meanwhile without much expense by introducing it into limited areas populated mianly by aboriginal tribes.'

Mr. Symington, endorsing in 1938 these recommendations, expressed his strong opinion that it was high time that funds were provided to implement them; and he was of the view that the education of the Adivasis should be withdrawn from the local school boards and Government should resume the control of primary education in these areas. But so far most of these recommendations have remained unimplemented.

The Bhils canont be left illiterate and uneducated. They must be given such education as will help them remain on their land and will teach them all their occupations better; it should therefore be a basic education through their own crafts. Elementary education must be made compulsory in all the Bhil villages. The language of instruction for all the Bhils must be one and as Bhili is structurally and basically more akin to Gujarati it is better that Gujarati is introduced as a medium of instruction in the schools of this area.

But in the primary standards this medium is not required. It must be Bhili and Bhili is a sufficiently developed dialect spoken by more than forty lakhs of people. The

four primray standards must be taught through Bhili, the text-books must also be in Bhili and these texts must be ingrained in Bhil culture and mythology. The Bhil children will much better understand the exploits of Raja Pantha and Ina Dev than those of Shri Krishna or the Pandavas; and they will better enjoy their own folk-songs and proverbs than those of the Gujaratis or the Maharashtrians.[24]

Though they don't spend much on marriages, they have to give a large amount of money as bride-price, which can be restricted to a small sum through co-operative action by the caste Panchayat and by proper propaganda on the part of the Government. Another source of saving that can be tapped is to stop them from spending on liquor, that is, introducing total prohibition in the area.

Prohibition was very strongly recommended by Symington: '. . . . if prohibition is justifiable at all it is particularly justifiable in the case of people like the Bhils and allied tribes. They drink as a race; their children are brought up to it and no man or woman can avoid the habit..... They have very little chance of improvement, economic, social or moral, so long as their habit of drinking remains.'[25]

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24 The Government of Bombay recently appointed a committee to conduct an educational survey of the Adivasi tracts of the Thana District and prepare a programme of educational expansion for those areas. Its findings are worthwhile following in this context: The committee came to a conclusion that the immediate introduction of compulsion was quite feasible. 'Under the scheme as recommended by that committee the unit area for a village school is a group of hamlets having an approximate population of 250 to 500 souls within a radius of one mile. The first essential problem is the provision of school building and quarters for teachers. The school building should be of the nature of a semi-pucca cottage in harmony with the surroundings with suitable accommodation for the teacher. The Government should make available the requisite timber from the neighbouring jungles and should not spend more than one thousand rupees in cash on its construction. The education should be on Wardha lines with agriculture as the basic craft. The teachers must be experienced and trained in the habits and modes of the Adivasis.'—D. N. Wandrekar, 'Educational Progress of the Adivasis in the Konkan Tract of the Bombay Province, *The Eastern Anthropologist*, Vol. III, No. 1, September 1944.

25. D. Symington, op. cit., pp. 65-66.

Total prohibition was inaugurated in Bombay State in April 1950 and this prohibition policy has been very much beneficial to the Bhils. After total prohibition appreciable improvement has taken place in the Rajpipla area of the Bhils and the position can be considered fairly satisfactory. There is hardly any smuggling of liquor from outside and it is found that to celebrate marriage and other festival occasions liquor is not being used.[26]

The Director of Backward Classes observes that the condition of the Backward Classes has been changing considerably albeit slowly. There are many instances of families which have reduced their debts.[27]

Mobile dispensaries will help them very much in their common ailments; but this also requires some effort on the part of the authorities because the Bhils do not easily take to modern medicines. In those areas where the roads are bad and almost blocked in the rainy season moving dispensaries may not be possible. Their place can be taken by one medicinal chest of common medicines to be dispensed by the school teacher in a central village for a group of four or five villages with one touring medical officer for every ten to fifteen villages. It must be seen that these medical officers conscientiously discharge their duties. For even if they don't do so they will be so far away from the administrative headquarters and so much unapproachable their delinquency will go absolutely undetected. Good pay and a proper control on them will do them work well.

Veth or forced labour was for ages the curse of the primitives of India in some form or other. (It was more so in the old Native States.) The autocracy of petty officials in remote villages was unbearable. The Bhils had of course to serve their *sowkars* out of compulsion. The petty officials too took forced labour from them whenever a forest road had to be repaired after the rainy season, or whenever a road had to be cleaned for the visit of a high official. A

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26. M. D. Bhansali, *Prohibition Inquiry Report, Bombay State,* (Bombay 1952), p. 16.

27. *Bombay Marches On.... Prohibition,* (Bombay 1951), p. 32.

decade ago whenever any official, small or big, came for a casual visit to their village they (the whole village at times) were forced to remain at his camp. Whenever there was a shikar party of some officers or of some prince, the Bhils had to be present to help in the general shout and in other matters. For all this labour, which they would do remaining away from their homes for days together and being sometimes hungry for the whole day, they got nothing. Because they were allowed to cut some firewood free from the forest they had to obey the officers, they were told. They had to give their bullocks and carts free whenever a conveyance was needed and the autocracy had reached to a height of sadism. I myself have seen officers—very petty ones at that—thus moving with three or four carts! Sometimes a train of Bhils with loads on their heads would toil uphill, while the officer, big or small—a man in khaki trousers and with a hat on his head was a *Saheb* for them—would follow on horse-back.

Till very recently they had to supply vegetables, milk, rice, eggs—almost everything asked for to all the visiting officers, from a small *sepoy* to a Collector! Their cows were very irregular in giving milk; sometimes they gave no milk at all, the calves having drunk it. But regardless of this the official would insist on being supplied with milk for his tea, and abuse the Bhil if he failed to supply it! With the advancement of administrative reforms these things began to change and the position is vastly improved since the advent of India's freedom and the Merger of the Native States. All primitive tribes including the Bhils are rising to the standard of the bulk of the rural population of India, which is marching ahead with a rapid programme of agrarian reform and social uplift.

The timber and charcoal contractors freely abuse the Bhil, beat him and force him and his family to work for the advance money he has taken. I once saw a Bhil being whipped by a Punjabi coal merchant when I was passing from Dediapada to Sagbara. The reason was simple: The Bhil's bullocks were ill and he could not carry the contractor's coal in his cart to the station. The contractor said that both the Bhil and his bullocks were pretenders, and whipped

the Bhil. This was the case not only in the area which I studied but also in other Bhil areas like Jhabua, where once the P.W.D. of the State is said to have asked the Bhils to put in labour gratis. When they insisted on wages, it was reported, they were given some bottles of liquor and sent away![28]

The Bhils developed because of incidents like this great timidity. When I offered them hire charges for their carts once they refused to accept them. After considerable persuation they accepted half of what I felt was reasonable charges. Therefore, the Bhils have to be taught to demand their dues. Of course, things are now improving with the Merger of the States with the Indian Union and as officers are expected to be more enlightened than before. Yet the natural temptation on their part to get easy work from the illiterate will be there, more so if there is no supervision from higher officers. Therefore, the Government has to root out this by a double device: a strict watch on its own officers and an awakening in the Bhils themselves of a consciousness that to demand the due is the right of all. It is only then that official exploitation can entirely end.

All this can be achieved if there is a separate administration for the Bhils. The idea is not to keep them segregated from the bulk of the Indian population in a state of picturesque antiquity. It cannot have any meaning anywhere, for no such segregation is possible in the face of forces which no Government can control. But this separate administration can take the shape of a separate district of the Bhils and other contiguous primitive areas under the charge of an anthropologist administrator. The creation of such a district is quite possible. The present districts on the borders of the Bhil land have been administratively unwieldy because of the merger with these of the small States and also because territorially it is one whole unit.

The formation of such a district is imperative also because in the race for progress, in comparison with the plains-people, the Government may neglect the needs and ambi-

28. *Janma Bhoomi*, January 6, 1946.

tions of the Bhils and their co-primitives. On the other hand, if it is formed it is possible to have subordinate officers who will be sympathetic towards, and know the needs of, the Bhils. The educated Bhils will gradually replace the officers drawn from other castes. The teachers must also be Bhils who will teach the boys in this district in Bhili. The tribes can thus live their lives in utmost possible happiness and freedom. The village Panchayat, their own institution, must be revived to solve many of their small problems. Only authorized merchants and money-lenders must be allowed to function among them. In all economic buying and selling, of course, the co-operative idea must be encouraged in this district.

No doubt, the contact with the outside world will be there as it must be there; but some such scheme of local autonomy is necessary for the Bhils' adaptation to new conditions with the minimum of disintegration and for maintaining their social stability. For any society that must function satisfactorily must be a co-ordinated whole, not single items being disjoined. And such a warning is necessary so that the administrator may know the reality of the problem of social adaptation. Or the Bhil area may be divided into blocks under the National Extension Service Scheme and greater attention be paid to these blocks, on the ultimate top of which an administrator with a sufficient know-how of tackling the people and their problems must be inevitably appointed.

This is the only way to check the cry of homelands by Adivasis. The East Pakistan primitives have demanded recently their own State called Adistan;[29] and in India the primitives of Bihar and other contiguous areas are vehemently trying for Jharkhand, their own forest homeland. There are revolts among the aboriginals of Orissa, Mymensing, the Nilgiris and the Thana District of Bombay, all of whom are against 'the foreigners in their own land'! Only some kind of a district autonomy as stated above can satisfy their desires. We must see the writing on the wall and take precautions. After this, they also must be given a share in the political

29. *Amrit Bazar Patrika,* December 2, 1949.

life of the country as a whole. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru declared in the Indian Parliament on April 3, 1948: 'However, I concede that in the present context of affairs in regard to these unfortunate countrymen of ours, who have not had any opportunities in the past, special attempts should be made, of course, in the educational and economic field; even in the political field we must see that they have a proper place till they find their own legs to stand upon without external aid.' They must be given proper representation in the legislative bodies of the States and the Centre so that they can also give their intelligent consent to whatever the country does.[30]

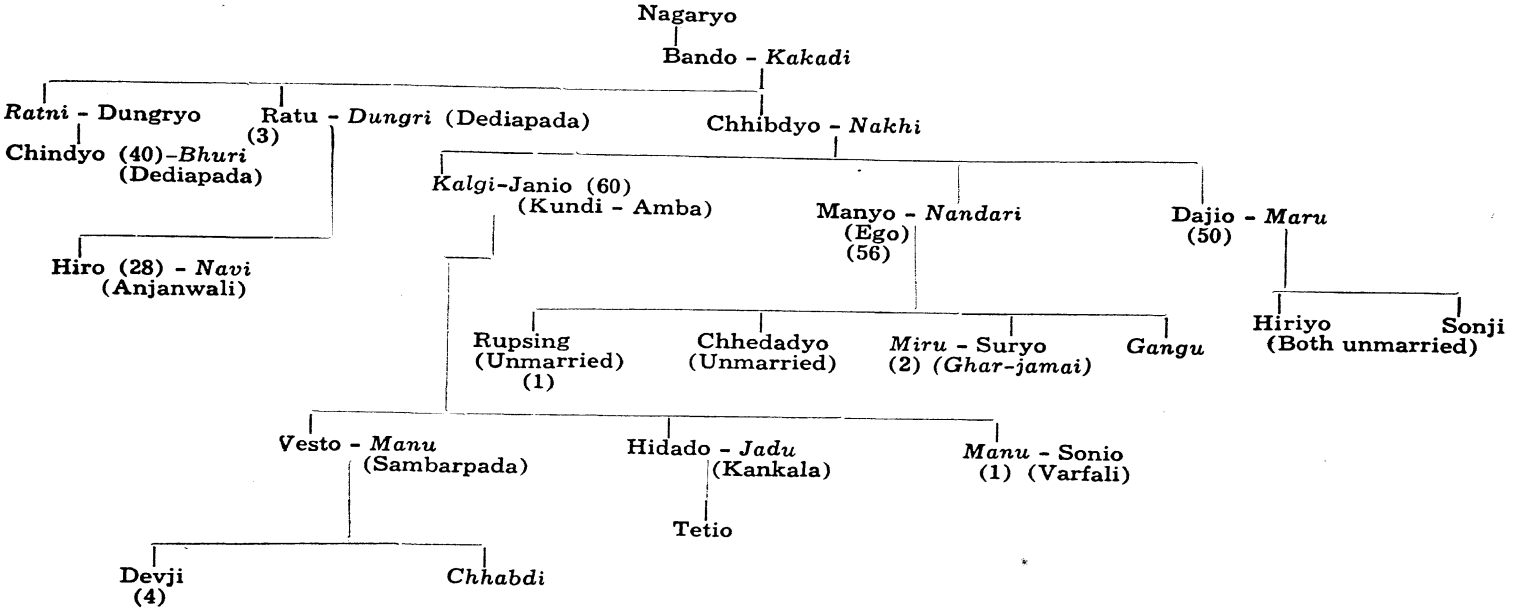
30. In the end let us always remember the words of Mr. John Collier, Indian Commissioner of U.S.A.: "We are not coercing them (the American Indians) into a mode of life that is not of their own choice. We think their own life is good. But we are offering a complete education and giving them the necessary mechanical and engineering techniques to go out in the world, and they have gone out..... They maintain their own law and order completely..... I am satisfied that every disinterested and informed observer would testify that this growth of life-energy, of hope and responsibility and purpose in the Indians is due to the urgent, searching, democratic effort of the Indian Service more than to any other influence of Government, Federal or local.'—Quoted by E. T. Lambert in 'A Note on the Administration of the American Indian in the U.S.A.', *Man in India,* Vol. XXVII, No. 1, p. 38.

APPENDIX I

Genealogical Tables

GENEALOGY No. 1

INFORMANT, MANYO, THE HEADMAN OF DEDIAPADA



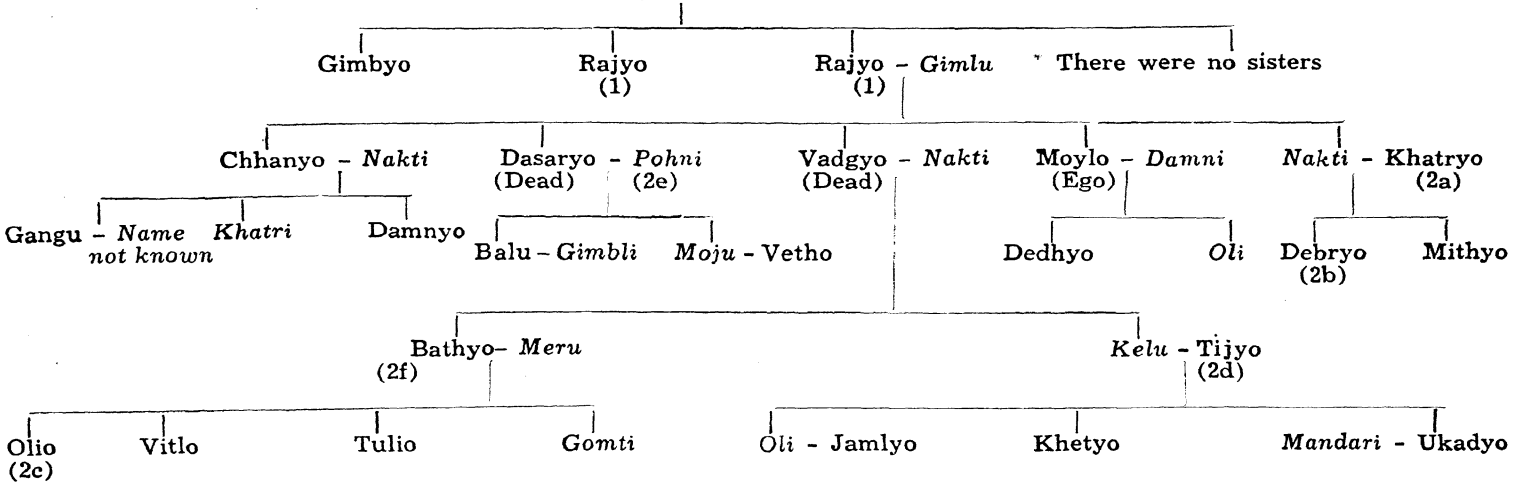
NOTES: (1) Manu, the daughter of *Kalgi*, is not married to Rupsing, the son of Manyo, because she is older than Rupsing.

(2) *Miru's* husband Suryo is a *ghar-jamai* with Manyo; *Manu's* husband Vesto is a *ghar-jamai* with Janio at Kundi-Amba.

(3) Marriages in the same village are there: Manyo (Ego) has married in Dediapada; Ratu, his uncle also married in the village.

(4) Manyo and Dajio are called *moto baps* by Devji.

GENEALOGY No. 2.
INFORMANT, MYOLO (41), OF MATHAWALI



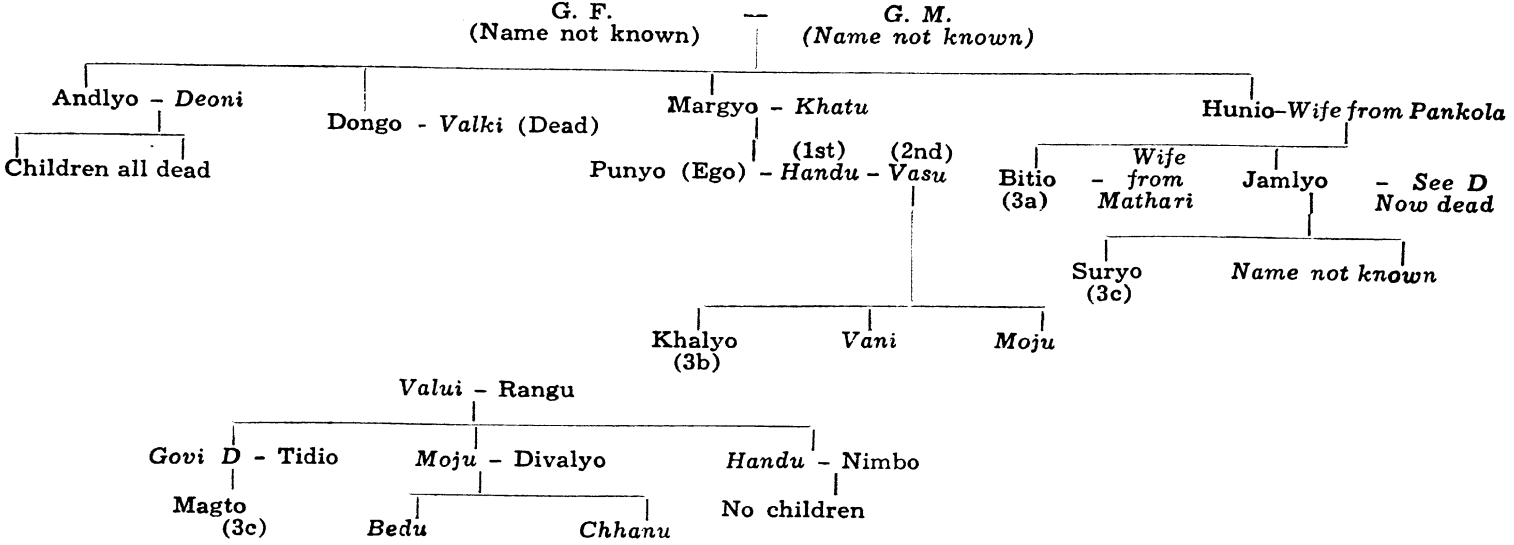
NOTES: (1) Two brothers can have the same name; if one is dead, his name can be given to the next one. Chamar's two sons have their names Rajyo.

(2) Some illustrative relations:
- (a) Khatryo is a *pavdyoho* of Ego.
- (b) Debryo is his paanjo; if his daughter is married to Debryo, he will be *jamah*.
- (c) Olio and others call Ego *dohno bahko*.
- (d) Tijyo was addressed as *jamah* by him.
- (e) *Pohni*, the wife of Dasaryo, his brother, calls Ego her *dero*.
- (f) Bathyo is his brother's son but called *diko* or son by him.

(3) *Damni*, his wife who was a widow of some other Bhil, was married by him by the *natra* form of marriage.

GENEALOGY No. 3.

INFORMANT, PUNYO, THE HEADMAN OF SAGAI (65)



NOTES: (1) Ego's first wife, *Handu* by name, was married by him at a bride-price of Rs. 60/–. She went away to Gader, on the northern side of the Rewa. The second husband should give him '*dawo*' as a rule; he (Punyo) had gone also to ask for it, but he found that the new husband was very poor and he did not insist on it being paid to him (Punyo). Both his ex-wife and the new husband are now dead.

(2) Dongo was the *Vasawo* of Sagai; as he had no children the headmanship and lands passed to Ego, his brother's son. The headmanship cannot be given to a son-in-law.

(3) Some relationships:

(a) Bitio calls him (Ego) *kaka*; and Bitio is his *diko* or son.

(b) Bitio and Khalyo, sons of two brothers or paternal cousins are *Kakawadiho pawaho*

(c) Suryo and Magto call him '*baba*'.

APPENDIX II

Answers to Riddles

1. A year
2. (a) Rainwater
   (b) The eyes
   (c) One's own self
3. An egg
4. A coconut
5. A needle and thread
6. A bullock's tail
7. A cart
8. A bow and an arrow
9. A cart
10. Hair
11. It is a pun on the word *tale* which means both 'down' and 'to float'
12. *Mahuwa* fruits
13. Wind
14. Sight
15. Mind
16. A bird laid eggs in the eye-sockets of a skull-bone: the riddle refers to it.
17. A lamp
18. The human body
19. A hand-mill
20. A bullet
21. Fire in the forest
22. A forest road
23. The earth-worm
24. The *thuvar* plant
25. The *bili* tree
26. The water-melon creeper
27. Shoes
28. A laddle
29. A broom
30. A loose turban
31. A razor
32. Ripe figs falling in water

33. A lamp
34. Chillies
35. *Mapi,* used to draw liquor from a vessel
36. A maize plant
37. A tom-tom
38. A bamboo
39. A stone
40. A bamboo
41. *Chalothi,* a kind of red seeds
42. A mango
43. Bells round a bullock's neck
44. A tom-tom (tightened by many ropes)
45. Paper with a writing on it
46. A bullock
47. The horns of an animal
48. *Juwar* ears
49. Going to the sorcerer with some grains for divination
50. A cudgel
51. A crow
52. A lamp
53. The palm and the *tadi*-tapper (the pot in which the *tadi* juice is received is made of earth. A man who goes up the palm does so with the aid of a loop of rope round him and the trunk of the tree)
54. A gram plant
55. A fishing net
56. Fire in the forest
57. A honey-comb
58. A flute
59. Bells round the bullock's neck
60. Feathers of peacock
61. Cane plants (shaking like the sorcerer)
62. A bear
63. Teats of a buffalo
64. The sun or the moon
65. A banana
66. A fish
67. To bring a sound, well-baked earthern pot
68. A plough

69. A *tur* plant
70. A lamp (light)
71. *Pan-supari* (Chewing-leaves and betelnut)
72. A smoking-pipe (bought by one; is moved round many; but in the end only one man washes the cloth kept at the mouth of the pipe.)
73. The white ant
74. Hand-milling in the early morning (one has to sit at the hand-mill with legs apart.)
75. Day and night
76. Flour and prepared bread
77. Chillies
78. (a) Cotton
    (b) A child
    (c) A plough
79. Money
80. *Tur* plant and *tur* pulse
81. One who is not indebted
82. A sickle
83. A louse
84. A bullock
85. Jute
86. A clove
87. A fish
88. A door-obstacle (Latch)
89. Sexual intercourse
90. A *hukkah*
91. Thresholds
92. A hen
93. A hen
94. A hen
95. A man's life
96. A pencil
97. Brooms
98. Coconut and date fruits
99. The sun and the moon
100. One's shadow
101. The moon and the stars

APPENDIX III

A Glossary of Bhili and Gujarati Words Used in this Book[1]

1. Words whose meaning is explained in the text are not included here. There may, however, be some repetitions.

adad, kidney bean, phaseolus radiata
agarbatti, scented, thin burning-sticks
ahindro, name of a tree whose leavs are rolled into *bidis*
amla, amra, phyllanthus emblica
bajra, panicilaria spycota
banti, name of an inferior grain
bap, father
bawa, bawo, a beggar, an ascetic
ben, bena, dear sister
Bhakta, a devotee
bhinda, bhindi, hibiscus asculantus
bhoro, a natural point on the head or body of a person from which the hair diverges
bidi, biri, the well-known leaf-cigarette smoked all over India
chamar, a tuft of hair
charoli, buchenenia latifolia
chhak, a dose, a drop
chhel, a lover
chhimta, jhimta, a wood-ash field
chhinara, name of a plant
chokhara, sokara, the clean person
chora, dolicos synesis
chulo, chula, the Indian oven
dadh, a wood-ash field
dai, a maternity nurse
dajia, see *dadh*
dal, split pulse
dalia, ria, parched grams
dhupel, a hair-oil
dohki, name of a plant

dovi, a wooden spoon (big size)
gadi, the throne
gali, an abuse
garbad-gota, confusion worse confounded
garmel, coleus barbetus
gentmin, a gentleman
gundi, cordia obliqua
hiarpi, see *dai*
imli, tamarindus indica
indrajav, raidia antidisenterica
jambu, engenia jambolana
jhaghado, a quarrel
jodi, jodo, a beloved
jutha, left-overs (after eating)
juwar, juvar, holins sorgham
kadhi, a curry prepared of whey
kado, see *indrajav*
kavach, a kind of a plant whose bean-skin irritates when touched
kevdo, kevda, pandanus tectorius
khakhro, khakra, butia frondosa
khencha-tani, a pull-and-let-go
khichdi, khichri, a dish cooked with rice and dal
kodra, kodri, paspalum scrobiculatum
kumkum, a red powder used by Hindus on all auspicious occasions
madhlo, name of a tree
mahuda, bassia latifolia
makai, lia maise, maize
mali, a water-stand
mar, a beating
maramari, a fight
mari, black pepper
mar-pit, see *maramari*
merala, a lover
medhla, name of a tree
moryo, moryu, name of an inferior grain
muhlo, a Muslim

nagli, slucin, elensine indica
Nishad, a savage
palash, see *khakhro*
palash, see *khakhro*
pan, a leaf
paṿ, sin
Parsi, a member of the Parsi community
Patwari, a petty revenue official
piplo, ficus religiosa
punj, a votive offering
punya, a good deed
rasti, belonging to the plains
rodali, a beloved
rotla, breads
sapkachru, name of a plant
sarkari, governmental, official
sasra, the father-in-law's house
shokah, sorrow
sitaphal, anona squamosa
shlokah, a poem
surmo, a fine eye-powder
taluka, an administrative subdivision of a district
thapko, a rebuke
tika, a *kumkum* mark on the forehead
timro, diospyros melanoxylon
toran, a bunting
tur or *tuvar,* cagenus indicus
umro, ficus glomerata
val, valor, dolicos lablab
varna, a caste
varna, one of the four divisions of the Hindu community
vilayati, foreign

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APPENDIX V

Index of Authorities

Abul Fazal, 14
Ain-i-Akbari, 14
American Journal of Physical Anthropology, 10
Annual Report of the Bharatiya Adim Jati Sevak Sangh, 334, 335
Apte, V. M., 162 n
Amrit Bazar Patrika, 226 n, 342

Bana Bhatta, 14, 215
Benedict, Ruth, 314, 318
Bhansali, M.D., 339
Bhavabhuti, 13
Biometrica, 8
Bombay Government Selections, 216
Bose, Uma, 11
Bruhl, Levy, 178, 199

Census of India, 8, 14 f, 172 f
Contractor, J. J., 223 n
Crooke, W., 6

Dave, T. N., 244 n f
Duff, Grant, 19 f

Eastern Anthropologist, 338 n
Elwin, 235 n

Fakir Bhai, 233
Firth, Raymond, 49, 147 f
Forbes, 20, 216
Fortes, M., 318 n
Fuchs, Stephen, 8

Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, 14, 55, 171, 177, 233, 310
Graham, 24
Gram-Vikas Weekly, 223 n
Grierson, 242, 249
Grigson, 168 n, 235 n
Guha, B. S., 7 f

Haddon, A. C., 6
Hari Vamsa, 12 n
Heber, Bishop, 310
Hedberg, Rev., 154 n
Hendley, Major, 13
Herskovits, M. J., 69, 70 n, 76
Hooton, E. A., 317 n

Indian Journal of Social Work, 222 n

Janma Bhoomi, 341
Journal of the Anthropology Society, Bombay, 56
Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay, 154 n
Journal of the Gujarat Research Society, Bombay, 9
Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bombay, 10

Kadambari, 14, 215
Kanakasabhai, V., 15
Katha-Sarit-Sagara, 12
Katyayana Srauta Sutra, 12
Keatinge, G., 76
Kiratarjuniyam, 13
Khanapurkar, D. P., 24, 154 n
Kinbery, 222
Kroeber, A. L., 313 ff, 318 n
Ktesias, 17

Lambert, E. T., 343 n
Latyana Srauta Sutra, 12
Law, B. C., 11, 14
Linguistic Survey of India, 248 n
Linton, Ralph, 318 n
Lombroso, 222 n
Lowie, R. H., 189, 198 f

Macdonell and Keith, 11
Macfarlane, E. W. E., 10 f
MacGregor, 172

Mahabharata, 12 f and *passim*
Mahalanobis, 7
Majumdar, D. N., 9 ff
Malcom, J., 20, 56, 216
Malinowski, B., 70, 235 n, 315 ff
Man, 9, 318, 319, 330
Man in India, 128, 154 n, 174, 343 n
Marret, R. R., 199
Manu, 12
Mathew, A., 222 n
Mead, Margaret, 117 f, 172, 318 n
Memoranda of Indian States (1937), 55
Montague, Ashley, 104
Morant, G. M., 8
Murray, Margaret, 189

Nirukta, 11

Parashara Samhita, 13
Paterson, T. T., 330
Pollexfen, 216
Prescot, 232
Ptolemy, 17

Ramayana, 13 f and *passim*
Richards, Audery, 79, 85 n
Rigveda, 162 n
Risley, H. S., 6
Rowney, H. B., 13, 24
Roy, S. C., 12, 15 n, 330
Russell and Hiralal, 19

Samar, Devilal, 312 n
Sankhya, 7
Sanskrit Texts, 12
Scientific American, 73 n
Seligman, C. G., 317
Shah, P. G., 54, 162 n, 174
Simcox, A. H. A., 21
Sodh Patrika (Udaipur), 312 n
Symington, D., 104, 334 ff

Thompson, J. A., 155, 236
Tod, Colonel, 18 f
Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society, 56
Tylor, E. B., 313
Tylor, E. D., 53

Uttara Ramacharitam, 13

Vajasaneyi Samhita, 11
Vanikar, P. G., 154 n, 218 n, 223 n, 324 n
Vedic Index, 11
Venkatachar, C. S., 14 f, 144 n, 172
Vishnu Purana, 12 n

Wandrekar, D. N., 338 n
Warner, 235 n
Wilson, 24

APPENDIX VI

Index of Subjects

Agriculture
—as main occupation of Bhils, 83
—origin of, 83, 175
—the Bhil methods of, 84
Ancestor worship, 167, 170
Anthropometric measurements, of the Bhils, 5 ff
Appearance, of the Bhils, 21 f
Arrow, ceremonial use of, 167
Ash cultivation
—conflict with authorities over, 218 f
—mythological precedent for, 83
—the Bhil tradition of, 83 f

Bamboo, and Bhil civilization, 33
Betrothal ceremonies, 131 f
Blood-groups, of the Bhils, 10
Bow
—at funeral pyre, 162 n
—derivation of name from, 4 n, 14
Bride-price
—as cause of *ghar-jamai* system, 146
—economic basis of, 98
—significance of, 145 f

Calendar, the Bhil, 41
Cattle
—at funeral pyre, 88, 164
—signs of defective, 88
—farming among Bhils, 87
—need for scientific farming of, 333
Census figures
—of Bhils, 1 ff; according to sexes, 146
—of Bhil States, 55
Character, of Bhils, 24
Chiefs
—deified after death, 27
—in villages, 46 f
Chidbirth
—gods affecting, 108
—taboos connected with, 106 f
Children
—death of, 167 f
—games of, 119 f
—naming of, 109 f
—treatment of, 115 ff, 122 ff
Cholera, 156, 193, 197
Cloth
—ceremonial use of,
—not woven by Bhils, 35
Co-operation
—need for development of, 334 ff
—religious beliefs fostering, 200
—the Bhil traditions of, 80, 82, 224
Counting, special ways of, 95, 206 f
Creation, myths of, 174, f, 202 ff
Culture, the Bhil, 312 ff

Dances, the Bhil, 309 ff
Day
—the Bhil divisions of, 42
—the Bhil routine of, 42 ff
Dead
—appearing in dreams, 196
—souls of, 173
—worship of, 167, 170
Death
—god of, 160
—life after, 170, 173
—omens signifying, 160
—unnatural, 168
Descent, accounts of the Bhil, 13 ff
Diseases
—affecting plants, 87
—caused by sorcery, 232

—caused by wrath of gods, ch. VIII
—divination of causes of, 185 f 187, 197
—the Bhil knowledge of, 156
—treated by magic, 187
—treated by medicine, 156
—removed by 'taking out cart',
—treated by prayers and sacrifices, 192
Divination
—after death, 170
—to diagnose diseases, 185 f
—training in, 186
Divorce, 142 ff
Dramas, the Bhil, 286 f
Dreams, 195 ff
Dress
—changes in fashions of, 327
—the traditional Bhil, 35 ff
Drunkenness, see Liquor

Endogamous groups, among the Bhils, 127 f
Evil eye, 117, 189
Exogamy, among the Bhils, 56 ff, 126 f
Fairs
—as economic institution, 200 f
—described, 193 ff
Kinship, 58

Family
—as fundamental unit of Bhil life, 145
—budget for, 99 ff
—organisation of, 65
—position of old men in, 152 ff
Fertility, 150
Festivals
—and economic activities, 86
—deities of, 182
Fire, held sacred by Bhils, 33
Fishing
—implements used in, 89
—mythological origin of, 209
—scope for development of, 333
—the Bhil tradition of, 33, 89 ff
Food, the Bhil, 39
Forest produce
—collection of, by Bhils, 92
—need for improved methods of exploiting, 333
Forgetfulness, the Bhil tendency to, 158
Fowls
—ceremonial uses of, 131 and *passim*
—diseases of, 89
Funeral rites, ch. VII

Games, children's, 119 ff
Gods, of the Bhil pantheon, 31, ch. VIII (I and II) and *passim*

Hills
—as abode of gods, 180 f
—worship of, 180 f
Hindu
—attitude to Bhils, 215
—influence on Bhils, 328, 332 f
History, Bhils in, 17 f, 216 f
Homeland, tribal demand for, 342
House
—ceremonies of building, 27 ff
—co-operative repairing of, 82
—description of the Bhil, 27 ff
Human sacrifice, 173

Idols, 192
Indebtedness
—Bhils' early attachment to, 104
—causes of, 104, 321
—measures for eradication of, 332 f

Jealousy, among co-wives, 151
Joking relations, 62

Lactation, diety of, 62
Land
—holdings of Bhils, 29, 74

—hunger of the Bhil, 330
—reforms suggested, 330 f
—tenure in Bhil areas, 76 f
Language, the Bhil, ch. XI
—Dravidian influence on, 236
—need for school instruction in, 337
Leprosy, 156, 168
Liquor
—Bhils' addiction to, 41, 103
—ceremonial uses of, 220 f and *passim*
—mythological origin of, 219
Love-making, in the Bhil tribe, 124
Lullabies, of the Bhils, 114 f

Malaria, 2
Marriage
—Bhil customs of, 60 f, 128
—ceremony described, 135 ff
—of widows, 128
—peculiar Bhil systems of, 141 f
Medicine, the Bhil knowledge of, 156
Medicine-man, 49
Memorial stones, 192
Menhirs, 168 n
Milk, use in Bhil homes of, 40
Missionaries, Christian, 326
Music, the Bhil instruments of, 31
Muslim
—influence of, among Bhils, 197, 325
—the Bhil culture absorbed by, 325
Mythology, of Bhils, 202 ff

Names
—ceremony of giving, 109
—of Bhil clans, 56 f
—taboos regarding use of, 109 f
—the Bhil pattern of, 109 ff

Oaths, 232 f
Omens, 160, 195 ff
Ordeals, trial by, 172 f, 233 ff
Ornaments, the Bhil, 37 f

Polygamy 149 f
Poultry farming
—Bhils accustomed to, 89
—scope for development of, 333
Pride of the Bhils, 320
Priests, ch. VIII
—Brahmins not acting as, 48, 173
Prohibition, in Bhil areas, 219, 338 f
Property
—communal, in Bhil villages, 76 f
—mode of dividing paternal, 67
Proverbs, the Bhil, 154
Punishment
—by *Panch*, 223, 228 f
—for sorcery, 234 f
—meted by Gods, ch. VIII

Quarrels
—liquor as cause of, 225
—modes of settling, 53, 143

Religious reformers, among Bhils, 322 f
Revolts, history of Bhil, 216 ff
Riddles, 305 ff

Sacrifice
—modes of killing animal for, 165, 167, 180
—offered to dead, ch. VII
—offered to gods, ch. VIII
Sex
—aberrations and crimes, 227 ff
—and division of labour, 80 f
—the Bhil attitude to, 226, 231 f
Shifting cultivation, see Ash cultivation
Shrines, the Bhil, 181, 192
Sin, meaning of, 223
Small-pox, 156, 168
Snake-bite, 156, 187, 191
Songs, the Bhil, 114 f, 256 ff
Sorcery
—and crime 232
—ordination into, 188

—means of detecting, 234
Soul, the Bhil notions of, 169
Stories, from Bhil folklore, 296 ff
Swing, used as cradle, 109

Talismans, 117
Tattooing, 173
Tea, Bhils taking to, 41
Theft
—early Bhil attachment to, 218
—practised by gods, 211 ff
—sanctioned by legend, 216
Timber, felling trees for, (*Kabadu*), 91 and *passim*
Tobacco, the Bhil use of, 65, 103, 165
Trade, in the Bhil land, 93 ff
Transformation, see Sorcery
Turmeric, ceremonial use of, 132 ff

Units of measurement, the Bhil, 94 f

Vegetarianism
—among gods, 185
—preached by reformers, 322 f
Village
—as a unit in Bhil life, 45
—choosing site for, 26 ff
—Panchayat falling into disuse, 322
—personalities of, 144
—social life in, 45 f

Wage-earning, among Bhils, 92
Weapons, the Bhil, 32
Widows, remarriage of, 144
World, mythological account of beginning of, 202 ff

ERRATA

PAGE	LINE	WORD OR WORDS	READ
4	19	asterick	asterisk
7	21	Cenchus	Chenchus
11	8	Mutation	mutation
14	f. n. 28		add p. 52 after Part III
15	f. n. 29	Roy in *Caste* . . . . Vol 17, No. 4	Roy in *Man in India*, Vol. 17, No. 4, Caste . . .
21	27	peace but isolation	peace, isolation
26 and subsequently wherever it occurs	13	Gopehohan	Gopechohan
28	f. n.	*modh*	*mobh*
		hatha	*hath*
29	15	*Yadu*	*Wadu*
31	36	*Yabli*	*Vahli*
31	37	*piyho*	*pivho*
32	2	small stick, *mandol;*	small stick; *mandol,*
34	3	graneries	granaries
34	last	*pendado*	*pandado*
36	15	*chhedu chhuta*	*chhedu chhuto*
38	2nd para	2nd sentence	young persons, especially women....
38	f.n. 3rd para	*yitni*	*vitni*
41	11 and 15	The use *ganja*	The use of *ganja*
67	19	*dokhe*	*dekhe*
69 Do. and subsequently wherever it occurs	f.n. 1 & 2	*Primitive . . . Masri* Herkovitz	*Primitive . . . the . . . Maori* Herkovits
70	11 & f.n. 3	Malinowsky	Malinowski
72	34	accutely	acutely
73	23	habitations	habitations:
81	4 and 5	brothers	brothers etc.
81	10	Brinking	Bringing
83	30	borests	forests
85	29	wratch	wrath
86	26	Holl	Holi
91	5	*modhava*	*nodhava*
93	last line	wicket	wicker
94	7	*Bhoiyas*	*Bhoyis*

PAGE	LINE	WORD OR WORDS	READ
107	24	efficaious	efficacious
111	19	Nawadyo	Mawadyo
113	11	rise	rice
118	31	*yidata*	*vidata*
„	35	aware	aware that
130	1	*pini*	*pinhi*
„	14	givn	given
135	8	united	untied
„	17	*kacharo*	*kachavo*
154	6	Besieds	Besides
161	14	ancesters	ancestors
165	28	antyhing	anything
166	„	*maryu*	*Moryu*
177	16	mine	nine
179	4		
and subsequently wherever it occurs		Agya Khambe	Agyo Khambho
181	3	Olie	Olio
„	18	corcodile	crocodile
182	„	*Dehno*	*Dohno*
184	12	*thokalva*	*thokalya*
192	27	Bhills	Bhils
204	10	*jhoriyas*	*ghorias*
„	15	Jagan Mata	Jogan Mata
208	18	*gefno*	*gofno*
209	14	Habla	Hahla
210	7	*khope*	*khopo*
„	8	*lakhvo*	*lakhyo*
„	11	*gefno*	*gofno*
„	18	Avidh	Avidha
216	8	portect	protect
224	30	joint	join
226	22	society	societary
229	26	cirminal	criminal
234	2	coin dropped	coin is dropped
237	3	suffixn	suffix
	28	*amo*	*amu*
240	11	*To*	*Te*
241	14	*behka*	*bahka*
„	25	*baj*	*bap*
243	7	*payrae*	*poyrae*
272	29	afther	father
276	30	from the	from do the

PAGE	LINE	WORD OR WORDS	READ
284	18	*Vaji*	*Vajir*
286	25	mgiht	might
„	28	spactators	spectators
287	7	*bandi*	*handi*
288	10	„	*handi*
293	32	mised	missed
308	33	let go	let us go
320	9	Naik,	Naik
321	28	occurerd	occured
327	17	Bhils.	Bhils:
	34	Rudendi	Rupdeudi
328	28	*munssib*	*munasib*
330	34	makng	making
337	29	canont	cannot
339	25	unapproachable their	unapproachable that their

On p. 58 in the section on kinship—full discussion on which is to appear later on—it may be noted that kins (meant there to include both the kins and affinas) are called *hagan.* One's father's younger brother is *kako* and one's paternal uncle's (father's brother's) wife is *kaki.* Paternal nephew and niece mean one's brother's son and daughter while a paternal cousin means one's father's brother's son who in Bhili is called *kaka wadiho pavo* and the paternal cousin siser who is one's father's brother's daughter is known as *kaka wadihi baya.* Similarly maternal cousin brother and sister there mean one's mother's brother's son and daughter. *Pojaha* towards the end of the list of kinship terms is the elder brother's wife which unfortunately has not been printed opposite the term.