

Some Approaches to Study of Social Change

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SOME APPROACHES TO STUDY OF SOCIAL CHANGE

I

In any piece of experimental research, the first essential is the designing of the experiment to collect data free from errors due to personal bias, or to peculiarities of the subject or object examined. For a study of change, the factors held to be likely to affect the object of study have to be varied in a controlled manner. Unlike the research worker in physics, chemistry, or even biology, the student of social change can neither set up an experimental apparatus or select the experimental material as he wants nor deliberately alter the conditions of study according to his requirements. He has to accept various existing structures and make a selection from among them. Again, in the study of culture, it is not possible to observe the rites, ceremonies and institutions even in a limited area for all units of society. Only a small fraction of the possible whole can be studied. It is therefore essential to draw representative samples, and then to collect exact data. Statistical methods furnish general principles on which samples drawn from any population may be used to estimate its characteristics. But to obtain information about changes, it is necessary to study several samples which differ in being under operation of different forces, other things remaining constant.

In general, it may be stated that the culture of a people depends on their geographical environment, economic structure and material culture, political background, and history and traditions. The basic human urges operate in these environments. Thus the culture of the Berbers living in the oasis of the Sahara differs profoundly from that of the Eskimos of the Arctic area. The food-collecting and hunting Australian aborigines differ sharply from the food-growing Melanesians of islands nearby, in their culture. The Sema Nagas of Assam and their autocratic chiefs differ in certain traits from the democratic Mundas of Chota Nagpore. Also, the food-gathering and hunting Veddahs have or until recently had a very different concept of property rights in hunting territory from the Australians of similar material culture and racial type. This difference is due to their very different history of contact with other people. It has been observed by modern psychologists that people are moved by: (a) the urge to live, which finds expression in food quest, and also in what is termed, the instinct of self-preservation; (b) the desire to mate and have children; and (c) the ego-drive to feel oneself in the social group and make oneself felt there while aiming at a goal set out for oneself. The study of ancient cultural remains of people of Iraq, Iran, India, and Egypt,

dating from the third millennium before the Christian era, shows unmistakable evidence of all these basic urges. We may therefore assume that these are present in the making of all cultures.

Let us now try to find out how we can ascertain with some degree of exactness the factors correlated to a change in culture. Let c_1, c_2, \dots, c_n denote culture traits at a given period in a given culture Kc in a particular area. The general term "culture trait" will only be used further on, without repeating the phrase "group of integrated culture traits", to denote both. Let Rc_1c_2 denote any two culture traits c_1 and c_2 in relation to each other and the culture as a whole at the time. Then, the sum total of these, or ΣRc_1c_2 , will denote the entire culture observed. Certain of these relations will mainly be functions of the geographic setting, others of the economic structure, and some again of the political form. Some of these relations will also be mainly independent of the external environment, and if the history of the areas be the same, they will depend on basic human nature on the whole. Let there be other cultures Ka, Kb with elements a_1, a_2, \dots , and b_1, b_2, \dots , as for the culture Kc . Using the same convention $\Sigma Ra_1a_2, \Sigma Rb_1b_2$ will denote these entire cultures. Thus, $Ka = \Sigma Ra_1a_2, Kb = \Sigma Rb_1b_2, Kc = \Sigma Rc_1c_2\dots$ It has been noted that in the above-mentioned culture-trait relations, some will depend mainly on basic human nature. Let a_i, a_{i+1}, \dots , up to a_{i+m} represent such traits for culture Ka , and b_p, b_{p+1}, \dots , up to b_{p+q} , and c_r, c_{r+1}, \dots , up to c_{r+i} represent such traits in the cultures Kb and Kc . Then, that part of these cultures will be represented by $\Sigma^m Ra_ia_{i+1}, \Sigma^q Rb_pb_{p+1},$ and $\Sigma^i Rc_rc_{r+1}$. At present there is a tendency on the part of social anthropologists and sociologists to ascribe various culture traits to innate urges of human beings, i.e. offer so-called psychological explanations. It is however evident that if the origin of a particular group of traits is ascribed to what has been termed here basic human nature, then such an explanation, which is but a working hypothesis, has to be tested by observation under certain specific conditions. If the other factors enumerated are, one factor at a time different, but there is repeated recurrence of the group of traits under consideration, then in the absence of diffusion of such traits, such a working hypothesis will be strengthened. It has to be remembered that the frequency of recurrence as counted will be valid only for independent occurrence of such traits. Diffusion of culture and the migration of people may easily lead to multiplication of the occurrence of a group of culture traits over a fairly wide region. This factor I have termed "history" of the people and their culture. I am stressing this point, as misuse of the historical factor in analysing culture has led to all attempts to take this influencing force into account as "pseudo-scientific". One alternative — of psychological explanation — to which some social anthropologists have turned for explanation of many things without establishing correlation is equally unscientific. The general weakness in mathematical equipment among this group of scientists has led them not only to disregard statistical

methods but to dismiss with cursory criticism any attempts to use algebraic methods, for example, of considering all possible alternatives of correlation of certain customs, and eliminating those which do not fit.

II

As an illustration of the method for testing a hypothesis, some details about the present writer's hypothesis of origin of Melanesian dual organization will be noted. In Melanesia, apart from the very large island of New Guinea, there are numerous smaller islands, some of moderate size, and others consisting of clusters of quite small land areas. In a number of these islands, the entire population is divided into two exogamous units, which are termed by social anthropologists moieties, the two halves together forming what is called a dual organization. In some of the smaller islands, there is no such dual unit or any exogamous sib system. In other areas again there are more than two exogamous units. In a number of these areas, secret cults are practised, which are part of the open cults of nearby Polynesian islands, indicating that some people with the culture of Polynesia had settled in these areas, without being able to dominate the Melanesian population and thus to practise these openly. The physical type of Polynesians is quite distinct from that of Melanesians. Polynesians had gone across to their group of islands, coming originally from the Indonesian area. The physical and the cultural data support the conclusion that the earlier population of some of the areas of the islands of Oceania was of Melanesian type. Also a people of higher culture had gone across the part of this area as far as Marquesas and Easter Islands, and New Zealand. One of the cultural characteristics of the Polynesians is their pride in ancestry. Also, they believed that if women had their periods when they were out on a journey in their boats going across the seas, the men in the boat would suffer from leprosy. So, in long hops across the seas, women would not accompany sea-faring parties. Such men, landing in populated islands, would of necessity take women of the earlier folk as wives. Boys and girls born of such unions would have a richer cultural heritage, and finer features generally. They would also have pride of ancestry.

If the immigrant men were closely related, which is very likely, they might have objection to marriage in their own group; or it might be that this idea and practice came from the earlier folk whose women became mistresses of the houses of the newcomers. Marriages of men as well as women would therefore be of necessity with the earlier people. But both men and women would stay on in their new settlement, with better houses, more plentiful food supply, and higher cultural prestige. The men in each generation would have to leave their ancestral house to the sister and her children, and make their own houses for their wives and children, for, the sister's husband was not of their culture and not skilled enough. This kind of partial segregation, if continued for several generations,

would lead to the development of (a) the custom of handing down ancestral property to the daughter or sister's children while self-acquired property was enjoyed by a man and his wife and children, (b) two groups in the island, one of which had finer features, were better organized and worked together smoothly. Eventually, the older folk would take up the culture of the new-comers and get organized. Then they would be strong enough to insist either on their wives coming to their houses or their sister's husband coming to live in their sister's house. As the house and land of the women of the immigrants would be of better quality, the second alternative will be more likely to be adopted. This would be in keeping with the already developed rules of inheritance. Descent would follow inheritance rules of ancestral property. The separate settlement of immigrants would disappear but the exogamy of two groups of matrilineal moieties would remain, along with avoidance of marriage of persons born in the same house. For, the house would now be the equivalent of the settlement of near-relatives, in the changed circumstances. The actual difference in physical features and racial characteristics of the two moieties would disappear in the course of a few generations but the traditions of such differences would persist, the moiety in the original settlement claiming superiority. This hypothesis was put forward by the writer as a more likely alternative to the gerontocracy theory of Rivers.¹ As the time required for assimilation and final equilibrium would depend on the relative numbers of the two folk, and as immigrants are likely to come in small numbers everywhere in the area, it followed that this time-factor would depend on the size of the island, if already populated by Melanesians. As a working hypothesis it was suggested that the need of women in the early period would lead to a woman once married being kept as a wife in the house even when her husband died. The brother of the dead man, and in his absence, the sister's son, who was the heir, would take up the woman. Later when the earlier folk asserted themselves, a man among them marrying a woman of immigrants would seek to keep the better house and property in his family of birth. This would strengthen the already developed custom of levirate and marriage with mother's brother's widow. If this hypothesis is correct, it follows that in a larger island where competition for property would be keener, and the immigrant folk more completely dominated, certain even more anomalous forms of marriage would develop. Some of the details are worked out in a paper published by the author in 1931.² In working out these details, all possible forms of kin-marriage, of persons of the same generation, of persons one generation apart and also two generations apart were tabulated. Certain of these forms were shown to be debarred under

¹ Rivers W. H. R., *History of Melanesian Society*, Vols. I & II, 1914.

² Chattopadhyay K. P., 'Contact of Peoples as Affecting Marriage Rules', Presidential Address, Section of Anthropology, *Proceedings of the Indian Science Congress*, 1931.

the rule of moiety exogamy; others were indicated as tabooed by the objection to marriages of children born of parents who had grown up in the same house. This type of exogamy I have termed "household exogamy". Eliminating these two groups of marriages, there remain those types which are permissible. Of these only a few help to retain a woman once married and also to continue control over her property in the consanguine family of her first husband. These marriages are therefore likely to occur more frequently than other permissible, i.e. possible marriages. Also the more anomalous forms of marriage would occur in larger islands. Finally, if any of the settlement folk moved to adjoining islands with their women, or immigration had occurred on similar lines along a chain of islands, we would get similar dual organizations in these areas. If, however, any of the settlement folk moved to an unpopulated small island, they would have to intermarry among themselves. Here at first there would be only one settlement; but if as suggested, the house is the real equivalent of the settlement there would develop household exogamy. One feature of household exogamy is that it debar marriage of children of two brothers, of two sisters and also of a brother and sister. The first two kinds of children are termed parallel cousins and the last category, cross-cousins. These cousins are, however, of two kinds really:

* M.B.D., \leftrightarrow F.S.Z. and F.S.D., \leftrightarrow M.B.Z.

One of the conclusions which follows from my hypothesis of origin of dual organization in these Melanesian islands is that cross-cousin marriage should be absent wherever there is exogamous dual division of society resulting from immigration of a people of what is probably proto-Polynesian culture. It should also be absent where there are no exogamous moieties or sibs but only exogamy on the basis of extended households. This conclusion will not however hold when there are more than two exogamous groups. Alternative explanations had been put forward by Rivers, Mrs. Seligmann³ and Deacon.⁴ Apart from the fact that the persistence of tradition of finer physical type, and of better organization does not fit in with those hypotheses, the likelihood of greater frequency of certain existing types of marriage cannot be deduced from them. All that they indicate is that these types of marriage are permissible. Possibility of an occurrence and probability of its frequent occurrence are, however, two distinct conditions. Also the hypotheses of Seligmann rests on the assumption of prevalence of cross-cousin marriage in the dual areas. But according to the hypothesis put forward by the present writer, cross-

* Abbreviations for kin used by the author for many years :

F = father; M = mother; B = brother; S = sister;
H = husband; W = Wife; D = daughter; Z = son.

F.S.H. = A related person like father's sister's husband.

³ Seligmann B. Z., 'Incest and Descent; Their Influence on Social Organization', *J.R.A.J.*, 1929.

⁴ Deacon A. B., 'The Regulation of Marriage in Ambrym', *J.R.A.J.*, 1927.

cousin marriage is negatively associated with dual organization. This conclusion may be subjected to a statistical test. In some of the areas, for example in the chain of small islands known as Banks Islands, there is dual organization without actual cross-cousin marriage. The moieties in each island have separate names, but each moiety in every one of these islands corresponds to a particular moiety in another island. Thus if the pairs of moieties in different islands are A and B, C and D, E and F and so forth, it will be found that A, C, E, etc. are equivalents, and so also B, D, F, and similar sections of society. A man of moiety A going to an island with moieties C and D will be accepted as a member of C. Now this kind of social structure may have developed either by similar migrations of the same folk to the whole series, or by overflow of inter-marrying groups into the chain of islands. In the first case, the social structure of each island will be an independent statistic; in the second case, the whole chain will be equivalent to one statistic. There is, however, a nearby island, Merlav, which resembles the dual area of Banks Islands in general culture except that in place of dual organization it has multiple exogamous sibs. On the hypothesis put forward such a society might have cross-cousin marriage. There are other islands at a distance from this area, but in

Table 1: EXOGAMOUS DIVISIONS AND MARRIAGE TYPES IN MELANESIAN ISLANDS

<i>Area</i>	<i>No. of Exogamous divisions</i>	<i>Marriage permitted or frequent</i>	<i>Cross-cousin marriage tabooed</i>
1. Banks Islands (Mota, etc.)	Two	B. W., and M. B. W.	Yes No
2. Merlav	Ten	B.W., B.M.W., and cross-cousin	No
3. Torres Islands	Three	M.B.D., and E.B.D.	No
4. New Hebrides	Two	M.B.W., and other types more anomalous	Yes
5. Ambrym	Dual Matrilineal, with patrilineal sections across	M.B.D.D.	Yes
6. Eddystone	Kindred group	—	Yes
7. Saab ⁵	Kin-group	—	Yes
8. Trobriand Island ⁶	Four	Cross-cousin (F.S.D. type)	No
9. Ysabel	Three	Cross-cousin	No
10. Guadalcanar	Six	Cross-cousin	No
11. Savo	Five matrilineal clans	—	Not found

⁵ Ivens W. G., *Melanesians of the South-East Solomon Islands*, London, 1927.

⁶ Malinowski B., *The Sexual Life of Savages*, London, 1929.

Melanesia, which have dual organization, and also a few which have no exogamous sib or moiety organization and no tradition of difference in physical type or organizing capacity. There are other areas which have large multiple exogamous units like sibs. The data about Melanesian social organization from literature available in our libraries is shown in Table I.

Items 1 to 4 and 9 to 11 are taken from River's work referred to earlier. For Ambrym the data is taken from Deacon's paper noted before. Other references are given in the footnotes.

From the data available in our libraries, it is evident that the predicted negative correlation between dual organization and cross-cousin marriage, and also between kin-group exogamy and cross-cousin marriage is supported by facts.

In this instance, social and economic forces are seen to have determined a certain type of social structure and marriage pattern. It may be noted that the conclusions drawn here may not apply to all dual structures in different areas and cultures. For example, a closed social group consisting of two exogamous and intermarrying units will develop, in a community where both types of cross-cousin marriage M.B.D. as well as F.S.D. are prevalent, as a more or less compulsive type of mating. No correspondence of moieties as found in Melanesia will occur in such case. As Grigson¹ pointed out this type of structure and not true dual organization is found among Gonds of Bastar.

There are in Bastar, phratries, i.e. groups of clans which cannot intermarry. They call themselves brother clans. In Orcha and Chhota Dongar Pargana in Bastar, the clan Usendi heads such a phratry of seven clans which are debarred from intermarriage. The Usendi group intermarry with a phratry of 14 clans headed by Jugho. In the Barsur Mar Pargana, the Usendi phratry intermarry with the Gume phratry. If the social organization was on dual moiety basis like that of Banks Islands, the Gume group would have been equivalent to the Jugho group in their area and intermarriage between them tabooed. This is not the case; these two groups intermarry on preferential basis, with both types of cross-cousin marriage.

III

In another piece of research, the principles enumerated were applied to decide whether certain traditions about marriage rules were affecting the particular society or not. The Santals are divided into seven major sibs, and four minor sibs, two of which are practically non-existent. There is a twelfth unit consisting of Santals who have intermarried with other folk and are outside the marriageable pale of Santal society. Of the major sibs, two have a tradition about an ancient quarrel when they used to live in their own territories, limited by boundaries for each sib. There are old songs, sung at ceremonials mentioning the quarrel which resulted in a murderous war between the two sibs. These two sibs, Marandi and

¹ Grigson W., *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*, London, 1938.

Kisku, are said not to intermarry, or at least to feel repugnance to intermarriage. In actual fact, some Kisku-Marandi marriages are found. As the likelihood of marriage between two sibs will depend on their numerical strength in a given area and also other factors, it is evident that the reliability of the tradition cannot be judged off-hand. A survey of Santal villages in undivided Bengal, selected on scientific random sampling, had been carried out by the present writer.⁸ The sibs of both parties in all marriages in the genealogies of the Santal families studied, where known, were tabulated to obtain marriage frequencies for the whole community. As the sample was random, it was permissible to take the ratio of total frequencies for each sib to the grand total for all sibs as likelihood for each sib concerned and thus to calculate the expected frequency for intermarriage between any two sibs. The difference between expected and actual frequencies was ascertained and the ancient tradition of enmity and repugnance was found to have enormously reduced the frequency of Kisku-Marandi intermarriage. A political event—an actual war—had such an effect for centuries. Other things were here equal for the two sibs; they were in the same geographical area and had the same culture. The new factor was this political trouble.

A report had been made by some earlier workers that the Santals did not marry in the sib of their mother. This report was also tested with the help of similar data, and proved to be wrong. It was found on the contrary that there was a large bias in favour of a man marrying in the sib of his mother. There was also some psychological resistance to admitting that such marriages took place. If there had been earlier a custom of marrying the mother's brother's daughter, and it had later been suppressed due to external influence, there might survive such a bias to marriage in the mother's sib but a resistance to admitting it. Behaviour attitudes resulting from the earlier but now defunct custom, actually not integrated to the suppressed custom, but related to it, would survive. Actually more light is shed on the practice if we look at M.B.D. marriage from the point of view of the girl instead of the boy who marries. The girl marries a man of the family in which her father's sister has married, for this is what M.B.D. marriage means to her. This amounts to women of different generations of a family and sib going to the same family-sib group (different from that of the women), and in absence of the custom of cross-cousin marriage to the same sib. Normally, where M.B.D. marriage is prevalent, the mating may occur with a second cousin of the same sib as the actual cross-cousin, if such a first cousin is not available for marriage. In the absence of such near cousins, a girl of the sib of the mother's brother may be married to continue actual M.B.D. marriage thereafter. Usually such a girl would be distantly related. Certain behaviour attitudes still survive

⁸ Chattopadhyay K. P., 'Santal Sibs, Their Traditional History and Observed Intermarriage Frequencies', *Proceedings of the National Institute of Sciences of India*, Vol. 23, Nos. 1-2, 1957.

among Santals indicating that a marriage form having effects similar to M.B.D. marriage had earlier been present. The full details of the data and discussion have been published elsewhere and are not hence repeated here. In this instance, a peculiar psychological attitude, not expected in the culture normally, indicated that an earlier custom had become submerged but was still influencing social behaviour. In a paper⁹ published two decades ago it was pointed out that outward behaviour in society runs somewhat on the same lines as for individuals, in case of psychological conflicts. It is not that there is a "mass-psyche" for social groups. But certain items of knowledge are not admitted in public as they conflict with existing accepted traditional beliefs and the practices based thereon. The effect is strikingly like individual behaviour, influenced by what is termed a "complex" in the "unconscious". The members of the social group in private realize the correctness of the knowledge denied. Hence behaviour attitudes, arising from such suppressed knowledge, so long as they do not conflict with existing fundamental cultural practices, are displayed. Thus, in Trobriand, biological fatherhood is publicly denied. But a father is pleased if the son is said to resemble him. Children are believed to be born through entry of matrilineally related ancestral spirits into the womb of the mother, and not through sex relation with a man. Property management, care of children of the sister, and authority rest with the mother's brother, integrally related with such beliefs. Nevertheless, to say that a man resembles his mother's brother in appearance is shocking. It suggests brother-sister incest. Clearly, here the suppressed knowledge has been affecting behaviour attitudes. I propose to use the term "private knowledge" for such submerged knowledge, which does not come openly to the surface but indirectly affects behaviour. The other type of open knowledge may be distinguished as "public knowledge". In the case of Santals, their "private knowledge" about a suppressed and blotted out social custom has been evidently influencing their behaviour attitudes.

IV

A direct study of social change for non-literate communities can be made only for the recent past. If earlier reports on the basis of exact collection of data are available, the time co-ordinate of the curve of change may be extended. The best way to study recent social change is, first of all, to have a brief pilot survey in the area and among the people concerned, and then to collect exact data from random samples of proper size. The type of data collected should be carefully analysed into simple traits or group of traits about which straightforward questions can be asked and exact answers obtained. Such questions and answers are to be drawn up on the basis of the pilot survey. It should then be applied in combina-

⁹ Chatteropadhyay K. P., 'Conflict and Social Behaviour', *Essays in Anthropology*, presented to Rai Bahadur Sarat Chandra Roy, Lucknow, 1940.

tion with the genealogical method of enquiry, with such use of case history method as may be required. The genealogical method, although originally devised by Rivers for collection of exact data regarding kinship terms and functions, can be extended to study other traits of culture with accuracy. When combined with statistical random sampling it enables the collection of representative samples over a period covered by three generations and sometimes more. This method of approach was used to collect data to ascertain how far major social changes occur under the impact of different social and economic forces. The general principles enunciated earlier were naturally followed. One important point should be clarified and stressed before setting out the data and results. It is about questions put and answers received. It is essential that the question should be unambiguous. It should be possible completely to answer the question by "yes" or "no", or by number or a noun out of several possible alternatives. For tabulation, the alternatives need not be coded when collecting data, as there should always be left room for remarks if the answer is qualified. But the aim should be to get a specific unqualified answer. The pilot survey may have open-end questions, as they are termed, and elicit somewhat mixed up answers. But from a study of such questions it should be possible to split up the queries into what I have termed "simple" questions. Unfortunately, many social research workers frame questions for schedules which are really two or more similar questions taken together. These may be termed "compound" questions. Sometimes the questions are even more complex and consist of several different questions. Borrowing a term from technology, such questions may be referred to as "composite". It may not be easy to split up compound and composite questions into simple queries capable of being given simple answers of the type noted. But the skill of the social scientist as in the case of the physical scientist has here to be displayed in designing such questions so that the answers will not be compound or composite. Some workers even think that after putting the question, explanations are to be added, as required. It is not realized that by adding explanations, the experimental conditions are being altered. There is a mistaken notion that it is permissible to use such loose questions, and that statistical treatment will remedy the lack of exactness in answers or deviations due to different conditions in which questions are put. In any scientific study the first objective should be collection of exact data. It is only after this has been done and other things are equal that statistical treatment can be of benefit. Stress is laid on this point which may seem obvious as recently there has been disregard of this in practice in surveys by several learned bodies.

For a comparative study of social change in the recent past, to ascertain which factors were of greater importance, tribal folk living in a forest area were first studied. Next, tribal folk more in contact with neighbouring advanced peasantry were observed. Finally a study was made of the advanced peasantry in an industrial area. In each case changes in

marriage forms will be discussed, as this institution leads to the formation of the family, which is the basic unit of the society.

V

The forest folk studied were the Korkus of Melghat, which is a taluc in the forest and hill area between Ellichpur and Dharni, in Berar. Until the British Government took over administration of this area from the Nizam, the Korkus had lived by shifting cultivation, and by cutting and selling timber in their free time. They supplemented their diet of bread and vegetables with flesh obtained from hunting game and by occasional catches of fish. Due to the imposition of restrictions on shifting cultivation, on cutting and sale of timber, and also on hunting, shortly after the area came under the British rule, their economic condition deteriorated. This change started in the eighties of the last century, due to gradual tightening up of the forest administration sometime after the area was ceded by the Nizam, and continued for a whole generation. A further economic set-back occurred when the government started timber yard in 1931 and compelled the Korkus to work there. A certain amount of forest work was also imposed on them for nominal payment. This type of *begar*, as the Korkus call it, as well as timber depot work interfered with their planting and watching over crops, and gave them poorer harvests. Full details and evidence of the economic deterioration are set out in an earlier paper.¹⁰ One more change occurred among Korkus. The cash wages of a man engaged as a helper in his own village (in addition to food and clothing) rose from Rs. 12 or so per annum two generations ago, to Rs. 25 to 30 or thereabout some years before the collection of field data by the writer. There was comparatively little other alteration in their general culture as reported by earlier observers. The change in marriage customs in the forest villages were therefore likely to be linked to economic changes. Details were obtained of the types of marriage found among them, and also the frequency of these in three generations. Genealogies were obtained of old men with married sons and daughters and with grand-children. Some of the latter were also married and the type of marriage of each was noted. The prevalent types were :

- (a) *Bcao*, where a large payment of about Rs. 150 to 180 has to be paid to the girl's father besides spending another Rs. 70 or so in giving two feasts. The girl's father has also to give a feast;
- (b) *Lokor*, where only one feast is given by the groom's folk and none by the bride's people, and the ceremony is abbreviated. Only Rs. 80 to 120 are paid to the girl's father. As he does not have to give a feast, he knocks off the approximate cost of it; and
- (c) *Lemjena*, in which no payment is made to the girl's father and no feasts are given. The boy works without wages as a helper (servant) in

¹⁰ Chattopadhyay K. P., 'Economic Condition of Korkus of Melghat Forest', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Letters*, Vol. XII, No. 1, 1946.

the girl's father's house. He served for 10 to 12 years in the old days. At present, the *lemjena* refuses to work beyond four or five years and this has been accepted in these villages as permissible.¹¹

The reduction of payment to the girl's father for *lokor* type of marriage when expenses of a feast were eliminated, and of the period of service in the *lemjena* type when wages had risen a good deal, both indicate, among these villagers, an awareness of the economic requirements and of the economic changes occurring, as well as of adjustments needed. We should therefore expect a shift from the expensive *beao* form of marriage to the less expensive *lokor* type, and finally, to the inexpensive *lemjena* form, in the course of two generations from old men. This has actually occurred.

Apart from these three types of marriage which depend on payment or service in lieu of payment, there are some other types in which the expense is comparable with that of *lokor*, or it may be even less. If a boy and a girl elope, or if a girl forces herself on a man (who has been making love to her but wants to back out) by entering his house by its private door, or if the girl is a widow or divorced woman, payment is much reduced. For the first two of these four kinds of less expensive marriage, the reasons for the union are social. The other two types are not wholly so determined. But economic deterioration may affect their frequency also to some extent. Table 2 shows the three forms first noted, and the second category of four types combined under "other types". Generation I is of old men, and II and III are of those succeeding as noted earlier.

Table 2 : PERCENTAGE OF MARRIAGE TYPES BY GENERATIONS

Gene- ration	Marriage Types				Total
	Expensive	Less expensive		Inexpensive	
	<i>Beao</i>	<i>Lokor</i>	Other types	<i>Lemjena</i>	
I	52.2	4.3	26.1	17.4	100
II	38.3	19.1	10.6	32.0	100
III	14.3	14.3	Nil	71.4	100

The sharp deterioration in economic condition along with the large reduction in the period of service accounts for the high rise in the frequency of the inexpensive type.

VI

The Santals are a far more numerous people, numbering several millions, and are settled in the three states of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa. Part of

¹¹ Chattopadhyay K. P., 'Korku Marriage Customs and Some Changes', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Letters*, Vol. XII, No. 2, 1946.

Bengal has gone to East Pakistan with a certain number of Santal villages and hamlets in the area separated. In Assam, there are large numbers in the tea gardens. The survey was conducted amongst the settled Santal population in undivided Bengal and elsewhere. Here a part of the data from West Bengal only will be discussed. A list of all villages inhabited by Santals in Bengal had first been obtained; an adequate random sample of villages was then selected and these were studied. As there were some differences in some of the areas of Santal occupation, stratified random sampling was done, using homogeneous sub-divisions as unit areas for sampling. Here also the genealogical method combined with simple questions was used to collect exact data.

The following kinds of marriages were recognized in Santal society :

- (a) *Bapla* : A full-fledged ceremonial form, involving several feasts, as among Korkus. The payment at marriage is, however, quite small.
- (b) An abbreviated form of the ceremonial type. Widow remarriage often occurs in this cheap form.
- (c) Marriage, with residence of the man in the wife's father's house.
- (d) Elopement.
- (e) *Itut* : Forcible marriage with a girl by a boy.
- (f) Intrusion marriage by girls, as among Korkus.
- (g) Levirate and sororate.

For the type (b) the cost is negligible. The type (c) is different from *lemfena* among Korkus. Here, a man who has only daughters tries to get one of his daughters married to a boy who will stay in his house as *ghardi jawae* (son-in-law in the house). Some land belonging to the man is arranged to be settled on the daughter and her husband, in consultation with his agnatic kin. Normally, such land and all other properties go to the brother's son and in his absence to similar agnatic kin, no real property being inherited by daughters. For intrusion marriage no payment is made for the girl, nor is any feast given. The elopement and the forcible marriage were formerly subject to penal measures, but in the present generation the penalty is waived. A modification of elopement is marriage by mutual agreement. This is also inexpensive. Levirate and sororate also involve no expense. Among Santals, these forms of marriage are reported in public assembly when some festival occurs and people come together for it.

In the Jhargram sub-division of Midnapore district, Santal settlements are old and their history is known fairly well. McAlpin had carried out a comprehensive survey early in this century to ascertain how Santal villages in Western Bengal had fared. He found that Santal village economy had suffered in most of the areas; but it had suffered less in the area of the older zemindars. A good part of Jhargram sub-division comes under this group. Midnapore Sadar sub-division, on the other hand, is an area of a different kind. Most of the land here was already populated by the Hindu peasantry before the Santals entered Bengal. In this sub-division the Santals have

come mainly as agricultural labourers. A few have little bits of land, obtained mostly on share-cropping basis. Forest land, also belonged to Hindus and could not be occupied by settling there and clearing it. Very few families of Santals were, therefore, able to obtain economic holdings. A good many of them had come from Jhargram side and from Bankura Sadar which is also an old area of Santal settlement in Bengal with a history similar, in respect of Santals, to that of Jhargram sub-division.

The distribution of land among Santals in these areas was studied in the survey of 1945 by the present writer. The details of cultivated land owned (plus half of shared land) are noted in Table 3. It should be remembered that a holding of less than two acres does not provide subsistence, in the areas of Santal settlement and that the Santals live by agriculture and agricultural labour.¹²

Table 3 : PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES AND SIZE OF LAND-HOLDINGS AMONGST MIDNAPORE SANTALS

Sub-division	Average size of holding per family	Size of holdings in acres			Total
		0—2	2—5	5 and more	
Jhargram	2.7	49.7	35.9	14.4	100
Midnapore Sadar	0.5	96.2	1.9	1.9	100

The marriage types prevalent among the Santals in the area surveyed were tabulated, on the basis of age groups as follows:

- I. Persons above 50 years of age, a few being over 70;
- II. Persons below 50 but over 30 years of age;
- III. Persons below 30 years of age.

The total number of marriages thus classified were a little over 1,740. As Santal boys marry at 20 or 21 years of age in rural areas, the marriage periods correspond roughly to:

- I. Before 1915, and from 1890-95;
- II. After 1915, but before 1935;
- III. Between 1935 and 1945 (years of survey):

Table 4 shows the distribution of marriage frequencies as under different types for different generations.¹³

The shift in frequency from the more expensive to the cheap but formal type is unmistakable for Jhargram, where there has been a steady deterioration in the matter of land-holding. For Midnapore Sadar, the distribution of land held shows that the Santals have practically no land to lose. This has been so for the past two generations. Hence the more expensive

¹² Chattopadhyay K. P., *Report on Santals*, Calcutta, 1947.

¹³ Chattopadhyay K. P., 'Changes in Santal Marriage Customs', Paper read at the International Congress of Anthropology, Vienna, 1952, (not printed).

Table 4 : FREQUENCY OF MARRIAGE TYPES BY GENERATIONS

Sub-division	Generation	Bapla	Cheap but formal types	Inexpensive but informal types	Itut	Total
Jhargram	I	57	21	18	4	100
	II	50	31	14	5	100
	III	44	37	14	5	100
Midnapore Sadar	I	32	42	26	—	100
	II	32	41	26	1	100
	III	32	49	17	2	100

type has not changed in frequency. It should be added that *bapla* marriage in Midnapore Sadar sub-division costs less than in Jhargram where the traditional formalities survive in strength in the partly intact villages. What is of interest is the drop in the inexpensive but informal types in both areas. As the marriage from *ghardi jawae* has been included under "informal" types, the total for this head has been increased. Otherwise the drop would have been more. The practice of taking a woman and living with her as husband and wife, deferring formal notification to society for many months, or even years in some cases, appears to Hindu neighbours like keeping a concubine. It appears that this social factor arising out of contact with Hindus has been operative in causing a reduction in frequency of this type in favour of one a bit more expensive. Due to spread of primary education in these areas, awareness of views of the neighbouring community has increased of late. For the custom of *itut*, the change in frequency is small, but the trend towards a slight increase is present here as well as elsewhere. The non-enforcement of penalty, seems to have brought about this change. The total frequency naturally has remained low, as the circumstances leading up to it are not common. The data for *itut* from other areas such as Mayurbhanj, where a variant has developed, support this view. A similar change seems to have occurred in the case of the Hos of related culture in respect to the *apartipi*, or abduction type of marriage.

VII

In the survey of industrial labourers in the jute mill belt, north of Calcutta, the random sampling was done by the Indian Statistical Institute, and the method of Latin squares was used to eliminate personal bias as far as possible. The dozen surveyors were trained by the present writer and the social data were collected by the genealogical method. Part of the field work was checked by him by visits. In all 2,158 marriages were

analysed over a spread of three generations.¹⁴ From a survey of prices and wages, it appears that in India between 1890 and 1914 "prices rose markedly and wages followed through with a lag," and for jute labour, "for several years, their real wages were reduced to one-third".¹⁵ In another report it is noted that "by 1923 the workers were generally better off than before the war".¹⁶ This improvement was maintained definitely up to 1932 and probably for a few years more. Real wages fell again thereafter, and sharply after the outbreak of the second world war. The marriages were tabulated as follows, by age of the woman married:

- I. Above 40 and up to 70 (in 1949);
- II. Below 40, but above 25; and
- III. Age 25, or less.

The average age at marriage of 2,542 women among these labourers came out as 11.2 years. Hence the three periods work out as:

- I. 1890 to 1920;
- II. 1921 to 1936, and
- III. 1937 to 1949.

Half of the workers had come from rural families, in which the father was engaged in agriculture, or agricultural labour. Only twenty-five per cent. are sons of industrial labourers. The marriages in this last group represent mainly marriages of actual workers, whereas for the group of all labourers, a large proportion of marriages tabulated are of village-folk who follow farming (in the sense indicated). The latter are mainly landless labourers, and share-croppers; 90 per cent. have less than two acres of land. Payment at marriage to the girl's father is usual among Hindus of the cultivator and artisan class; among Muslims, a settlement is made on the bride. As real wages rose or fell, some adjustments were made in the matter of these payments. Among the two groups, (1) all labourers, and (2) such of them as are sons of industrial workers, we find the following percentages:

Table 5: GENERATIONWISE DISTRIBUTION OF BRIDE PAYMENT

Type of payment	Percentage of total number studied					
	All Labourers Generation			Labourers with workers as fathers Generation		
	I	II	III	I	II	III
Bride payment immediate	30	44	36	40	48	39
Bride payment deferred	70	56	64	60	52	61
	100	100	100	100	100	100

¹⁴ Chattopadhyay K. P., *Socio-Economic Survey of Jute Labour*, Calcutta University, 1952.

¹⁵ Buchanan D. H., *The Development of Capitalist Enterprise in India*, New York, 1934.

¹⁶ *Report of the Royal Commission of Labour of India*, Calcutta, 1931.

In the case of the whole group, as well as for the sons of workers, the percentages are for those cases where payment or settlement is made at marriage by the bridegroom, or his folk. It will be evident that the adjustment made with regard to deferment reveals awareness of the changes in wages occurring in the three periods.

Among most Muslims, whether the social group is of high or low status, it is usual to settle something on the bride at marriage. Among Hindus on the other hand, high castes do not pay anything at marriage to the bride's family. Such payment is restricted to agricultural and artisan castes, and to tribal folk. When a section of a so-called "lower caste" wants to raise its social status, it tries to get rid of the payment to the bride's folk, as a mark of its higher status. This is a well-known and observed phenomenon in Hindu society in Bengal, and adjoining states. If, among agricultural castes, a labourer works in Calcutta on steady wages, he tends to have, or claims to have higher status than when he works in the village as a labourer. Analysis of the marriage data for Hindu workers — about 1,500 in all — may be expected to throw light on the type of adjustments made among them.

Table 6 : GENERATIONWISE DISTRIBUTION OF HINDU MARRIAGE BY PAYMENT-AT-MARRIAGE CRITERION

Generation	Percentage of total number studied				Total	Total No. studied
	Payment to bride	Payment to groom	No payment to either	Widow marriage		
I	14.1	69.6	10.6	5.7	100	207
II	15.6	71.3	8.7	4.4	100	541
III	14.1	73.4	10.6	1.9	100	743

Actually these statistics include marriages from quite different areas like Bengal, Bihar, and U.P. where the marriage customs vary, the economic condition of the workers is different, and the family structures differ. Hence no general conclusions can be drawn, except in two respects. On the whole, there is a steady reduction in widow remarriage. The drop in the second period, in the frequency of this marriage would have been greater but for a rise in one state, Bihar. Here the large number of deaths, following the influenza epidemic of 1919, left behind numerous widows, as also men without wives. Among the Bihari labourers there is a numerous element which practises widow remarriage and there was consequently in this period an increase in the frequency of this mating. The following figures give the relative frequencies of widow marriage in different areas. There is clear evidence of imitation of the higher castes in respect of discouragement of widow remarriage over the whole period 1890-1949, it

Table 7 : GENERATIONWISE DISTRIBUTION OF WIDOW MARRIAGE IN DIFFERENT PROVINCES

Generation	Percentage of total number studied		
	Bengal	Bihar	U. P.
I	3.2	4.8	7.6
II	1.2	6.4	4.0
III	0.0	2.7	1.8

being maximum in Bengal and the least in Bihar. The trend towards adoption of higher caste customs is also apparent in the slow and steady rise in the frequency of payment to the bridegroom at marriage. This trend is much more clearly visible in the case of Bengali workers from data noted in Table 8. The average earning of these men (Bengali Hindus), in 1949, was Rs. 141 per month which was adequate for living with wife and children at the minimum of the accepted standard of nutritional requirement and with other amenities. The pay was adequate for this group also before the war; it was Rs. 46 per month. In consequence, we have in Bengal a steady increase in the proportion of frequency of payment to the groom and a steady and similar drop in payment to the girl's folk.

Table 8 : GENERATIONWISE DISTRIBUTION OF MARRIAGE OF BENGALI HINDU WORKERS BY PAYMENT-AT-MARRIAGE CRITERION

Generation	Percentage of total number studied			
	Payment to bride's folk	Payment to bridegroom	No payment	Widow marriage
I	28.1	56.2	12.5	3.2
II	15.3	65.9	17.6	1.2
III	11.4	74.6	14.0	0.0

An interesting point to note is regarding the intermediate practice that had developed in marriage, where no payment was made by either side. Due to the claim on one side for payment for the girl and on the other for honorific payment like *tilak* for the boy, this practice had emerged as a compromise. In the Bengal villages where the boy's family has means but socially has not prestige enough to be able to insist on and to get payment to the groom, this custom is found. Here it seems that some of the people accustomed to get bride payment agreed to no payment, while others went further and paid something to the groom. The decrease in bride payment in generation II is 12.8 per cent.; but the corresponding

increase in bridegroom payment is only 9.7 per cent.; whereas there is a rise of 5.1 per cent. in "no payment" category. There is an excess of two per cent. in this last category. It may be pointed out that widow marriage involves no payment. In this generation the rise in "no payment" is equal to the drop of two per cent. in widow marriage. In the third generation, the marginal-status people who could wangle "no payment" as a compromise, now gained further ground and realized payment to the groom due to continued better position of the men. The men who were drawing adequate living wages in this period as well thereby consolidated their higher status. Widow marriage did not occur at all as it did not fit into this pattern of avoidance of customs not approved by higher castes.

In U.P. the family wages of Hindu workers were Rs. 95 in this period, and Rs. 23 only in the earlier, i.e. second period. Both amounts are much below living wages. The actual amounts required were Rs. 144 and Rs. 38 respectively for the two periods. Hence the U.P. Hindu labourers could not expect a gain in prestige status as occurred in Bengal in any of these periods. But the social force to conform to upper caste customs was operating here as well. We have seen earlier that it has affected all groups in spite of the influence of economic forces in the opposite direction on certain occasions. It is apparent from Table 9 that the low wages drawn, Rs. 23 against a requirement of Rs. 38 per month in period II, (1921-36), resulted in gain of no prestige for the U.P. industrial worker. Again, in

Table 9 : GENERATIONWISE DISTRIBUTION OF MARRIAGE AMONG WORKERS IN U.P. BY PAYMENT-AT-MARRIAGE CRITERION.

Generation	Percentage of total number studied			
	Payment to bride	Payment to groom	No payment	Widow marriage
I	10.9	70.7	10.8	7.6
II	15.8	73.9	6.3	4.0
III	14.5	76.6	7.1	1.8

Bengal, no family woman worked in a factory. The man was the sole earner. Hence he could dictate terms. Among U.P. Hindus, on the other hand, more than one-third of the earners were women of the family. Clearly, in such a community, a male worker in the Calcutta industrial belt cannot claim payment from the girl's folk in marriage. At the same time the steady drop in widow marriage and slow increase in bridegroom payment indicate the continued operation of the upper caste imitation force. But the increase in the second case is very slow because of economic reasons. In generations II and III, the total of "bride payment" and "no payment" has practically remained stationary. In period I

(1890-1920), it should be remembered, the surplus agricultural labourers were coming in large number to Bengal, due to lack of employment at home. The Indian Industrial Commission¹⁷ has noted that in 1886 all the hands in the jute mills were Bengalees, but in 1906, about two-thirds were immigrants, while in 1916 this proportion rose to 90 per cent. In the beginning the immigrant men drawing steady wages in Calcutta would have greater prestige, but when large numbers had already come to Calcutta, and their wages turned out to be inadequate to maintain a family, there would be a revulsion. This is indicated by the figures for generations I and II noted in the table.

In Bihar, the presence of a large group of people favouring widow marriage weakens the social force of imitation of higher castes. The data for widow marriage makes it clear that the social force of upper caste imitation was not dominant. It is an indicator, inversely, of this force. Hence we should expect a similar weakening of the social trend to pay *tilak* to the bridegroom. The wages of Bihari Hindu workers were the same as for U.P. Hindus in period II, but slightly better, though nearly as inadequate in period III (1937-49), being Rs. 107 per month. Here also family women worked in the mills to the extent of 26 per cent. of earners. In this state of affairs, we find a drop in payment to the groom in the second period along with a corresponding rise in bride payment. Similarly, the increase in widow marriage is accompanied by an equal drop in the "no payment" type of union. The abnormal condition of the decade after 1919 having passed, there has been a reduction in widow marriage. The increase in "no payment" type has absorbed this deficit, as also the slight drop in the two payment-based types of marriage. Here, the economic factor of poor wages is operative, and has reduced the frequency of both types of payments, the social force of upper caste imitation being too weak to counteract it.

VIII

The comparative study of three different folk, indicates certain general conclusions :

A. If in a society, there is no class division with class marks of ways of life and the economic structure is not complex, and outside influences are also not strong, social traits tend to change directly in response to economic change. The changes do not necessarily lead to the appearance of new traits. If there are alternatives already developed in society to suit differences in economic condition, a shift is made from one or more alternatives to those more suitable. This is observed in the case of Korkus.

B. Where the internal conditions are as set out in the preceding paragraph but external forces are quite strong, and contact with others leads to an attitude of respect for the culture of the outsiders which is looked upon as desirable, the direction of changes that occur is partly determined by

¹⁷ *Report of the Indian Industrial Commission, 1916-18.*

economic forces and partly by the indirect social force of desire to conform to the way of life of the outsiders, provided such effects do not conflict with the integrated culture of the inhabitants. If in the process of adjustment to economic forces, a particular alternative is found to be not in conformity with the way of life of the respected outsiders, there will be some discouragement towards adoption of this alternative. The extent of discouragement will depend inversely on the strength of the older integrated culture. This is revealed in the comparative figures for informal types of marriages among Santals in Jhargram sub-division and Midnapore Sadar sub-division.

C. In a more complex society, where there is class division with different culture traits for different classes, there is a trend to modify existing traits in the direction of conformity to the traits of the dominant class, or classes. In our Hindu society, social status depends more on conformity to certain social codes and not directly on economic position although this has also its importance. It is found that where the lower social class considers itself to be Hindu, then, in certain circumstances, the social changes that occur may be against the trend of changes resulting from operation of economic forces. However, where the lower social class consists of people who are only partly "Hinduised", the social forces may give way to economic compulsions. Here also existing alternatives are resorted to in such adjustments.

D. Certain customs which are not at first recognized but are implicit, tend to come to the surface as explicit types in case of such changes. Thus in the "forcible" marriage type of *itut* among Santals, the alleged "force" has always been to some extent fictitious, the girl's consent having been previously obtained. An exact parallel is found in the *apartipi* (abduction marriage) type among the Hos, where the girl pretends to oppose being carried off, after having arranged to be so taken away by her lover.¹⁸ With the political environment discouraging the imposition of penalty for *itut*, this marriage form has now come to be, mainly, an arranged match by the parties concerned, with public notification (among Santals) by vermilion marking on forehead where parents are not in favour of the union. A variant type of it among Mayurbhanj Santals, the *or-itut*, where the girl is actually taken home as in *apartipi* among the Hos, indicates the change even more clearly. Among advanced rural people working in industry, the "no payment" type, which has no direct recognized proto-type in Hindu tradition in this area, seems to have developed as a result of the balancing of social and economic forces. Marriage by exchange to ensure no payment on either side had existed earlier. It required greatly changed circumstances to balance the demands of the two sides, one for payment to the girl's folk and the other for payment of *tilak* to the boy, in somewhat similar fashion. The existence of a certain proportion of "no payment" marriages, in period I, shows that the relevant forces had begun to operate earlier.

¹⁸ Majumdar D. N., *The Affairs of a Tribe*, Lucknow, 1950.

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