SOCIAL STRUCTURE IN VILLAGE INDIA
WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE
PANCHAYATI RAJ

by

DOUGLAS S. MOSER

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We accept this thesis as conforming to the
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Department of Anthropology and Sociology

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver 8, Canada

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ABSTRACT

The village has been the significant social unit on the Indian subcontinent for thousands of years. To maintain its integrity it has developed a set of interlocking structures, some of which are unique to the subcontinent, which are very resistant to change. The Indian national government passed legislation which provided for the formation of new structures of political allocation without providing the basis of support for changing the other related structures existing within the village. This thesis attempts to show why this particular change, advocated by the state and national governments, failed.
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CHAPTER I

Introduction

PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

I propose to analyze the patterns of social interaction in a typical northcentral Indian village with particular emphasis on the nature and direction of social change resulting from the introduction of formal panchayats. I shall be examining in particular the following analytic structures; role differentiation, solidarity, economic allocation, and political allocation. Much of what I shall discuss will be couched in a series of hypotheses which hopefully can and will be tested in the field at some later date.

DISCUSSION OF REASONS FOR THE USE OF A TYPICAL VILLAGE

The reasons I have chosen to discuss social interaction in a typical village rather than a particular village are several. First, much of the data I shall use is the result of secondary analysis.

Second, many of the data gathering agencies define the village in such fashion that it is not really a social unit. Thus, the national agency whose job it is to collect taxes may lump several villages together which do not act as a social unit in order that the collection of taxes might be expedited. And the National Extension Service cuts and lumps the villages in an entirely different way than the tax collection agency.
The administrative units of these two government agencies need not coincide. Again, the Census Bureau has still another definition of what they mean by the village.

Third, the villagers themselves as the actors define the village in quite differing ways. For example, André Beteille, in a recent publication, points out that when Brahmins are asked to enumerate the inhabitants of the village they number only themselves, excluding all those who belong to other castes resident in the village. The Brahmins hadn't thought to include the other castes until the fact of exclusion was pointed out and even then they were hesitant because the others owned no property in the village other than personal property and very little of that. To the outsider it might seem that the Brahmins thought of the other residents as coming with the land.¹ This observation was made in southern India and may or may not occur in other parts of India. (That other researchers have not mentioned this does not mean that this sort of situation does not exist; it may merely mean that the question has never been asked in that manner.)

Fourth and finally, there is the problem of the pattern of settlement. Some villages are compact, centrally located blocks of houses. Some are of the dispersed hamlet type and still others are of the dispersed household type. Some of the villages which I shall refer to are in fact dispersed hamlets even though they interact in much the same way as the villages which are of the compact settlement type.²
WHY USE THE VILLAGE AS THE BASIC UNIT RATHER THAN CASTE OR HOUSEHOLD

A pertinent question at this point is: Why choose the village as the social unit rather than caste or household? In my estimation the village is the closest thing to being a self-sufficient social unit that can be found in India. Neither the household nor the caste can be considered as self-sufficient units in terms of either economic allocation of goods and services or political allocation of power and authority. There are a considerable number of outside forces which impinge upon the decision-making powers of either of these two units. To use either unit as the basis for analysis would exclude much significant interaction. The household and the caste do, of course, make decisions that affect the actions of the members, but a large number of decisions can be and are made for the members of the caste or household in which these members have no part in the decision-making process. The reasons I have applied for not using either caste or household may be leveled by some against my choice of the village for the village is not completely self-sufficient either. The interaction which occurs between villages cannot be ignored and I shall have occasion to discuss this interaction, but, on the whole, the significant interaction (e.g., political and economic activity) does occur within the village proper (significant in terms of the amount of interaction and the type of interaction). Perhaps the single most important pattern of behaviour which is
not village oriented is that which is based on the marriage of village males to extra-village females. In most villages there is also some trading for specialized products and some sharing of the talents of specialized labourers.

Defining as the social unit anything larger than the village would be misleading. Only on special occasions do residents of two adjacent villages cooperate—normally one would expect hostility rather than cooperation. Caste-mates from adjacent villages occasionally work together in ceremonies related to birth, marriage, and death to make a bigger show for the rest of their own village and improve their prestige. Within the village it is possible to see antagonistic groups, but this antagonism is mitigated by the need to cooperate in matters economic or political. Above the village level such is not the case. Villages do not need to cooperate to ensure economic survival. The production unit is small enough to be easily contained within the village. Political groups or factions within the village are often quite antagonistic, but, again, this is mitigated by the existence of other kinds of ties such as caste bonds which do not operate effectively above the village level.

It must be constantly kept in mind that throughout the paper, unless otherwise stated, I am talking about a typical village. There is a great deal of variation in village social structure within any one region and obviously there is even more variation when India is taken as a whole. The typical
village under analysis in this study will more closely resemble what is generally known about northcentral India than any of the other regions. There will, of course, be some similarities between regions. On some occasions in this paper I shall infer or hypothesize behaviour patterns for the northcentral portion of the continent which have not been observed (mainly, I am assuming, because no one has looked for them or thought to look for them) except in other regions. To do a proper job for the whole of India one would have to establish typical villages for each of the major regional variants, which lies beyond the scope of this project.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPICAL VILLAGE

To put the typical village in proper perspective I think it is necessary to describe the national setting in which the village might be found as well as the village itself. So I begin this section with a brief description of the larger setting in which the village finds itself.

1. Position of the Village within the Larger Setting

India is the second most populous nation on the earth. The population in 1961 was 436,424,429. It is largely a peasant type agricultural nation with only a few large centers of population. The 1961 Statistical Abstract lists only 2,609 centers whose population is greater than 5,000. There are a
few very large centers of population like Calcutta, Bombay, and New Delhi, but even these large cities seem to differ greatly from large cities in most Western nations. In 1961 roughly 82 per cent of the total population was living in approximately 558,000 villages of less than 5,000 inhabitants. (The Census Bureau defines the village as having less than 500 inhabitants.) Since this means that the average village size can only be about 640 there are obviously thousands of villages which may have only two or three hundred inhabitants. Most of these villages contain within their borders little more land in numbers of acres than they have inhabitants (this varies from region to region). In the northwest of India the villages tend to be larger and the land/man ratios higher because the soil is not as productive. In some parts of the northeast and in the south the village population is smaller and the village land holdings are less, both because it is more productive land and because there are more people. The further south one travels in India the more one is likely to see dispersed hamlets or households. People live on high ground wherever it exists because of the annual threat of floods, rather than form fairly large compact settlements in the center of the fields as they do in the north of India. This high ground is often around the tanks (ponds) and is the result of the original preparation as well as the repair of the tank.

The climate of India varies widely from desert type conditions to monsoon type weather. Soil type varies with the
altitude, type of parent rock from which the soil is derived, and the amount of rainfall. And as these factors vary so do the types of crops which may be grown. Southern and eastern India are basically rice-growing areas. The drier areas in the northwest are predominantly wheat and millet-growing areas. Northcentral India agriculturalists grow both types of crops depending upon the amount of water available. Generally the wetter parts of the village lands are given over to rice and the drier parts to wheat or millet. Supplementary crops appropriate to the growing conditions are grown wherever possible on the village lands and cash crops are beginning to be grown on increasingly large acreages.

Until recently the subcontinent has been able to produce enough to meet its consumption needs in most years, given the state of the technical arts. There have been periodic famines all through India's history but the bulk of these famines can be attributed to lack of distribution facilities rather than to any absolute lack of production. (Villagers in one locality could be starving while just fifty miles away there might be a surplus.) The local famines were normally the result of poor rainfall. Oscar Lewis points out that there is great variation not only in the monthly amount of rain but in the yearly amount as well. The situation presently is more grim. With the tremendous increase in population in the last few decades even good crop years do not provide enough food, and when the rains fail or come at the wrong time as they have in the last few years in India famine runs rampart. Only the shipment of
large quantities of grain from surplus nations has kept India from suffering the death of millions of her inhabitants. Unfortunately the situation can only get worse as further population increases are marked.

India is just beginning to develop industrially. She has a fairly good supply of the basic minerals needed for industrialization, and good sources of power in the many rivers which come down from the Himalayas and from the central highlands. Development of these resources requires, among other things, capital and trained manpower (both skilled labour and trained management) both of which are in very short supply.

India's great problem is her rapidly expanding population which eats up any economic gains she can make. Very little of the government's effort to raise the standard of living of the average Indian through increased crop production and industrialization reaches the average peasant. This is made fairly obvious in the writings of various authors who have been concerned with the problem. Many villages are not even aware that the national government has formulated Five Year Plans to aid them to increase crop production.

Politically India is a very divided nation. The original division of the subcontinent at the time of independence in 1947 into India and Pakistan was caused primarily by the fears of the Muslim minority that they would be swamped by the majority who are followers of the Hindu religion. The separation of the two nations on the basis of religion has not been entirely
successful in that something over 35 millions of Muslims were still living in India at the time of the 1951 census. Reli-
gion is a problem in India, but the bitterness which was so evident in 1947 is somewhat less today. The local people in each country still periodically put pressure on the minority to clear out, but it seems that they are living together in much the same fashion that they did previous to Independence.

Probably the most divisive force in effect today in India is the friction between the various language groups. No single language can come even close to encompassing a majority of citizens. Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi are the most commonly spoken languages and between them they number just short of 150 millions of speakers. The twelve major languages mentioned in the Indian Constitution number roughly 323 millions of speakers. There are 47 other languages whose speakers number over 100,000. In addition to these languages there are a further 720 minor languages. The boundary location of the Indian states has been drastically effected by language and there is constant agitation from some language groups to form new states on the basis of language.

In the recent past very serious language riots have occurred. These riots at times have reached the proportions of communal riots which took place between Hindus and Muslims before and during Independence. The multiplicity of languages is a serious problem at the national level, but at the local village level the villagers do not really get involved unless
they live in an area which is transitional between two languages or in a region in which two languages are used by groups which have commingled. An interesting example of commingling is the Punjab. The males speak both Urdu and Punjabi and the females speak only Punjabi. By and large, however, the villagers are unaware of the national language problem for they have only sporadic contact with the outside world and that generally with agencies which are service oriented.

Politics in India have become increasingly confused as the number of political parties proliferates. There was really only one party at the time of independence—the Congress Party. Almost its sole reason for existence was to gain freedom for India from the British Empire. Since it was the only national political party and was fairly well organized, the Congress Party assumed political control of India. It very quickly became evident that the Congress Party was little more than a very loose coalition of interest groups who had but one common interest—freedom from Britain because opposition within the ranks soon developed concerning the direction in which the party was to move and the means for attaining goals. The results of the 1951 elections showed that the Congress Party was still the most powerful, winning 357 seats in a Parliament of 489. They had, however, only about 45 per cent of the popular vote. That they won such a high percentage of the Parliamentary seats with such a small percentage of the popular vote may be attributed to the large number of minor parties.
contesting the election. Even though the Congress Party was the most powerful party and formed the government they did not have the kind of support necessary to present and carry out the sort of forceful program needed to bring India into the industrial world. In more recent elections the Congress Party has received even less popular support. They are still the largest of the national parties, but their effectiveness has been greatly reduced.

There is a large number of splinter parties and the number seems to be increasing. In the 1951 elections there were 14 parties entering as national parties, 51 more as state parties and in addition to the parties there were a tremendous number of independents. (some of whom were former princes of the more than 500 Princely States of pre-independence India). None of these parties has a large national following and few of them have enough interests in common to attempt to form some kind of coalition. About the only thing they have in common is opposition to the Congress Raj. They seem unable to present any sort of viable, responsible program because their interests are directed to the achievement of specific, group oriented goals.

The splinter parties seem to be of three sorts; first, regional parties, the basis for membership of which is the area in which one lives and the language one speaks; second, caste parties, the membership of which is based on inclusion in a particular caste; and third, ideologically based parties whose membership is recruited on the basis of belief in a particular
ideology. These parties generally have a fairly solid local basis, but this power on the local level does not give them any power on the national level except perhaps to block local Congress moves. It is quite possible to draw a parallel between these parties and, for example, the Social Credit Party in British Columbia. The Social Credit Party is powerful in British Columbia but has little influence at the national level.

Again, at the village level, the villager is not really aware of the national significance of the local party platforms if, in fact, he is truly aware that India is a nation. The political parties on the national scene have the knack of arriving in the village only during election times fully expecting the villagers to be knowledgeable and ready to support them only to find that the villagers don't even know who they are. The only kind of platform which the local residents can understand is one which deals with local problems. I suspect that this is one of the reasons for the proliferation of state parties. In order to get and maintain local support, broad national issues are avoided and, of course, each region has its own particular issues.

Many villagers are disillusioned about all political parties and don't really understand the election process. They have never before in their past been asked to make a choice between two sets of leaders. A lot of the villagers are of the opinion that the government ought to help them with
their problems since it is the government that is the author of schemes involving sanitation, road building, schools, formal panchayats, etc., and the villagers see these schemes as causing changes which they cannot cope with at the village level.

Keeping in mind that the last few pages have described the India national scene in only a rudimentary way I should now like to describe the typical village.

2. Description

The typical village is small, numbering somewhere between 500 and 700 inhabitants. Some villages may be smaller, but they very rarely number below 200 to 300. Villages larger than around 1000 start to become something other than a typical village. 21

The arable land controlled by the villagers is hardly more in acres than there are inhabitants. Although it can vary widely, the man/acre ratio is typically near one. Rampur had a man/acre ratio of 1.22 in 1940 and by the time of Lewis' study in 1952 the ratio had changed to .71. The change resulted from a population growth of 645 in 1940 to 1095 in 1952. 22

The settlement pattern is of the compact sort. The residents live, jammed very closely together, in a more or less centrally located area. In the densest part of the village each house may share three of its walls with three neighbours. Around the perimeter the houses will be more widely spaced.
Who lives where in the village depends normally upon two things. Fellow caste members tend to cluster in one area of the village. This is particularly true of both the high and low castes and not so true of the middle castes. The high caste and low caste groups are normally situated as far from one another as possible and still remain within the confines of the village. The second factor operational in determining residence patterns within the settlement has to do with the time at which the family became residents in the village and the space available for home building. The later arrivals in the village often must take what is left over. This means that some mixing of castes does occur—mainly in the middle-range castes, however.

The economy of the village is based on the land. Only recently have the villagers began going outside the village to obtain jobs and to purchase consumption goods. Traditionally the village produced, with a few minor exceptions, everything that it consumed. The basic diet consisted of the various cereal grains which were appropriate to the climate and soil conditions. Most villages have land that is able to support both rice (commonly called paddy) and wheat or millet. The wetter areas of the village lands are normally double-cropped; paddy in the wet season and dry land grain in the dry season. The drier lands are single-cropped with wheat, millet, or some other local equivalent. A few vegetables are grown to be used in sauces, and sometimes a few fruit trees are planted.

Cattle are a part of the village scene—a very necessary part. Animals are virtually the only source of motive power in
the village. The bullocks, buffaloes, and cows are normally all present. The bullocks are the work animals, pulling the plows and carts as well as drawing the water from the village wells for irrigation purposes. Buffaloes and cows are used primarily for milking. The cow is usually less abundant because it is not as good a producer as the buffalo. The milk is not normally drunk, but rather is the source of ghee. There may be a few other animals such as goats, sheep, donkeys, and even the odd mule or camel present as well. Aside from the more obvious uses that these animals are put to they are used additionally as a very important source of fuel. One of the most common sights in the village is the dung cakes which are patted into shape by village women and dried on the walls and roofs of the houses to be used as fuel for cooking and sometimes even for heating.

Most individuals work directly on the land as farmers or landless labourers and those who do not certainly depend indirectly upon the land. The various artisans living in the village trade their services directly for food. Not everyone owns land. Usually the dominant caste owns all but a few acres, which they may or may not directly farm themselves. Whether or not they do depends upon which caste they belong to. Farmer castes do cultivate and Brahmin's usually do not. (They are probably more apt to do so in northcentral India than in southern India.) The caste which owns the land and cultivates it (or has it cultivated) is the dominant caste in the village. The dominant caste in the
village is not always at the top of ritual hierarchy. Which caste is dominant is usually determined by events in the long past history of the village and the region in which it is located.

Although the caste composition of the village can vary widely, most villages contain enough different castes to ensure that the vital tasks be carried out. To have too few castes generally means that the village will have to depend upon outsiders to come in and do some of the village work. The greater the extent to which this is necessary the less the village operates as the significant social unit. In the typical village there is a single dominant agricultural caste which numbers at least half of the village population. Because caste is similar to a closed union with regard to occupation the number of other occupations practised within the village indicated the number of other castes in the village. Most of the common occupations are represented—some by perhaps only one family because the village hasn't the business to support more than one. The outcastes or untouchables are often the second largest group in the village population. The outcastes are viewed as one large group by the other castes in the village even though, in reality they differentiate between themselves in much the same fashion as do the castes. It is mostly the untouchables who work as landless labourers for the dominant cultivator caste.

Political interaction within the village, and for that matter outside the village, is controlled by the dominant caste. In some ways one can say that the only significant
political interaction that occurs in the village is within the ranks of the dominant caste. (This will be discussed more fully in Chapter V.) Depending upon the matter under consideration the dominant caste does or does not act as a unified body. Splits in caste solidarity generally occur only in those matters where control of the other castes in the village is not a question.

The above descriptions of India as a whole and the typical Indian village are very general and are given only to provide a minimum of background information. As the discussion proceeds I shall present a fuller picture of village life. Theoretically, in discussing the changes which have occurred and are occurring I should describe the 'classical' or 'traditional' state of affairs in the village. Significant changes were already taking place in India by the middle of the 19th century because of the pervasive British influence. The studies done before 1900 were concerned with describing food, dress, and utensils, rather than social relationships. The primary concern of this paper is what will happen given the present interaction pattern.

In the following chapters I shall discuss four analytical structures: role differentiation, solidarity, economic allocation, and political allocation. These four chapters should give a fairly complete view of the present patterns of social interaction in the village. The last chapter will be devoted to a discussion about which of these analytical structures is changing and in which direction the change is taking place.


3. Krave, 1953: 119 (with reference to a single caste but may apply to others as well); Lewis, 1958: 160-161; Cohn, 1954: 12; Mayer, 1960: 208, 213.


5. Examples of some differences include: 1) lack of 'sky scrapers' generally associated with larger cities in the West; 2) many more homeless residents living within the city than is the case, say, in the U. S.; 3) less well developed suburbs; 4) faster expansion of population than in the West; 5) rapid transition from urban to rural appearances; 6) very poorly developed water, sanitation, and transportation services.


7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.


11. Mineral resources:

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<tr>
<td>Bauxite</td>
<td>30,000,000 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal</td>
<td>60,960,000,000 tons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Copper</td>
<td>3,266,000,000 tons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gold</td>
<td>530,298 tons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gypsum</td>
<td>47,641,000,000 tons</td>
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<td>Iron ore</td>
<td>21,300,000,000 tons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lead ore</td>
<td>Over 100 million tons</td>
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<td>Lignite</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limestone</td>
<td>Ample reserves</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manganese</td>
<td>Several thousand million tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mica</td>
<td>156,000,000 tons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sulphur</td>
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Known reserves
Petroleum At least 100 million tons
Natural Gas At least 43 million tons


12 Potential kilowatt production is 216,000,000 kilowatt hours; actual production is 12.5 million. Ibid., p. 31.


16 These riots are ones in which one protagonist was the Hindu community and the other the Muslim community. They were extremely difficult to control because they were so suddenly triggered and because such huge numbers of individuals were involved.

17 Personal Communication with a Punjabi language instructor at the University of Minnesota in the summer of 1963.


19 Nicholas, op. cit., p. 254.

20 Ibid.

21 The larger villages tend to become market sites which means that they will have more contact with both the outside world and with the surrounding villages than would the typical village.

22 Lewis, p. 10.

23 In some villages the outcaste population may actually reside a few hundred feet from the main settlement. This is probably more common in the south of India than anywhere else because there seems to be a larger portion of the population who are either very high caste or very low caste.

24 Ghee is clarified butter and is much desired for cooking purposes. In fact one of the measures of relative wealth in the village seems to be the amount of ghee available for use in food preparation.
CHAPTER II

Role Differentiation Within the Village

... the analytic structure of role differentiation in any social system may be defined as the structures of distribution of the members of the system among the various positions and activities distinguished in the system and hence the differential arrangement of the members of the system.¹

In order to arrive at how a particular society goes about allocating "the various positions and activities distinguished" Levy proposes nine different criteria: age, generation, sex, economic allocation, political allocation, religion, cognition, nonhuman environment, and solidarity. Not all of these are significant indicators for all societies. In some societies, for example, there may not necessarily be any role differentiation on the basis of religion, nonhuman environment or cognition. Levy himself uses only the first five in his discussion of the family in "traditional" and "transitional" China.²

While agreeing with Levy that roles must be differentiated, I would argue that the nine criteria which Levy outlines as minimal for discovering the nature of the structure of role differentiation in a social system are inadequate for the analysis of the Indian village. It does not seem that their use should allow me to show how certain individuals come to fill particular roles within the village. I would hypothesize, rather, that roles are differentiated and allocated in the Indian village on the basis of but two categories of criteria, one of which includes three of the criteria suggested by Levy.
In the first category we shall be concerned not about individuals but households. An individual assumes a role in the village on the basis of the status of his household. How one determines the status of a particular household will be discussed later in the chapter, but suffice it to say that role assumption by an individual is only indirectly related to either ascribed or achieved characteristics. The second category is concerned with the characteristics, mainly ascribed characteristics, of the individual himself such that he does or does not assume a particular role within the household. I shall consider three characteristics: age, sex, and generation. They are the most useful for determining the structure of role differentiation within the household.

An individual's role in village activities is determined first by his role in household activities and second (and more importantly) by the position of his household relative to other households in the village. The individual must become part of the decision-making machinery of the household before he can begin to think of assuming a part in the decision-making machinery of the village. Achieved characteristics become important only when two individuals have the same ascribed characteristics and their household status is roughly the same.

ROLE DIFFERENTIATION WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD

Before discussing role differentiation within the household in terms of the three criteria mentioned above (age, generation, and sex) it is necessary that some consideration be devoted to a
definition of "household." In the village the adult is not really considered a whole person until he is married and rearing children. Those who are not married and those who are married but without children are objects of pity and, as Srinivas points out, to be avoided by some groups, "Brahmin beggars who are supposed to be very orthodox do not take alms from the childless . . ." Primary emphasis is placed on male children because the eldest male child is responsible for seeing that his father and mother, but primarily the father, become proper ancestors, and because the male progeny are a source of support in their parents' old age. Female children are of less importance for the household because they typically pass out of the household at an early age and into the household in which the husband resides—nearly always in another village and often a considerable distance away. Barely do the females become old enough to be producing members than they are married into another household. Not only do they leave, but they take a sizable dowry with them.

DEFINITION OF HOUSEHOLD

The ideal household in northcentral India is the joint household in which three generations live together with their wives and children under one roof sharing a single hearth. The joint household is beginning to lose its "jointness" when multiple hearths are employed. There seems to be a definite path down which joint households travel towards splitting:
first, separate hearths; second, partitions within the house; third, separate houses; and fourth, splitting up the land among the heirs. Friends and associates work hard to prevent the break up but normally succeed only in slowing down the process. Only very rarely are four generations found living together. Indeed, a three-generation household is not common and then may last only for a very few years because of the short life expectancy. This is pointed out by Collver in his comparison of the family cycle in India and the United States. The death of one of the parents frequently occurs before the marriage of the eldest child in India. Thus the joint household is more likely to be two-generational consisting of a group of male siblings, their wives and children. Being part of a joint household would seem to be the ideal state of condition rather than something which exists in the real world to any degree. There are too many factors involved which tend to mitigate the possibility of achieving and maintaining a joint household. Joint households are most numerous in the wealthier castes and become less frequent with the decreasing status and wealth of the caste group. Only those households which possess a large resource base—until recently ownership of land in the village—can afford to maintain a sizable household. Even possession of wealth does not mean that they are likely to remain for very long as a joint household as we shall see later. In Oscar Lewis' Rampur study only thirteen out of 150 households contained more than twelve members and all of these households
were either Jatis or Brahmins who either owned a considerable amount of land or had good jobs outside of the village. Among the less well-off castes only one household out of a total of 55 had more than nine members. Average household size varies from 8.3 for the Jatis who are the wealthiest caste in the village to 5.0 for the Chamars (a low caste group ritually and one with little wealth in either land or outside jobs). On the basis of household size, it would seem that the single most common type of household is the stem household—that is, one, and infrequently both, of the aged parents of the head of the household and sometimes an unmarried sister or brother. Most of the discussion which follows is directed toward the large household and may in fact be an idealization.

AGE AS THE BASIS OF ROLE DIFFERENTIATION WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD

As might be expected absolute age has a great deal to do with role selection. Ideally the eldest male in the household is the final authority on all matters having to do with the maintenance of the household. Obedience is expected to be prompt and complete. The household head makes the decisions and sees that they are implemented. In actual fact the household relationships are never that exact. There always seem to be mitigating circumstances. The decisions made by the head of the household are never made in a vacuum. A 'good' household head takes into consideration the other members of the household. As I pointed out above the head of household
may have living with him his aged father. According to the ideal the aged father is the head of the household, but the reality of the situation is that the aged father exercises very little authority. He is only the titular head of household, not the de facto head. The authority of the male begins to wane when he no longer can provide the bulk of the financial resources necessary to maintain the household. As well, his intellectual capacity to make decisions may be affected should he be fortunate enough to live that long. Usually what happens is that the son simply leaves soon after marriage if he cannot get along with his father.10

Ideally the household head has complete authority to make any and all decisions about household matters. In reality the male assumes more and more importance as he marries and has children, and takes a full part in providing the household the wherewithal to exist. The newly married son does not need to be consulted about household decisions, but the wise father consults him in order to keep the son satisfied and, perhaps more importantly, to provide the son with experience in dealing with the various factors involved in making decisions. If there is more than one son, the other sons will not likely be as involved for it is the eldest son who will look after the parents and carry out the proper rituals which will allow the parents to become pukah ancestors. Always the decision must be obeyed, but having had a hand in the process of arriving at a decision, the son's obedience comes easier.
On the female side, age has a great deal to do with position in the decision-making machinery. Ideally of course females have no position of authority in the patriarchal Indian household. Nonetheless females do exert considerable influence. In the household of origin they have virtually no influence because they pass out of that household at a young age. However, in the household which they join upon marriage it is possible to come to a position of influence as they increase in age (the mother-in-law is a powerful force within the family).

As a young bride a female clearly has no influence because she is completely under the thumb of her mother-in-law. The parents make the decisions, not her husband—this includes the decision as to who will be her husband. The bride must satisfy her husband's parents, not her husband. She has no authority whatsoever. Her reason for existence is to provide her husband with children and until she has them she can be treated as though she doesn't exist. With the arrival of children (particularly a male child) her treatment at the hands of her new relatives improves. She can make claims for better treatment (more food, better clothing), if not for herself, at least for the children. As the mother-in-law gets older, and more feeble, the wife begins to 'take up the slack.' The arena of authority for women consists in maintaining order within the household. The woman has to see that activities are so arranged that the needs of the husband are met. She is responsible to
the husband and any really important decisions are made in his name. By this time the husband and wife who before marriage were strangers have arrived at some kind of relationship which enables them to function fairly smoothly as a household.\textsuperscript{11}

The period of greatest influence comes to the woman when she achieves the position of mother-in-law. She now has a young daughter-in-law to mold so that she will be a fit wife for her son. She has complete control over all internal household matters. She may even have influence over relationships which have developed between the household and other households in the village. This role will be discussed more fully when I talk about the solidarity structures in the next chapter.

In the preceding paragraphs I have discussed the effect of absolute age on the making of decisions. In certain situations relative age is important—primarily when male siblings are concerned. Relative age is always important in such events as household councils (if such a thing is held), but there are two other periods when relative age is particularly crucial. The first is in childhood. During childhood older children are often responsible for their younger siblings—particularly in poorer households that cannot afford to retain a nurse or do not have grandparents about to do the job. Varying amounts of the training of younger children are carried out by the older children in whose charge they are placed during a good part of the day. The amount depends upon age and sex of both the older children and the younger.
The second occasion in which relative age is important is after the death of the father when the group of brothers continues to operate as a joint household. In this situation the eldest brother is the one through whose mouth decisions emanate. As the eldest he makes decisions for the group. That there must be other bases for the maintenance of power and authority than that of relative age is evidenced by the short-lived nature of joint households composed of brothers. The eldest brother takes the place of the father without having the same institutionalized bases for this position as did his father. Often brothers may find it possible to operate with the eldest brother as the household head, but the wives of the brothers force the separation. The wives often do not have the mutual ties of affection that exist between brothers and frequently quarrel among themselves. This is not to say that brothers always get along, because they do not, nor is it to say that wives cannot get along, because in some cases they do. I have no statistics, but it would seem that wives are more frequently the cause of joint household disintegration than are brothers.\textsuperscript{12} Perhaps the basic reason for the quarrels between wives is that the senior wife (wife of the eldest brother) assumes the role of household manager which was previously occupied by the mother-in-law without the generational prerogatives of the mother-in-law. The other wives are quick to resent this and just as quickly work on their respective husbands to set up separate households so that they can do their own managing without interference from other wives. In some
cases the brothers maintain the household property as a single unit, but set up separate living quarters.

From the above I can conclude that role differentiation on the basis of relative age must reinforce differentiation on the basis of absolute age. Obviously the two are closely tied and any contradictions between the two bases can only lead to instability of the system. Relative age by itself is only a very weak basis for authority.

ROLE DIFFERENTIATION ON THE BASIS OF GENERATION

Role differentiation on the basis of generation is obviously tied in with age. In some respects generation is similar to the category of relative age. One cannot place definite limits of age on generational categories. Generation here refers to a person's position relative to other individuals who lie either above or below him on the biological, or putatively biological, descent line. Thus the father and his brothers are of a different generation than the father's son. The father's youngest brother may be younger than his oldest son so that one may occasionally see the incongruous situation (to us) of an older man treating a younger man with the same respect as he would his own father. This is of course far from the normal situation and if it were it would lead to instability of the system because it is in contradiction to the differentiation of roles on the basis of age. Under normal circumstances there is a definite gap between the members of one generation and the next. The first ascending generation is usually the generation which has
the capability and responsibility for rearing the following generation. It is primarily the husband and wife who manage the care and upbringing of the children. In most cases this is because there are only the husband and wife as adults in the household.

I have no information concerning the relationship between alternate generations, but one may assume that it is different than that of the parent-child relationship. The grandparents probably do not have responsibility in the same manner as the parents. They are less directly concerned with training the grandchildren and hence there are more possibilities for ties of affection to develop. Grandparents and grandchildren may see themselves as allies. Grandparents are losing previous authority and the grandchildren have none. Each is subordinate to the generation between. I suspect that parents make use of grandparents as parent subrogates only when absolutely necessary because there is not the clear dichotomy between subordinate and superordinate as there is in the parent-child relationship. Although it is the parents who are responsible for raising the child, it is the grandparents who are the source of much of the cultural history which everyone is expected to know because they are the group which has the time to do so. The father and mother are too busy as producers to talk with the children. In any event, this is often not a crucial issue because there are only a few households which have included in their members a grandparent. Most often, in poorer households, younger children
are cared for by older children or children tag along with their parents as they go about their daily tasks.

In the Indian village generational differentiation, and the subsequent behaviour patterns, are extended beyond the immediate kinship group. The father's age mates within the local caste group are treated with respect similar to that given the father. Generational differences are observed between castes as well. The further away biologically the generationally older man is, the less he will be treated in the same manner as the younger man would treat his father.

ROLE DIFFERENTIATION ON THE BASIS OF SEX

Role differentiation on the basis of sex is not, in some instances, as clear cut as role differentiation on the basis of age. The primary differentiation is strictly biological in nature. Women bear the children and during the early years of the child's life are virtually the only sex with which the child has any interaction regardless of its sex. By and large it can be said that the women are responsible for the preparation of food and the maintenance of clothing. Beyond these few things the roles played by adults in the household depend upon caste membership and the level of wealth. Many of the jobs necessary for the maintenance of the household can be done by either men or women and are often done by both working together. There are very few jobs which require sheer brute strength. Role differentiation is on the basis of what is thought to be appropriate and this varies from caste to caste and on the wealth of the household.
The women of wealthy, high caste households do very little actual physical labour even in terms of raising their own children. Those households can afford to retain others to do the housework and the wives are merely administrators and managers. Females are concerned primarily with the internal affairs of the household. The relationships which they form are with other women. Men are not really part of their world. The only men with whom they interact are their husbands and sons. The father-in-law and the elder brothers-in-law are to be avoided.\textsuperscript{15} Any relationships which exist between households are maintained by the males of the household. Females from one household do have occasion to interact with females of other households, but this does not occur frequently. One interacts freely with equals only and there are not very many equals in a social system which is highly concerned about relative ranking.

In these sorts of wealthy households the males are in much the same position as the females. They are the managers of the household properties and only rarely do any physical work. High caste households would rather leave the work undone than do it themselves because they would suffer a loss of prestige were they to do so. Generally speaking, in wealthy households the males form the production unit that brings in the requisite income to maintain the household. This is accomplished either by managing the household property or by occupying a position which brings in income from outside the village.
Actually it is only in the upper caste or wealthy households that there is a great distinction between the roles of men and women—and these represent a small percentage of the total households in the village. In the low caste households or households with low incomes the position of both males and females is somewhat different. Individuals, both male and female, act not in terms of what is desirable but what is necessary. The women are often required to perform duties which take them out of the house. The women of the lower castes must perform for the women of the upper castes the same sort of service that their husbands perform for the husbands of the upper caste wives. The village washerman washes the clothing of the upper caste males and the wife of the washerman washes the clothing of the upper caste females. The clothing is washed in the local stream or tank so that the job cannot be done within the home. This being the case for a fairly large number of caste occupations the female can spend only a part of the available time carrying out the duties of child care and food preparation. They are in effect managers although they are not managing servants but their own children. Often women of the poorer agricultural castes or poorer households of the higher agricultural castes must help their husbands in the fields during the crisis periods of planting and harvesting. It is definitely considered demeaning for women of the high caste household to be seen doing any kind of work outside of the home. It is not considered demeaning for lower caste women to work
outside of the home (it is actually part of their role) so that there is not the sharp differentiation of roles in the lower caste households as there is in the high caste household.

The ideal role of women in the Indian household seems to be similar in some ways to the ideal role of women in our society. That is to say that they are viewed as consumers and not as producers. The man who requires that his wife work to help support the family is not really fulfilling his role as provider. One big difference between the wealthy of our society and the wealthy of the Indian village is that in the Indian village the woman is not expected to conspicuously consume.

Ideally of course, there is always a distinction between male and female roles, but to the extent that the male must depend upon the help of his wife as producer rather than consumer the distinction between male and female roles is blurred. I do not think there can help but be a certain amount of confusion where role distinctions are not clear and this can in turn effect such things as the allocation of power and responsibility. The female can and does exert more authority than she is ideally allowed.

Age, generation, and sex, then, are the major bases for the distinctions between roles within the household in the Indian village. I should now like to examine the second category mentioned at the first of the chapter, that of household status,
which will aid in the differentiation of roles within the village social structure.

HOUSEHOLD STATUS AS A MEANS OF ROLE DIFFERENTIATION WITHIN THE VILLAGE

Roles are occupied within the village structure on the basis of household status. One must be the head of a household with high status before it is possible to assume any important role within the village. Since at the village level household has different connotations that it does at the household level I think it important that the term household be properly understood. To the individual the household refers to the group of people who have a common residence. The primary orientation and loyalty of every individual is directed inwards towards the rest of the household.\textsuperscript{16} At the village level individuals see the household as the basic unit out of which village social structure arises. Each individual distinguishes between roles within his own household but does not do so for other households. The only significant interaction between households is that between household heads who act for their respective households as a unit. In addition to this distinction the household is seen as a more all-inclusive unit that the individual perhaps views it. The household unit for the individual is the group who share a common hearth. The household as seen by others in the village may perhaps be better referred to as the "kindred of cooperation." This is a term which I have borrowed from Mayer who uses it in his discussion of caste and kinship
in central India. The kindred of cooperation is that group of kin which cooperates in matters economical, political and religious. They operate as a unit vis-a-vis other kindreds. The minimum size for a kindred is a single household and the maximum size is that number of households which can still maintain a united face against other kindreds. Efforts are made to maintain as large a kindred of cooperation as possible, however, because it increases the status potential of the kindred.

In other words the individual villager has two conceptions of the household. Which one he employs depends upon the circumstances. If it is an individual household matter the household is composed of those who share a common hearth. If it is a village or caste matter individuals within the household are not important rather it is the household as a whole.

Kindred of cooperation are always intracaste in composition. Each caste group within the village will then have at least one kindred. The numerically small castes may be composed of only two or three households, the heads of which are brothers, cousins or even more distant relatives, but if they act together socially, politically, economically, and religiously they can be considered a kindred. The numerically larger castes will more than likely be composed of at least several kindreds each of which see itself as a separate unit and, more importantly, is seen by outsiders as a unit.

Given that this is the group which is granted or not granted status, on what basis does the group attain it? There are three
primary sources of status for the kindred. They are, 1) position in the ritual hierarchy, 2) traditional occupation, and 3) membership in a political faction operating within the village (and sometimes outside the village as well).

Each of these three sources of kindred status is an analytical aspect of what is usually described as the caste system (see the appendix for a general definition and discussion of caste). No matter the region and no matter the particular focus of the observer, every community study or for that matter every study of social action must take into account the caste system. There are considerable variations in the way in which caste operates from region to region, but there are no regions in which it does not operate in the Hindu areas of the subcontinent. Even in the predominantly Muslim areas there are manifestations of its operation. The caste system is very old and has undergone considerable change since its inception at the time of the Dravidian submission to the invading Aryans from the north. The four original religious varna have proliferated into several thousand secular 21 'economic' castes (or perhaps more appropriately, jatis) some of which have a small local membership, some a regional, and some a large national membership. These jatis are all ranked relative to one another such that members of each jati are aware which jatis rank above them and which below. The closer the distance between two jatis the more there is specific knowledge about each other. The way in which one
jati member behaves toward a member of another jati is related to the distance, either above or below, that exists between them. There is no clearcut absolute ranking for in one region one jati may be reckoned higher ritually relative to other jatis than it might be in another region.

The basis for establishing rank involves such things as who will eat with whom, who will accept which kinds of food from whom, and who will marry whom. As well as these kinds of activities the approach to religion by each caste must be taken into account. Brahmins have a particular form of worship which only they can employ. Lesser castes may have elements of the Brahmin form of worship, but should they attempt to copy the Brahmins too closely they run the risk of a sound beating.

Occupation of the caste has a decisive effect on caste status. The highest status occupations are those which involve no physical labour or those which are not directly concerned with production of goods (for example the Brahmin priests). The next group of occupations are those which involve working the land (providing it is the owner who is working). Equal or perhaps slightly below the cultivators are the artisans who manufacture the tools needed for production. The lowest ranked castes in terms of occupation are those castes which are responsible for providing services to the higher castes. These castes are the majority of the village population. Below the castes are the outcastes. These are people who do not belong within the caste system because their occupations are too
degrading. These people clean the streets, remove dead animals, etc. They are also known as the untouchables because to touch them is polluting and requires a fairly extensive ceremony to become pure again.

In some ways to talk about position in the ritual hierarchy and occupation (because occupation largely determines ritual position) as two separate devices for determining caste status is to make a distinction not worth making, but it is useful if for only one reason. Castes do change their occupation without immediately affecting their ritual position. For example, Ahirs who are herders occupationally may stop being herders and become landless labourers. This occupation is not as polluting ritually so that they gain status in terms of occupation while at the same time retaining their very low status ritually. Over a period of time their ritual position may improve, but it won't do so immediately.

The third method for determining status for the caste group is membership within a particular political faction. I shall not discuss this here because it is covered in the chapter on allocation of power and responsibility.

Although it is possible for a caste to rank high in terms of occupation and low in terms of ritual position, this kind of discrepancy does not occur very often. Normally there is a high correlation between these three means of establishing relative status. Thus Brahmins who are at the top of the ritual hierarchy normally have occupations which do not involve
physical labour and are members of one of the powerful political factions in the village. Sweepers rank very low ritually, must perform the most menial tasks, and are not members of a powerful political faction if they are members of any factions.

It is from high status households or kindreds of cooperation that village leaders are selected. The household head of the household with the highest status will normally occupy the most powerful position in the village. If one household does not emerge clearly as the most powerful, then it is possible that personalities will be taken into consideration. Competence is a factor only when all other things are equal. Thus an individual of great ability but a member of a low status household has very little chance of making himself felt in village affairs. His sphere of activity will be constrained to within his own caste group or household. He may be recognized as doing a very good job at that level by the rest of the village, but he will not be invited to help make decisions at the village level.
FOOTNOTES


2Levy, The Family Revolution - Modern China (Cambridge, 1949), Chapter I.

3As an aside and to go out on a limb I would suggest that the avenues to power are so narrowly delineated that there is almost never a question of who will become what in the village activities. This does not hold true in the transitional villages in India today because with wider contacts in the outside world there are other avenues than the traditional one open. The teacher as a role is one such example and I will discuss the role of teacher in village political interaction in the chapter on the structure of political allocation. We as outsiders can 'see' that there are many ways to achieve power in the village, but to the actors there may not be any alternatives.

4The information for role differentiation within the household is devised mainly from the following books and articles:

Books:


b) K. M. Kapadia, Marriage and Family - India (Oxford, 1956), 2nd Ed.

c) Irwatti Karve, Kinship Organization - India (Poona, 1953).

d) Oscar Lewis, Village Life - Northern India (Urbana, 1958).


g) S. N. Srinivas, Marriage and Family - Mysore (Bombay, 1942).

h) P. Thomas, Hindu Religion, Customs and Manners (Bombay)
Articles:


h) Henry Orenstein, "The Recent History of the Extended Family - India," *Social Problems*


For the village as a whole females are quite important. Females who marry into another village provide links between two villages. There are statistics which show the extent to which females marry into particular outside villages and the kinds of relationships which then exist between the two villages. It is much more difficult to maintain an argument with a village in which live the daughters and daughters-in-law of the protagonists.
In Mayer's Ramkheri study only two out of 194 marriages occurred between individuals who were both residents of the village. Of these marriages, 184 were virilocal. Marriott, in his study on Kishan Garhi, points out that only once in three generations has a marriage occurred between Kishan Garhi and any of eleven other surrounding villages. The average distance between natal home and conjugal home for the women is 12 miles, a fairly great distance in village India.

Collver, op. cit.

Lewis, op. cit.

Mandelbaum, "Family, Jati, Village," p. 32.

There are two reasons for suggesting this. First, if the wife does not prove to be what either the husband, or, more particularly, the husband's parents think she should be she can be sent back to her parents. This is a fairly drastic move, but it is employed if the wife proves to be too recalcitrant. The second reason is that every woman desires marriage because she is not really welcome past puberty in her natal home. Once she is married the natal family would look with extreme disfavour upon her permanent return. Strictly speaking one could say that the woman has a choice between staying with her conjugal family or returning to the natal family, but in reality she has no choice. Given the above the female would rather remain in the conjugal household and I think one can assume that she will do her best to get along with all of the members of the conjugal household. This may involve efforts on her part to modify either her own behaviour or that of the other members. Since she is a definite minority most of the changes will probably occur within her own behaviour. As a consequence of this I would suggest that quite strong bonds are formed between the husband and wife. They may not necessarily be based on affection, but they nonetheless do exist. The relationship which exists between Wang Lung and his wife in Pearl Buck's *The Good Earth* is a good example. Each is a stranger to the other at time of marriage and each has certain reasons for entering into the state of marriage, and so long as the other partner fulfills expectations the relationship is smooth. Affection is not expected to be part of the relationship but it certainly does develop. I think it would be very difficult to compare marriage and divorce statistics in India with those of the United States because the approach to these roles is so different. In India, strangers marry and hope to develop affection and in the United States individuals who have affection for one another marry and hope to develop other bonds to strengthen the bonds.
I assume the information is not available simply because those who have studied the Indian village have not asked the appropriate questions. The researchers were concerned about other things.


Ibid., p. 37.

Adrian C. Mayer, Caste and Kinship - Central India (London, 1960), particularly the Introduction.

The size of the kindred may vary according to the issue at hand. Issues may arise which lead to the splitting of the kindred, either temporarily or permanently. Conversely, new kindreds may be formed as the result of other issues.

Theoretically all members of a caste can trace their individual biological lines back to a common point so that all caste members are related.

For a further discussion of the kindred of cooperation within the context of caste see the appendix on Caste.

Secular relative to the original idea of varna but definitely not secular as we think of secular in our society.

The higher ranked caste will accept uncooked but not cooked food from the lower ranked caste. The lower ranked will accept both cooked and uncooked from the higher ranked caste.

Males may marry down, females must marry into the same caste or higher. The distance between castes cannot be too great, however. For example, should a Brahmin male marry an outcaste female he becomes outcaste as well.


CHAPTER III
Structure of Solidarity

In the previous chapter I have discussed the way in which roles are allocated among the various villagers. Implied in the definition of role is a separation of viewpoints because the occupant of each role looks upon each situation from a different vantage point. In this chapter I propose to analyze that structure which operates to standardize the relationships between these roles. I am not concerned with the structures which operate in any society to integrate roles; rather I am concerned with the structure which functions to standardize the modes of behaviour which are considered appropriate between occupants of differentiated roles.

There are three aspects to the structure of solidarity which must be considered in analyzing any relationship between roles. I shall use Levy's definitions for each of the three following aspects: content, strength, and intensity. The content of any relationship is defined as "... the type of relationship that is to exist and the members between (or among) whom it is to exist." The strength of the relationship is defined as "... the relative precedence or lack of precedence taken by this relationship over other relationships of its general sort, and over other obligations and commitments in the larger social sphere." The intensity of the relationship is defined as "... the state of affect involved in the..."
relationship. There are two possible types of variation in the state of affect: first, the type of affect involved (e.g., love, hate, anger, joy, respect, etc.); and second, the degree of affective involvement that is expected (e.g., whether the relationship is to be intimate or one of avoidance).

If I am granted the above by way of explaining and defining the structure of solidarity then it follows that the structure of solidarity is crucial in at least two circumstances: first, where the frequency of interaction is high; and second, where relationships are strategic to the system (strategic relationships may have a high incidence of interaction, but this need not be the case).

It is neither possible nor is it desirable for my purposes to treat all of the relationships which can occur between roles within the village. Theoretically I should find it necessary to analyze only the relationships which exist between roles in the village social system, but, as in the previous chapter on role differentiation, the solidarity structure of the lower level social units (the household) must be considered as well because they so colour the upper level relationships that the upper level relationships cannot be fully understood without knowledge of lower level relationships. Thus we must begin by discussing the structure of solidarity as it functions at the level of the household.

In this chapter, as in the last, I have had trouble finding any material which deals with the relationship as it
actually operates rather than how it should operate ideally. Hence much of the material that is presented in this chapter is suppositional and hypothetical.

SOLIDARITY STRUCTURE WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD

Of the many possible relationships which exist between members of the household there are two which must be understood in order to comprehend the structure of solidarity at the village level. These are the father-son relationship and the brother-brother relationship. At the village level females do not figure as possibilities for the roles which are to be allocated. At the household level, females do effect the content, strength, and intensity of the above mentioned male relationships, but ideally at least they should not effect the content, strength or intensity of the village level relationships.

1. The Father-Son Relationship

Before continuing I must mention another major problem which I have been unable to solve (and one which no one else has solved to my knowledge). Social relationships are dynamic and my analysis is static. Ideally the role of both father and son does not change with time, nor does the solidarity structure which orders the relationship. Actually the content of the relationship changes drastically over time as does the strength and intensity. The father-son relationship is not the same when the father is twenty-five and the son five
as it is when the father is sixty and the son forty. The best that I can do in these circumstances is to examine the father-son relationship at different stages in its development.

In a social system which is characterized as patriarchal, patriloccal, and patrilineal I think it can safely be assumed that the type of relationship will be that of superordinate-subordinate. The father has complete control over the actions of the son. However, the situation is never clear-cut because the young father is as dominated by his father as he is dominant over his young son (ideally he is dominated whether the father is still alive or not). The following, rather lengthy quote, from G. Morris Carstairs' book, The Twice Born describes the kind of relationship which exists between father and son among the upper castes in the village he was observing:

In striking contrast to all this attentive mothering, the child's father is an aloof seemingly unwelcome figure. The reason for this is that a man, so long as he remains under his own father's roof, must keep up the fiction of denying that he leads an active sexual life of his own. Not to do so is to be disrespectful. Consequently, a man and his wife can never talk to each other naturally, in his parents' presence; nor is it proper to either of them to show affection for their own children in front of their elders. This obligatory suppression of any overt show of tender feelings is relaxed only when the child cries. Then his needs take precedence even over the grandparents' authority, so that he will be handed over to his mother, often with the command "Give him the breast." A father, however, experiences no such exception to the demand that he remain impassive and detached. Even if his wife or child falls ill he must contain his feelings and surrender the responsibility of tending them to his own parents. This taboo perpetuates in each generation the tension which exists between father and son; and it is very strong. Young Chauthmal, who lived in his father Bhurmal's house, had a boy of eighteen months,
and often the grandfather could be seen carrying this child in his arms, or dandling him while they sat at their shop— but never Chauthmal: "I don't like to fondle him, even when we are alone in our room," he said: "if I did, he might get into the habit of running to my knee in the bazaar, and that would not look right." . . . On the other hand, there were three among my younger informants who disregarded the rule, and openly fondled their young children. They were able to do so because in each case their fathers were dead, and they were the heads of their several households: but still the consensus of opinion (as they were well aware) condemned their unashamed display of affection. . . . The usual father-child relationship, then, was drained of spontaneous warmth of feeling. Instead it was governed by strict obligations on either side. . . . The obligation of each to the other, of financial support and instruction on the one hand, and dutiful service throughout one's father's life (and after his death) on the other, were constantly emphasized, but personal intimacy was conspicuously absent.  

The above observations, made on the content, strength, and intensity of the father-son relationship among the three highest castes in the village of Deoli, are made on a situation where, in fact, there is more opportunity to live up to the ideal father-son relationship. Among the lower castes one would not expect these observations to be made for at least two reasons. As Carstairs observed, it is the presence of the grandfather and/or grandmother which constrains the behaviour of the father with respect to the son in the upper castes. Among the lower castes the presence of grandfathers and grandmothers within the family is even more unlikely than among the upper castes where the probability is only about fifty-fifty that both parents will be surviving at the time of the son's marriage. There is a fairly good correlation between caste ranking and wealth (the higher the caste the
more likely that caste will be wealthy) and there is a fairly high correlation between wealth and life expectancy.

The second reason is that among the lower castes there is very little opportunity for a father to accumulate wealth over which he has control in his old age. In a wealthy household the aged father has no real need of physical strength, he merely needs the mental ability to make decisions concerning its disposition. The father can be traditionally oriented because he has the power to back his position. Among the poor lower castes when a man loses his physical powers, as he inevitably must, he can hope that his son will follow tradition and provide for him in his old age. Thus when the son is the main contributor or only source of household income he need not pay attention to the demands of his father. It is much easier in the poorer households for the son to take over from his father and begin to make decisions about the disposition of the household income. Concomitantly the poorer household heads may exhibit different behaviour patterns towards their sons than is found among the wealthy, high-caste households. Fathers and sons will probably spend more time, more pleasantly and less formally, with one another.

A third factor which is probably not as important as the first two is that while there is a lot of direct contact between father and son among poor households this does not hold among wealthy households. The father in the wealthy household appears,
and more likely is, as a more distant figure to the son. He does not have many direct dealings with him. Mother, grandparents, teacher and possibly servants will stand between him and his father.

Even among wealthy households, however, it is possible for the father to fly in the face of tradition with respect to his behaviour towards his son. While it is important to know that extreme variations can and do exist with regard to the content, strength, and intensity of the father-son relationship, I think that the more normal type of solidarity structure that exists between some roles on the village level more nearly resembles that of the wealthy household than that of the poorer households. The intervention of caste into the structure of solidarity at the village level resembles the intervention of the mother, grandparents, teacher and servants at the household level.

I shall discuss shortly which roles in the village seem to have a solidarity structure modeled after the solidarity structure of the father-son relationship, but before I do so I wish to discuss the solidarity structure of the brother-brother relationship on which other village roles are based.

2. The Brother-Brother Relationship

One cannot say that the brother-brother relationship is a strong one except in certain circumstances. There are a number of other household relationships which can and do
assume precedence over the brother-brother relationship. Some examples are the father-son, mother-son and husband-wife relationships. The differentiation of brothers occurs on the basis of relative age. The eldest son is expected to take over the household and ritual obligations of the father after the father's death. Neither the eldest brother nor the younger brother(s) have much power to make decisions while the father is alive (and capable of making decisions) so that the difference in roles is not much emphasized. As the brothers grow up they receive much the same sort of treatment from others in the household. The younger brother may in fact receive more attention simply because it is the older brother who will have the advantage when the father dies.

In addition to the above brothers inherit equally from the estate of the father—although the senior son may be granted something extra from the estate to compensate for the extra ritual expenses being head of the family.

Although in theory the elder brother should stand in the same kind of relationship to his younger brother as the father stands to his son, this kind of relationship cannot be maintained—particularly after the father is dead. The father can control his son because whatever wealth the household has is in his name, but each brother has his own source of wealth if any. To quote again from Carstairs,

In principle, the same subservience was postulated in relation to one's elder brother. As Rajmal put it:
"if my father or my elder brother tells me to stand in one place, I'll stand there, dammit, all day if need be, until they tell me I can move." He was exaggerating, because he was, in fact, a man of very independent spirit; and like some other younger sons in the village, he went his own way, seldom bothering to consult his elder brother. In general, however, elder brothers were accorded, at least in public, the deference due to their position in the family; and the same restraint was observed by a younger brother in suppressing all show of affection towards his wife and children before an elder brother, as before his father. As Hira Singh put it: "Even if she is sick, I would not like to say this to my elder brother--but if younger brother is there, I can tell him and ask him to go for medicine." Hari Lal extended this category further saying: "Every man has got five fathers, and it is his duty to obey them without question, whatever they ask him to do. They are, his father, his elder brother, his king, his guru, and his friends."

It would seem from the above that the distinction between brothers is perhaps most important after childhood. As we shall see in a later chapter, it is important that brothers stick together in economic and political matters because they have more power as a group than as individuals. This combined with the power of traditional respect for the elder brother means that it will be the elder brother who makes decisions after taking into consideration the attitudes and desires of his younger brother. Often the brothers will maintain joint property even though they have set up separate households. The ideal is a joint household, (cf. p. ), but this is difficult to maintain because the wives so often quarrel with one another about who is to make what kinds of decisions within the household. (This is particularly true after the death of the mother-in-law.)
Sometimes brothers do quarrel and decide to go separate ways. This is usually at the instigation of their respective wives. What happens in effect is that the wives have forced their husbands to give precedence to the husband-wife relationship over the brother-brother relationship. When the brother-brother relationship is forced to give precedence to other relationships it may break down completely. Brothers actually join political factions which are opposed quite bitterly to one another. They may even be the heads of these factions. (Actually it is possible that factions may be formed in this way as we shall see later.)

SOLIDARITY STRUCTURES AT THE VILLAGE LEVEL

During the rest of this chapter I shall be discussing the solidarity structures which exist for relationships at the village level. Just as the individual is the basic unit of the household so on the village level the household is the basic unit. The eldest male is the head of the household and in any relationships outside of the household at the village level the head of household represents the household. Households are interacting and the points of interaction (intersection) are the respective household heads. There are essentially two types of relationships into which households enter at the village level: first, those in which caste is involved; and second, those which have to do with the jajmani system (cf. p. ).
SOLIDARITY STRUCTURES IN THE CASTE SYSTEM

Solidarity structures order the relationships which exist in both intracaste and intercaste situations. I shall discuss first the intracaste situation and second the intercaste situation.

1. Solidarity Structures as They Order Intracaste Relationships

I would hypothesize that relationships of an intracaste nature are ordered in much the same fashion as the brother-brother relationships is ordered. The behaviour which is manifested by the interaction of brothers is very similar to that manifested when the household heads who make up the caste panchayat interact. Membership in the caste panchayat is ascribed to the same degree that the male sibling group is ascribed within the household. Relative age is important in determining who will be the head of the caste panchayat. However, instead of relative age as the prime selective factor for panchayat leadership, it is the size and wealth of the household which the individual represents. That individual who has the largest and wealthiest household behind him will be the ranking member of the caste panchayat unless of course he is much younger than any of the other panchayat members. As the head of the household is responsible for the behaviour of all the members of the household, so the head of the caste panchayat will be held responsible for the behaviour of the members of the caste resident within the village. This responsibility is more theoretical than real,
although it does have realistic elements, because, just as the eldest male of the sibling group does not have absolute authority over his siblings and must secure their consent in some sort of household council, so that ranking panchayat member must secure the consent of his fellow members. More simply stated the ranking member of the caste panchayat and the eldest male of the sibling group are each in their setting the first among equals. Like the sibling group there are times when other relationships take precedence over this particular one. Intercaste relationships seem to take precedence over intracaste relationships just as the father-son relationship takes precedence over the brother-brother relationship.

There is a greater frequency of interaction at the intracaste level and less power differential between the heads of households in the same caste and hence there would seem to be a greater possibility for affection to be manifested and for the relationships to be more intimate. The development of intimate and affectionate relationships depends, I think, upon the size of the caste. If there are only four or five households living within the village it is much easier for household heads to behave as siblings toward one another. Just as one can imagine it to be a difficult thing for a large sibling group to act in concert in all matters so it is difficult for a caste panchayat of twenty or thirty members to maintain agreement on all matters affecting them. Normally, what happens,
as I shall discuss in the chapter on political structure, is that factions appear. There will be several groups of household heads within the panchayat—each group acting as a unit with a head who interacts with the heads of the other groups.

2. Solidarity Structures in Intercaste Relationships

If the behaviour patterns manifested in intracaste relationships bear close resemblance to those of the brother-brother relationship, then intercaste relationships bear a similar resemblance to the father-son relationship. Just as the father gives orders and instructions to the son and expects them to be carried out so a higher caste gives orders and instructions to a lower caste and expects them to be obeyed. As the son is responsible to the father and the father is responsible for the son so with the upper caste and lower caste. As the son depends upon his father for support but not vice versa, so the lower castes depend upon the upper castes but not vice versa. As the father-son relationship takes precedence over any other relationship for the son but not vice versa, so the upper caste-lower caste relationship takes precedence over any other relationship (at the village level, of course) for the lower caste but not vice versa. Just as the father-son relationship is cold, distant, and formal so the intercaste relationship is cold, distant, and formal. As the father-son relationship appears to be asymmetrical so the intercaste relationship appears.
SOLIDARITY STRUCTURES WITHIN THE JAJMANI SYSTEM

The second type of relationship at the village level which involves the head of the household acting as the representative of the unit is the jajman-kamin relationship. This relationship is in content essentially an economic one—although it does have definite political overtones—in which the kamin is in an inferior and dependent position relative to the jajman. The jajmani system will be discussed more fully in the next chapter, but it is necessary to look at the relationship in terms of the solidarity structures now.

The relationship is defined by the type of service which is exchanged between jajman and kamin households. As in the caste oriented relationships the point of contact is the heads of the two households, but in some ways the relationship can be regarded as an unwritten contract between two households so that the relationship can exist through more than one generation. It is up to each head of household to see that the terms of the agreement are lived up to. In the case of the joint household—brothers after the death of the father—it is the eldest brother who as head of household assumes the rights and duties of the previously existing agreement. If the jajman household is small and the kamin household is large it may be that the services of only part of the kamin household are needed. In that case the unneeded portion of the joint household will have to form a new relationship with another jajman. The situation may, of course, be reversed.
The content of the jajman-kamin relationship is very similar to that of the father-son relationship. The kamin is in an inferior position with respect to the jajman because of his caste and occupation, and the behaviour patterns manifested in interaction patterns between the two are very similar to those between father and son. The kamin always shows a great deal of respect, deference and obedience to his jajman. The jajman in turn expects this and so long as that kind of behaviour is forthcoming treats the kamin as though he were a son.

The relationship for the jajman is not a strong one just as it is not for the father in the father-son relationship. For the kamin the relationship with his jajman may take precedence over any of the others he might form at the village level. For example the kamin will observe his obligations to his jajman before he observes the obligations he has to his caste panchayat.

SUMMARY

Solidarity structures at the village level operate to order the significant relationships—intra and intercaste and jajman-kamin relationships—in a manner very like the father-son and brother-brother relationships at the household level. The village can be viewed almost as the household writ large with each household as an individual writ large.
FOOTNOTES

1 The following books and articles were particularly useful for the writing of this chapter:

(a) Alan R. Beals, Gopapur (New York, 1962), Chapter II.

(b) G. Morris Carstairs, The Twice Born (Bloomington, 1962), Chapters 3 and 4.

(c) M. L. Cormack, She Who Rides a Peacock (New York, 1961).


(f) Mandelbaum, "The Family - India," Introduction to Civilization of India (Chicago).


3 Ibid.

4 Ibid., p. 352.


6 Ibid., p. 69.

7 Panchayat literally translated means Council of Five but generally includes all household heads of the caste in question.

8 Although I shall discuss the jajmani system more fully in a later chapter, I shall outline briefly its nature now. In the jajmani system there is a jajman (patron) and a surrounding
group of farmers (clients) who work together as a production unit within the village. The jajmani is a land owner and the kamai are the artisans and labourers who serve him. Each has certain rights and obligations with respect to the other. Hence the relationship continues through more than one generations and will be broken only when one of the parties ceases to fulfill its obligations.
CHAPTER IV

The Structure of Economic Allocation

The processes of economic allocation must be divided into two broad categories: the processes of production and the processes of consumption. This breakdown is necessary because the unit which is involved in production is not exactly the same as the unit which consumes.

DEFINITION OF ECONOMIC ALLOCATION

I shall define economic allocation following Levy, "Economic allocation in concrete social structures may be defined as the distribution of the goods and services making up the income of the concrete structure concerned and of the goods and efforts making up the output of that structure among the various members of the structure and among the members of the structural unit and other structural units with which it is in contact in these respects." The substructure of economic production in terms of this definition includes all the structures from whose operation goods and services accrue to the concrete structures concerned. The substructure of consumption includes all structures whose operation ensures the allocation of goods and services to the appropriate concrete structures.

THE SUBSTRUCTURE OF ECONOMIC PRODUCTION

In describing the substructure of economic production the sorts of questions which must be answered are who does what to
produce which goods and services. The first thing that needs to be established is the nature of the concrete production unit. It is not the household because it is not large enough to directly produce all it consumes. Households are bound by their caste to produce only one kind of good or service which is exchanged for the other necessary goods and services. And it is not the village as a whole which acts as a minimal production unit because there are several production units coexisting in the village. (Although the village can be considered as a unit with respect to the services rendered by such caste groups as the sweepers, this is really a rather special case.)

The basic production unit is on a scale in terms of numbers of individuals involved somewhere between the household and the village. It is a multihousehold, multicaste group with one of the households recognized by the rest as managerial and the rest of the households ranked according to their caste and contributions to the group. These groups as units of production exist over all of India and certainly throughout northern India. This unit has many names depending upon the language of the area, but, in general, at least since Wiser's 1936 study, *The Hindu Jajmani System,* it has been known as the jajmani system.

THE JAJMANI SYSTEM

The jajmani system comes into existence because of the caste system. Households are confined to carrying out only one of the tasks of production because of their caste. As a
result a fairly elaborate system of reciprocal exchanges develops. Each household depends upon the production of other households and some kind of system must be developed to ensure reciprocity between households. The resulting system is the jajmani system. Each household has all the other households in the system as a jajman—in other words, each household in the system serves all the other households. And in turn all the other households serve a single household. Thus each household should receive all that is necessary to ensure survival. For example, the potter makes pots for a group composed of households of other castes which in turn supply the potter with the goods they produce. Each potter is a member of a similar group. However, just as it is caste that makes this elaborate system necessary, so it is caste that causes this system to be anything but the egalitarian model it seems.

To show how the jajmani system actually works I shall make use of the data which Oscar Lewis provides in his 1958 study of the village of Rampur in Uttar Pradesh.

1. The Jajmani System as it Operates in Rampur

There are 150 households in residence in Rampur village. There are twelve castes represented in the village with the following distribution: "Seventy-eight Jati families, fifteen Brahmin, twenty Chamar (leatherworker), ten Bhangi (sweeper), seven Kumhar (potter), five Jhinvar (water carrier), four Dhobi (washerman), four Khati (carpenter), three Nai (barber),
two Chipi (calico printer or tailor), one Lohar (blacksmith), and one Baniya (merchant)." Thus 52% of the households in the village are Jati. This preponderance is made even greater when it is considered that Jati households are on the average larger than the households of other castes. The percentage of Jatis by numerical count is exactly 59%. The next three largest groups account for not quite 25%. The other eight castes total just over 15% of the resident population.

The village of Rampur is located in an area which is dominated by the Jati caste and the villages are known as Jati villages. In other parts of the U.P. the Rajputs or the Thakurs are the dominant caste and in still other areas there may be other castes who dominate. At any rate the typical pattern is for one caste to numerically dominate the village. Although in the Jati areas of U.P. one expects the dominant caste to be Jati the presence of other castes in the village as well as their numbers is not nearly as predictable. Unlike Rampur there may be villages in which there are only two or three households of Brahmins and Chamars and more Dhobis, Bhangis, and Lohars.

Not only do the Jatis dominate numerically in Rampur, they also own over 90% of the 784 acres of land within the boundaries of the village including the land on which the village residences are built. Landholdings vary in size, and twelve of the Jati households depend completely upon sources other than the land for their livelihood. Although this
situation is not too unusual today, it should be pointed out that in the past and for many villages today there is no outside source of income. There are an additional 30 households, some of whose members acquire income from nonvillage sources. There are, in fact, only 36 Jati households which rely completely on the land they own for their livelihood. Among the other castes the percentage of those relying upon outside sources for income is quite high. Indeed, there are few of the other castes who rely completely upon sources of income within the village. For both Jatis and non-Jatis this is a relatively new phenomenon. Previously virtually the only source of income lay within the village and it is in this context that I shall examine the jajmani system, for it is only in this context that the jajmani system can actually work. As long as households must look inwards towards the village they must work within the system.

As I pointed out earlier in the chapter, the jajmani system in theory is a set of reciprocal exchanges between households all of whom in carrying out their daily tasks provide each other with the goods and services necessary for survival. Each household serves all the other households and all of them serve each household. When being served the household is known as jajman and when serving the household is known as kamin. These two terms mean roughly master and servant respectively, so that an individual household should be both master and servant to all the other households in the group. This however, is nothing like what the system really
is. Were it so the kinds of relationships between households would more closely resemble those of a group of siblings. There would be some give and take, some semblence of equality, mutual respect for one another, etc.

Far from being a well-balanced system for the production and distribution of goods and services, it is rather a repressive and coercive system in which certain households are able to almost completely dominate other households. It resembles, in fact, the father-son relationship quite closely from all indications. Ideally the jajman-kamin relationship is a voluntary one in which each of the households is able to opt out should it be felt necessary. The jajman has the right to sever the relationship should the kamin not provide adequate service and the kamin has a similar right should the jajman fail to live up to his obligations. In reality severing the relationship is more possible than probable for the household which is in the position of kamin. In reality each household is known in the village as either jajman household or as a kamin household. A household in the village is known to all other households as either jajman or kamin and this is a fixed status. Those households which are known as jajman households are those which own land—those that do not own land are known as kamins. In addition to this 'either/or' ranking, households are ranked within either group. The poorer Jati households (poorer generally because they own only small amounts of land) are jajmans but not nearly to the same extent as the wealthy
Jati households. In some ways they are considered jajmans only because they are of the same caste as the wealthy jajmans. By the same token some kamins are more dependent than others on their jajmans and to the extent that they are dependent they take on a greater amount of the quality of 'kamin-ness.' The kamin is in reality the servant of the jajman and the extent to which he must be just a servant depends on his importance to the jajman.

A test of the mutuality of the jajman-kamin relationship and the respect each has for the other is to observe the number of castes which any one caste serves and the number of castes which are in turn servants to that caste. This is one of the aspects which Wiser looked at and it is obvious that there are some castes which only serve and are not served in turn. These include the very low castes which are responsible for carrying out the tasks which the higher castes designate as being ritually polluting (e.g., removing waste of either human or animal origin from the village confines). These castes are jajmans to no one and they are kamins to all. They must perform all the services necessary for their survival for themselves and they must still depend upon the village (e.g., the jajmans) for gifts of food.

The role of kamin is, then, essentially a servile one, but it is a matter of degree— that is, one has more or less of the quality of 'kaminness' which dictates the appropriate pattern of behavior with the jajman. The variation extends
from a relationship which has elements of equality about it to a relationship with implications of complete inequality. At one pole the jajman-kamin relationship may approach the ideal and at the other pole it may approach very nearly the opposite of the ideal. The jajman-kamin relationship approaches the ideal when the two households involved are of roughly the same status in the ritual hierarchy and each offers to the other what is considered by each to be an important service, and it is furthest when the two households are separated by great ritual distance and when the need of one for the other is greater than the reverse. It is difficult, if not impossible, to generalize about which castes will or will not enter into a jajman-kamin relationship with a modicum of equality. One must first establish the caste of the jajmans in the village. This is fairly easily done by asking any of the residents what kind of village it is. In Rampur the answer would be that it is a Jati village. Most of the villages in the vicinity of Rampur are Jati villages. Further to the east, where most of the village land is owned by Rajputs, the villages are known as Rajput villages and the Rajputs must be considered the jajmans in those villages.

In Rampur Jatis are not very highly ranked in the ritual hierarchy. Their patterns of behaviour preclude high ritual status (based on the type of food they eat and its mode of preparation as well as the fact that they allow widow remarriage. Their jajman status is based solely on the fact that
they own the village lands. Thus they are able to form a relationship with some of the higher artisan castes which is based on reciprocal needs and is not over coloured by ritual differences. This would be particularly true with respect to the Brahmin priest. The Rajput jajmans to the east are much higher on the ritual hierarchy and the ritual distance between them and nearly all of the other castes (perhaps with the exception of the Brahmin priests) prevents to a large degree any approximation to the ideal jajman-kamin relationship.

In addition to the relative position in the ritual hierarchy as a method of determining the amount of equality there will be in the jajman-kamin relationship, one must also consider the size of the resident population of each caste as well as the fact that some castes perform a fairly specialized task. The Kumhars are a typical example of this combination of factors. Everyone in the village needs clay pots for containers of one sort or another.⁹ There is, however, a definite limit to the number of pots that the village can use. As long as there are only enough or not quite enough Kumhar households to meet the needs of the village their services are in demand. The other castes do not have a choice as to whom they will patronize. If there is a dire shortage the village may even make efforts to persuade another, outsider Kumhar household to come live in the village. Various kinds of advantages will
be offered to get them to leave the village they are already serving—the prime one will be that the jajman-kamin relationship will have less emphasis on servility. If there are more Kumhar households than the village has needs then the Kumhars are in a more difficult position. They have several courses of action open to them—none of which are very appealing in the eyes of the Kumhars. The first option is that each household will continue to make pots but in smaller quantities thus reducing their income. The second option is that some of the households cease to make pots and become tenants of the jajmans or worse (and probably more likely) landless labourers. This course of action is likely to be resisted because it would lower their overall status in the eyes of the other castes—it would lower the status even of those who are still making pots. The third alternative is for some of the households to leave the village in search of other villages which do not have an over supply of potters. This is undesirable because it means leaving behind established relationships with family, friends and political and economic patrons. There are seven Kumhar households in Rampur. I do not have any information about the desirable (from the Kumhar viewpoint) household ratio, but I would suspect that in Rampur the Kumhars would like to be less numerous.

The Chamars are another example. Their traditional occupation is that of removing dead animals from the streets and fields of the village. Their income is derived from the products which they can make from the dead animals (e.g., leather
buckets for the Persian water wheels, sandals, traces for bullocks, etc.), the meat of the dead animals as well as a certain amount of the agricultural produce of the village at harvest time. The Chamars are a very low caste group. (In some areas they are not part of the caste system being regarded as untouchables.) In each village the needs for this kind of occupation are small, only enough to support a couple of households. In Rampur there are twenty Chamar households. This is obviously more than is needed so that they have been forced into one of the three alternatives suggested for the Kumhars above. They have not moved out of the village because all of the other villages in the area have the same problem. There are just too many households for them to split up the available income. Thus they have had to become the servants and part time field hands for the Jati farmers who have need for their labour. Because there are so many of them they have no real bargaining power within the jajmani system.11 A caste only has bargaining power when it has alternative ways of securing the requisite income for survival.

Aside from the ritual distance between the Kumhars who are a fairly high caste group and the Chamars who are definitely low caste, the Kumhars have a better position within the jajmani system because they are not tied to a single jajman. Rather they serve several jajmans and can play the jajmans off one against the other. If they are not treated the way they feel they should be by a particular jajman, they can simply stop
making pots for the household. Chamars are much more likely to be tied to a particular jajman.

Thus the quality of 'kaminness' depends upon the caste of the jajman and the caste of the kamin as well as the size of the caste to which the kamin belongs.

Just as there are degrees of 'kaminness' so there are degrees of 'jajmanness.' All of the Jati households in the village partake of this quality. None of the other castes, including the Brahmin, would be considered as jajmans. All Jati households in the village are entitled to equal respect by all of the other households, but this is only by virtue of belonging to the Jati caste. It is not difficult for the individuals living in the village to determine which of the jajmans are 'hangers-on' and which are not. There are big jajmans and little jajmans.

The Jatis are the jajmans by virtue of the land which they own. Those who own the most land are those which have more of the quality of 'jajmanness.' Of the 78 Jati households in Rampur only 28 have more than ten acres of land. I would suggest that those households which own less than ten acres of land are the hangers-on because these households probably do not have sufficient surplus after feeding themselves and meeting ritual obligations to command more than minimally the services of the other castes. They will have very little basis for reciprocation with other castes.
Of the 28 households owning more than 10 acres, there are 14 households which own between 10 and 14 acres, six which own between 14 and 18 acres, three which own between 18 and 22 acres, three which own between 22 and 25 acres, and two which own more than 25 acres. One of the latter two owns just over 50 acres. Only those jajman with considerable land holdings can command the services of large numbers of kamins. A household which owns 25 acres requires the services of a large number of labourers. These households require the services of other castes to meet their needs. If there are enough households involved then the individual castes involved will have enough work to do and remain tied to the entire group. For example the jajman may have attached to him enough households to require the full-time services of a Kumhar household. This household will be loyal to the group because they provide it with the services it needs to survive. As we shall see in the next chapter it is to the political advantage of the jajman to have a large following of kamins who are loyal to him and to the rest of the group. Thus the larger jajmans will try to increase the size of their following. The larger the following the more political power the jajman has and the more political power he has the easier it is to acquire more land. As can be seen the process of cumulative (circular) causation is at work in the economic activity of the jajman households.

There are 28 households in Rampur which could form the nucleus of a jajman-kamin group. Not all of these households
have done so. There just are not enough kamins to go around. Only the largest land owners will be able to develop this kind of group. The smaller landowners are not left out in the cold, rather they join with the larger landowner to form a rather cohesive economic unit which shares the services of the other castes. Thus within any one village there will be several of these units consisting of the jajman, other cooperating, lesser jajman, and a surrounding group of kamins. The jajman assumes what may be termed a managerial role which, as I mentioned in the chapter on solidarity structures, takes on some of the attributes of the father role in the household. Although much of the actual farming is done by Jati households, some of the kamin households will provide additional labour either as tenants or as day labourers. The relationship between these households and the jajman will be closer than the relationship with any of the other kamins because farming is the primary activity of the group. The next closest ring of kamin households includes those who provide goods and skills which neither the jajman nor the labouring households possess or do not have the time to pursue. This group includes the smith, the carpenter, the potter, the tailor, etc. The outermost ring of kamin households which surrounds the jajman consist of castes who follow occupations which are ritually impossible for the jajman and the other kamins. This lot includes such occupations as the barber, the water carrier, and the washerman.

All of these castes, with the jajman operating as a manager at the center, work together in such fashion that their needs,
both ritually and physically, are more or less satisfied. Their needs will be more satisfied if they are higher on the priority list and less if they are low on the list. The members of this system assume priority in the order that I described immediately above when outlining their respective contributions to the group—the jajman as manager, the labourer as farmer, the service castes for their skills, and the servant castes for performing ritually polluting jobs.

Not all of the households in the village are eligible for membership in the jajmani system. The Chamars and the Bhangis are outcastes or untouchables and hence can never become part of the system. They are, in effect, kamins to the village as a unit. They service the entire village, but do not receive services in return. What food they receive is more in the nature of charity than as something due for services rendered. Failure to perform this service can and does lead to such punishment as a severe beating.

The jajmani system as described above, then, is a system which operates to ensure the production of goods and services needed to sustain the individual households within the village. In saying that the jajmani system is the basic production unit, I am not saying that the unit is totally self-sufficient. There are some items which cannot even be produced by the village as a whole let alone by the jajmani system. Items such as salt have to be purchased outside of the village,
but by and large everything needed by the unit could be produced by its members.

The jajmani system is a rather unique way of handling the production needs of a society. It seems to have developed in response to the needs of a society which has very rigid caste boundaries. There must be some kind of structure which can coordinate the efforts of all the castes. That it is rather unique can be seen when it is compared with other agrarian societies. Normally the production unit in other societies is the household. There seems to be more division of labour within the household and not quite so much between households. All households carry out roughly the same tasks necessary for survival rather than dividing up the tasks between households.

THE SUBSTRUCTURE OF ECONOMIC CONSUMPTION

I have said above that the basic unit of production in the Indian village is a group of households consisting of a jajman household and a varying number of associated kamin households. The combined activities of the kamin households, under the management of the jajman produce the requisite goods and services to meet at least the minimum requirements of the whole group. Distribution of the produce occurs in one of two ways: goods flow into the hands of the manager for future redistribution among the members; and/or, services and goods are traded between the kamin households as well as between the jajman and kamins.
The substructure of consumption is, like the substructure of production, complicated. In some instances it is the jajman-kamin group which is the basic consumption unit and in other cases it is the individual household. It is possible to differentiate these instances on the basis of the direction and flow of the goods and services produced. In other words the substructure of consumption is tied intimately with the process of distribution. Those goods and services which are produced by kamins and collected by the jajman to be distributed at a later date to other kamins are instances of the whole group acting as a consumption unit. It is the jajman who decides which household will get how much of the total product. This occurs primarily with respect to the consumption of agricultural products.

When Kamin households exchange goods among themselves with the jajman as intermediary it is the household which is acting as the consumption unit because it is the household which makes the choice as to what it will take for consumption purposes in exchange for its products—in other words, when the decision rests with the household.

It can perhaps be said that this is an unnecessary distinction, but the fact that the kamin household may not be granted as much for consumption as it has produced makes the distinction warranted. So long as the jajman has the power to force a surplus from the production unit I think it is a necessary distinction. The size of the surplus which the jajman keeps back
depends upon his power in the village as well as whether or not the kamin households have a viable alternative (whether or not there exists the possibility that the kamin household can enter another production unit).

Generally speaking the surplus which the jajman is able to command is a very small percentage of the total product of the production unit. The total product of the production unit is barely able to cover the consumption needs of the unit. In many cases if there is a surplus it is only because the consumption unit in terms of the individual households is not granted even the minimum. When this happens the individual household must look elsewhere for the rest of the necessary income. Often the only course of action is to borrow money from the jajman and this is one of the most effective means at the disposal of the jajman to ensure that his kamins remain within his group.

As we shall see in the following chapter on the structure of political allocation the structure of economic allocation is extremely important in terms of the decision-making process. As in any social system of this nature the separation of economic and political allocation can occur only analytically. Changes in any concrete structure will effect other concrete structures and this is what I shall try to show in the last chapter on social change.

To summarize, then, what I have discussed in this chapter, an economic structure has developed which is designed to
overcome a very rigid caste system such that all castes are able to more or less receive those goods and services necessary for survival.
FOOTNOTES

1 Of particular use in writing this chapter I would include the following:

a) F. G. Bailey, Caste and the Economic Frontier (Manchester, 1957), Chapters 4-7.

b) Thomas O. Beidelman, A Comparative Analysis of the Jajmani System, Monographs of the Association for Asian Studies (New York, 1959), Chapters 1 and 2.

c) T. Scarlett Epstein, Economic Development and Social Change - South India (Manchester, 1962), Chapters 2 and 5.


f) Kusam Nair, Blossoms - The Dust (New York, 1962).

g) W. H. Wiser, The Hindu Jajmani System (Lucknow, 1936), Chapter 1.


3 Wiser, op. cit.

4 Oscar Lewis, Village Life - Northern India (New York, 1958).

5 Ibid., p. 15.

6 Jatis are a farmer caste. As land owners they may not have to work in the fields but their traditional occupation is that of farming.

7 Lewis, op. cit., p. 98.

8 Wiser, op. cit., p. 9.

9 The Kumhars have encountered more serious difficulties than population pressures. The manufacture of brass and aluminum pots has put a large number of potters out of work. Clay pots are not nearly as durable as brass or aluminum.

10 The Chamars, like the Kumhars, have almost completely lost their traditional means of livelihood. Villagers can get better quality cheaper products from the cities.
Although they have no power within the jajmani system, the same cannot be said when the jajmani system begins to break down. I shall discuss this more fully in the last chapter.

Outside sources of income include: Teaching, army and police service, clerks and drivers for the post office and nearby mills and factories, and pensions. Obviously not all villages will be near enough to such sources of income to take advantage of them. Because transportation is extremely limited, villages with a high percentage of outside income must be located quite near larger cities.

Lewis points out that villagers reckon a household with oxen requires 12.5 acres to live properly. However, 15 households have oxen and landholdings of less than 12.5 acres and still seem to survive. It is for this reason that I set ten acres as the lower limit.

CHAPTER V

Political Activity Within the Village

It will be my hypothesis in this chapter that although political activity is widespread, it will have as its sole object the control of land within the village. The implications of this statement are that there is very little political activity among the lower castes except as they serve as instruments of the upper castes in the struggle for control over land. I hesitate to state that there is no political activity among the lower castes because I would also hypothesize among the lower castes because I would also hypothesize that the sanskritization process first described by Srinivas (cf. p. ) is a form of political activity practiced by the lower castes. (I shall deal with this in a later section of this chapter.)

In the majority of villages in North India one caste owns all or at least a very high percentage of the village lands. Actually it is the individual household which owns the land, but only members of a particular caste are allowed to own land. The land may be alienated by the household, but political pressure is such that only members of the land owning caste will purchase it. Alienation is always the last resort, however, for it means a loss of political power. Increase or decrease of acreage is an indication of either an increase in political power or a decrease.

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Normally a household does not control enough land to have much power within the village so that to gain power the individual household must combine with other households. This combination of several households is called a faction by most writers who have observed political activity within the village. Generally speaking the households which combine are kin of one sort or another. Often a sibling group will form the nucleus of such a combination. These factions are fairly stable in the short run (i.e. five or ten years), but in the long run there is considerable shifting of alliances. In order for a faction to operate successfully in the long run it must meet three conditions: (1) it must be sufficiently cohesive to act as a unit, (2) it must be large enough to act as a self-sufficient ceremonial group; for example, it must be able to summon an impressive number of relatives for a marriage party, (3) it must have sufficient economic resources to be independent of other groups.

Of the three conditions it is the first that is most difficult to meet over an extended period of time. A faction may disintegrate when one of the household heads of which it is composed dies and his holdings are divided up among his sons. Even if all of the sons maintain their holdings as a group it means that the number of household heads which make up the group has increased. If this happens with several of the original households, the number of households may become too unwieldy to be efficient relative to other factions.
second possibility which occurs is that brothers do not maintain their property jointly because either they or their respective wives are not able to get along with one another. In this event brothers may join different factions.

As the cohesion of the faction begins to break down it becomes more and more difficult to meet the other two conditions necessary for stable factions. Thus there is a constant formation and reformation of factions within the village in the long run. Political activity takes place within factions at one level and between factions at another.

Given that conditions are met such that factions are formed I would hypothesize that the number and size of factions within the dominant caste of the village is dependent upon four interrelated factors. These four factors are as follows: (1) the size of the caste (number of households, average size of household, and proportion of the total village population), (2) the personalities of the prominent individuals and the number of them within the caste, (3) the length of residence within the village (i.e. how long the households making up the faction have lived in the village and how long the faction, recognized as a faction by the other factions, has been a part of the village political scene relative to other factions), and (4) the nature of the issue which is before the factions. I shall discuss each of these factors separately below.
SIZE OF CASTE

In those villages where the dominant caste controls the land completely out of proportion to its percentage of the total population there will be a tendency for the caste to have fewer factions. The rest of the village population could easily become a threat if the controlling caste were not united in its efforts to keep the rest of the village disunited—disunited at least with respect to the dominant caste. In addition, the fact that there are fewer households in the dominant caste means that there is more land to go around and individual land owners will be the focus of a rather large jajman-kamin group. Managing this system of relationships can in some circumstances supercede in importance intracaste disputes. (It should be noted here that it can have the opposite effect in that the jajman can use his group of kamins as a political force, and having in hand a large group of kamins certainly must be tempting.)

In those villages which have a large population of the dominant caste there is less likelihood of unity for there is less need of unity in the face of the rest of the village population. There is likely to be a greater spread of wealth and hence political power between the households of the dominant caste. There are more households competing for the same amount of wealth and fewer kamins in the village to be used as political pawns. In this situation one would expect
a larger number of factions—each faction consisting of a
group of households, usually based on kinship ties, working
together to protect their interests from the depredations of
other similarly constituted groups (cf. page in chapter 3).

PERSONALITY AND NUMBER OF PROMINENT INDIVIDUALS WITHIN THE
DOMINANT CASTE

The number of able and ambitious individuals within the
village determines to a great extent the number of factions. In Hitchcock's Khalipur study a single individual managed
to assume most of the reins of power and factions virtually
ceased to exist as long as he remained in control. His down­
fall after ten years in 'office' came partially as the result
of his own failings, but partially because there came on to
the scene other younger individuals who were able and ambitious.
With their coming and the previous leader's passing, factions
within the dominant Rajput caste rose again, each headed by
one of the able and ambitious younger men. Since the politi­
cal pie does not get larger in the village except in the long
run, each of these individuals is competing for a static
amount of power. One individual can gain more power only at
the expense of another individual. Each individual attempts
to align as many of his fellow caste members with his posi­
tion as possible. The more households there are to back him the
stronger is his political position relative to other positions.
Too many able and ambitious individuals might tear a village
apart—particularly if they make too much use of the intercaste
group for which they are the jajman. Fear of losing control of the lower castes probably limits this kind of competition---at any rate, I have seen nowhere in the literature any examples of a struggle between factions which has led to the downfall of the dominant caste. Just as too many prominent individuals could cause problems for the dominant caste so the lack of prominent leaders may cause problems. This would particularly be the case should there be able and ambitious leaders among the lower castes.

Cohesiveness of the faction is at least as important as size if not more so and cohesiveness is directly related to the personality of the leader. The faction will operate successfully in the face of other factions only as long as the leader is able to maintain unity.

LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN THE VILLAGE

Length of residence in the village, for purposes of demarcating factions, is measured in terms of depth of lineage. The effective historical period in terms of faction formation is only as far back as lineages can be traced. In any given village there will be certain lineages which can be traced further back than others. Often the oldest lineage is directly descended from the village founder or at least is thought to be directly descended. This lineage will feel a certain amount of unity in the face of other lineages and in certain types of issues may operate as a faction to oppose other lineages. This
lineage may or may not be powerful: the vigourousness of the lineage (i.e. the presence of dynamic and interested leaders and followers) is as important as its depth.

Thus a very old lineage may be dying out and even though it continues to act as a unit its power will not be as great as another, newer lineage which is vigourous about its interests.

The formation of factions on the basis of lineage may be the result of an old quarrel or through the process of fission. The further back a lineage can trace its origin the greater the distance there will be between the living members of the lineage. There seems to be a limit not only to the number of households which can cooperate, but as well a limit in terms of distance of kinship ties. Brothers are usually found within the same faction. First cousins may be included depending upon the issue, but beyond fairly close kinship ties it is difficult to maintain cooperation. Although most factions contain households which are related fairly closely, some factions are formed where there are no kinship ties—the basis for cooperation in this kind of faction is a similar attitude toward a particular issue and may not last beyond the successful or unsuccessful resolution of the issue.

Aside from being one of the founding lineages there are at least two other ways in which a new lineage may become established in the village and become the basis for new factions. The first way is that an individual may come into the village sometime after it is founded and establish a household
from which a new lineage springs. Because the caste is endogamous the two lineages are ultimately related, but it may not be possible to trace the linkage. The validity of the newcomer's claim to a particular caste status will be investigated before he is allowed to become a member of the village, but such tenuous connections are not of much importance to faction formation within the village. The incoming founder household may have merely bought land in the village or the individual may have come as a supplicant seeking refuge from some kind of awkward situation in the village of origin. The individual may have come as a partial or complete conqueror. The Jati caste in Rampur may have entered the village in this way. At any rate this might be an explanation for the fact that the Jatis in the Rampur are of much lower caste status than the other land-owning castes in that part of north India. The Jatis may perhaps have been granted land in return for helping some military conqueror who had moved into the area some hundreds of years ago.

The second way in which a new lineage can come to be established within the village is for an individual who is related to an established lineage through female ties to take up land in the village either by purchase or through gift. An example of this might be the marriage of a young man into a household which has nothing but females in the younger generation. This kind of beginning is not considered very auspicious and it may take a lineage established in this way quite a number
of generations to be considered by other lineages in the caste as legitimate. The manner in which the lineage comes into existence has a great deal to do with the prestige of the faction which is formed out of the lineage.

Even where the entire caste population in the village is closely related and where there has not been any in-migration one can expect factions to develop because the very size of the group makes it too unwieldy—unless there is a single strong leader or a very strong reason for maintaining unity of caste within the village.

THE TYPE OF ISSUE

The issue which is under consideration within the caste population has a great significance for the formation of factions. Issues develop at three different levels within the village. The issues at the first level concern those events which effect just the caste itself. Factions are formed and maintained as the result of, for example, a court case over irrigation rights or over a boundary dispute or again over certain forms of caste behaviour relating to ritual purity. The faction lines harden over the years and further examples are found by each of the factions which show that they need to maintain unity.

Issues which involve other castes tend to create unity between factions that otherwise might be bitter enemies. If the Chamar caste suddenly decides to give up its traditional occupation of leather worker and become more sanskritized
this will effect all of the members of the dominant caste equally. In many villages in north India the Chamars may include as much as a quarter of the village population and their attempt at sanskritization would represent a full scale threat of revolution. There can be little question of disagreement among households of the dominant caste if they are to preserve their hold in the village. In effect a committee of the whole will be formed by the dominant caste to deal with the matter.

Issues at the third level are those in which the world outside the village becomes the focus. The village caste population will normally try to present a united front to outsiders from other nearby villages even though they be of the same caste. This does not always hold true however. One faction may try to exploit its relationships with individuals or groups outside of the village in order to improve their position relative to other factions in the caste. Factions may even develop in response to the attempt of one group of households to gain power within the village by taking advantage of relationships formed with powerful individuals outside the village.

FACTIONS WITHIN NONLAND-OWNING CASTES

Factions exist, or can exist, in any of the castes resident in the village. In Rampur, for example, both the Chamars and the Bhangis are divided into factions. That other castes are not divided is a function of size. A caste
which has only three or four households is not very likely to be divided. Since there is little intercaste sociability if the three or four households are not united there is a great need to get along with one another. They need each other too much economically and socially to quarrel.

The fact that it is possible to discover factions among castes other than the dominant land-owning caste does not mean that there is political activity among castes other than the dominant caste. In terms of my definition of political activity, factional activity among the Chamars and Bhangis is not political. The Chamar factions in Rampur are based on the positions each of two groups of households took with respect to the 'kidnapping' of a Chamar girl by a group of Chamars from another village. The girl who was kidnapped became the wife of one of the outsider Chamars--this was why she was kidnapped in the first place. The Bhangi factions are based on a quarrel over who was to replace a dead headman of the caste. Some households favoured one individual and another group of households favoured another individual each of whom appeared to have a basis for making the claim that he should be the next headman.

In neither of these cases is there any chance of gaining control over land. Neither of the issues have anything to do with acquisition or maintenance of land ownership.
The first use of the term Sanskritization was made by Srinivas in a 1952 study of the religious and social life of the Coorgs of South India. Srinivas explained the term in a following passage:

The caste system is far from a rigid system in which the position of each component caste is fixed for all time. Movement has always been possible, and especially so in the middle regions of the hierarchy. A low caste was able, in a generation or two, to rise to a higher position in the hierarchy by adopting vegetarianism and teetotalism, and by Sanskritizing its ritual and pantheon. In short, it took over, as far as possible, the customs, rites, and beliefs of the Brahmins, and the adoption of the Brahminic way of life by a low caste which seems to have been frequent, though theoretically forbidden. The process has been called "Sanskritization" in this book, in preference to "Brahminization," as certain Vedic rites are confined to the Brahmins and the two other "twice-born" castes.9

The term 'sanskritization' was put forward to explain certain kinds of behaviour patterns which function to increase the power of particular castes in the village relative to the other castes. It is a useful term because it differentiates between two types of power plays. Sanskritization refers to behaviour on the part of the caste which is directed not towards changing the structure of the village, but rather is directed toward changing the status quo. In other words, sanskritizing behaviour is essentially conservative in nature. The second type of power play which is known as Westernization is directed toward overthrowing the whole structure. Both of these forces are at work in the village. Sanskritization as a
process has been operating for hundreds, and perhaps thousands of years. Westernization as a process only began to operate after the arrival of the British.

Since the 1952 study quoted above, Srinivas has somewhat modified his definition. Srinivas had assumed that the model the lower classes would be emulating was the Brahminical model. Pocock pointed out in a 1955 publication\(^\text{10}\) that the Kshatriya model was used in some regions of India:

> Just as the Kshatriya or King stands with the Brahmin as superior to the Vaishya and Shudra varna, so we may also speak of the Kingly model in Hindu society which is complementary to, though dependent in certain respects upon, the Brahminic. At any given time or place the Kingly model is represented by the dominant political power in any area, and is mediated by the local dominant non-Brahmin caste or castes of that area. Thus in secular matters the Moghuls and the British at various times have provided a standard by which secular prestige is gauged.

Sanskritization has come to stand for the process whereby the lower castes in a particular area will emulate the behaviour of the dominant land-owning caste whether that caste traces its origins to any of the varna. In terms of this discussion what is important is the effort that a caste makes towards sanskritizing its behaviour patterns. Success in the venture depends upon several things. If the caste attempts to make too great a change it will likely be sanctioned by the castes above it. Chamars, for example, are at the very bottom of the caste hierarchy and would have little luck in attempting to model their behaviour on that of the Brahmans in the village. They would normally emulate the behaviour of a caste only a
few ranks above them. Along with the change in behaviour there must be some change in the economic status of the group. They must somehow find a source of income which would place them higher than they had been previously relative to the other castes. Finally, the success of the attempt depends upon the strength and unity of the upper castes. If the upper castes are split in their attitudes towards this attempt at upward mobility it will be much easier for the attempt to succeed.

SOURCES OF POWER WITHIN THE VILLAGE

So far in this chapter I have carefully refrained from using the word power. I have discussed those activities which are political. These activities are pursued by households, factions, and caste in the hope that should they be successful they will have gained power relative to other households, factions and castes. Power accrues to households, factions, or caste from several different sources of which successful political activity is but one. The economic activities discussed in the last chapter are a second source. A third source of power comes from the position held in the ritual hierarchy. A fourth source comes from the individuals involved. A dynamic, ambitious individual will have more power than one who is not all else equal.

As in most social systems there is a definite positive correlation between power holders in one kind of activity and power holders in the other kinds of activity.
The principle of 'circular and cumulative causation' as developed by Myrdal among others, is quite appropriate in the village setting. A single household will only rarely enjoy power in one area of activity without having power in other activities. This does not mean that a particular household will occupy roughly the same position in all of the various power-source hierarchies, rather it means that a particular household high in one hierarchy will, or can, be high in another hierarchy without any apparent basis. Thus a very poor Brahmin household will likely have some political power because it is at the top of the ritual hierarchy, and conversely a wealthy, low caste household (a not very likely occurrence) will have some political power. Normally, however, there is little of this kind of thing happening in the village. Should a low caste group gain wealth they will gradually rise on the ritual hierarchy relative to other castes. It is too disturbing to have these kinds of disparities in the village.

Before ending this chapter I should like to discuss the panchayat, the description and workings of which are usually included in chapters on politics of Indian villages. The assumption is that the panchayat is the focus of factional disputes—that is, that one can observe the delineation and interaction of factions best at panchayat meetings. I agree in the main with this assumption. It is during meetings of
the panchayat that the faction lines are most clearly formed. However, much of the business of the panchayat is not really political according to my definition of political. Factional disputes need not always center around control over land—indeed many disputes arise as the result of what one faction considers deviant behaviour on the part of a member of another faction. Although I have never seen any statistics, it is my impression from reading the literature that the bulk of the disputes which are settled (or if not settled, at least brought into the perview of the panchayat) are nonpolitical in nature.

I would hypothesize that most of the factional interaction whose subject is control over land takes place outside of the panchayat. Only on the rare occasions when there is a concrete point to argue is the panchayat used. For example, two households may be disputing a boundary and the factions backing each of the households may meet in a panchayat to settle the differences. Most political activity is of a more subtle nature and, again hypothesizing, revolves around such things as attempting to persuade households to realign themselves with another faction.

SUMMARY

In discussing political activity at the village level it is possible to either see all activity as political or to see very little activity as political. I have chosen the latter because it makes it easier to decide how to attack the problem
of inducing change at the village level. All activities have something about them that is political and, again, all activities have something about them that is economic or religious. However, I think it can be said of every activity in the village that it is predominantly one or the other of the possibilities. The value of this approach will become more evident in the following and last chapter.
FOOTNOTES

1a) F. G. Bailey, Tribe, Caste and Nation - A Study of Political Activity and Political Change in Highland Orissa (Manchester, 1960).


d) Oscar Lewis, Village Life - Northern India (New York, 1958), especially Chapter 4.

Other articles include:

a) F. G. Bailey, "Politics - Village India," an unpublished article.


2Lewis, op. cit., p. 115.


4Hitchcock, op. cit., Chapter 7.

5The political pie is control over land until such time as the village becomes more consciously an integral part of the larger world outside the village.

6Lewis, op. cit., p. 137.

7Ibid., p. 138.

8Ibid., p. 139.


Power is defined as the ability to influence the attitudes and actions of others.

In the previous chapters I have outlined the social structure of the village in order that I can point out the way in which these structures have been changed and are being changed by the introduction of a new concept of the nature of the panchayat. Panchayats are evidently as old as India. It is difficult to know how long they have been part of the village social structure, but it appears that the concept was already extant during Vedic times. The term panchayat literally means council of five, but in actual usage the term refers to an approach to decision making rather than to a particular body of individuals. Most simply the panchayat is a body brought together in order to conduct deliberations about matters of importance to the village or to the caste if it is a caste panchayat. Traditionally it is not an official body, it has no official members, no official meeting time, and no official matters to which it must attend. When problems insoluble by other means arise in the village it is likely that a panchayat will be convened. If it is a matter which can be taken care of at the caste level a caste panchayat will meet. If, for example, two households within the caste have some kind of argument that is threatening the unity of the caste, a caste panchayat will meet. The panchayat would include the heads of the two households and
discussion would continue until a consensus is reached. Everyone must be in agreement. Voting and majority decisions were definitely not part of the concept of the panchayat. Should a dispute arise between households of different castes then a panchayat of a multicaste nature would be assembled to discuss and deliberate the issue. The vast bulk of the 'cases' handled by panchayats were nonpolitical in nature—that is, disputes arising out of conflict over land control were few relative to other kinds of disputes.

The effectiveness of the panchayat is related to the willingness of the two sides to modify their position. Without this modification through which the two sides reach a middle ground, there can be no decision. In ancient times, as in the present, it can be fatal to the unity of the village when consensus cannot be reached about a crucial matter. If it is known beforehand that consensus will not be reached the panchayat may not convene. An attempt is made to ignore the problem.

The willingness to modify a position is determined by the interaction of two factors. The first factor is the amount of support the individual household can generate among other households. The stronger the support the less likelihood there is for any modification. The second factor tends to counteract the first. The second factor has to do with the extent to which the household is tied to the village. Most households are closely tied to the village economically if
not socially and religiously. Unwillingness to modify a position means that either one or the other of the parties might be forced to leave the village or that the village might be split in two. Neither of these possibilities is very desirable for the same reasons which I explained in chapter four. Thus most positions are modified before total chaos results.

In reality the village panchayat is also the caste panchayat of the dominant caste in the village so that while we cannot completely ignore caste panchayats it is the village panchayat which is important for this discussion. The members of the village panchayat would normally be made up of the powerful heads of the households of the dominant caste plus the head of the dominant household of each of the other castes in the village. These latter attend more by invitation than by right and would not be present at all panchayats—they would be present only at those in which discussions directly affecting their own caste are undertaken. Membership is, then, almost entirely ascriptive. Membership is only achieved on rare occasions.

This was the type of local government in operation when the British moved into the subcontinent. It is so informal that the British probably did not even recognize it. All they could see was a dominant caste telling the rest of the castes what to do.
It is difficult to really know the thinking behind the British decision to reconstitute the village panchayats in a form more familiar to the British but one must assume it was because they felt the whole village should share in the decision-making process and because the new form would result in more decisive action taken in a shorter time. That they were committed to indirect rule is beyond doubt. Not only were they philosophically against complete direct control, but they were not numerous enough to enforce it.

The British response to the twin needs of indirect rule and more decisive action on the part of village councils was to pass legislation which would ensure that every village have a democratically elected official panchayat with which they, the British, could deal in times of need. The need, at least in early British times, was mainly concerned with the efficient collection of revenue from each village.

The British attempt to change the character of the panchayat was largely unsuccessful for the same reason that the older, informal panchayat was largely successful. Individuals really had very little choice. The village residents would be hard put to survive unless they cooperated. Life was hard enough without having to contend with enemies inside the village. More importantly, the dominant caste was very dominant indeed. Their control over the rest of the village population was virtually complete. The only alternative to doing what the dominant caste suggested was to leave the village and
join caste mates in another village. And one would still be at the mercy of the dominant caste in that village. For a member of the dominant caste the decision to fight for a particular side in an argument with no intention to give in would be equally dangerous for the rest of the caste would merely ostracize him and quickly he would lose his position in the village. Just as migrating to a new village was a possibility for the lower castes so the upper caste household could entertain this possibility. To do so would mean starting all over because the upper castes in the new village would not likely sell or give land to the newcomer.

Under the new British legislation any household head could be elected to the panchayat. In practice the household heads of the lower castes could not run for office because their economic well-being was controlled by the dominant caste. They voted as they were told. The official panchayat nearly always looked exactly like the unofficial panchayat. The membership was almost certainly the same. Occasionally a group of the lower castes might get together and elect one of themselves to the panchayat. The effect that this lone individual could have on the rest of the members was negligible and would normally only serve to increase hostility between the castes which worked against the village in the long run. Sometimes the dominant caste allowed the lower castes to elect a member from among themselves, but this individual would be so concerned about avoiding conflict and getting along with
the other panchayat members that, again, he could have little
effect on the decisions of the panchayat.

The British attempt to clarify the decision-making
machinery within the village was pretty much a failure. The
British did not make just one attempt, however, rather one
could say they never gave up in attempting to change the
decision-making process. Throughout their long administration
of the subcontinent they continued to push the idea of the
elected panchayat. Meanwhile other factors of change were at
work on the subcontinent. All of these factors, which seem to
operate everywhere in the world, combined to decrease the
insularity of the village. Increasingly the outside world
impinged upon life in the village. The informal, flexible
style of dealing with problems still worked to a large extent,
but insoluble problems increasingly plagued the village.

When the British pulled out of India in 1947 they left
a tradition behind them. One facet of this tradition was an
emphasis on the elected village panchayat. The national
leaders of India continued the British tradition—unavoidable
considering that nearly all of the Indian leaders were British
educated either in Britain itself, or in Indian schools closely
patterned after British schools.

The Indian national government passed legislation soon
after independence which outlined the broad pattern of the
panchayati raj. As early as 1948 Nehru declared at the first
Local Self-Government Ministers' Conference that "Democracy
at the top could not be a success unless it is built on the foundation from below." The national government set out the broad outlines of the panchayati raj, but left implementation up to the states out of recognition that the different culture areas would require different handling of the matter. The recommendations of a nationally appointed Study Team on this matter were adopted. Their recommendations follow:

Firstly, we should have village panchayats purely on an elective basis, with a provision for the co-option of two women members and one member each from the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Secondly, Panchayat Samiti should be formed for an area included in a block at present to be constituted by indirect election from the village panchayats. The panchayats within the block area can be grouped together in convenient units and the panches of all the panchayats in each of these units shall elect from amongst themselves person or persons to be members of Panchayat Samiti, about 20 in number. . . .Vast powers have been entrusted to this body which should be the main agency for development work in that area with sufficient resources, both Central as well as Provincial, at its disposal. Then there would be the Zila Parishad at the District level, mainly with a view to enable the necessary co-ordination between the Panchayat Samiti, all members of the State Legislature and of Parliament whose constituencies lie within the district and the district level officers.

The village panchayat, then, is the broad base on which the rest of the government superstructure is to rest. Gandhi wrote of panchayats in the following manner, "Indian independence must begin at the bottom. Every village should be a republic or a panchayat having full powers—the greater the power of panchayats the better for the people." Thus each village is to have an elected panchayat some of whose
members will be placed on the block level panchayat which is intermediate to the district level Zila Parishad.

Implementation of panchayati raj by the states began in 1959 and had been carried out almost completely by 1962. The panchayats which came into existence during these years are quite different than either the traditional village panchayat or the British notion of the village panchayat. In the first place, the Indian notion is a rather strange one, perhaps I should say a divided one. The state and national governments recognize the village as an autonomous social unit. For example, it is the Indian government which has arrived at 558,000 as the number of villages in India. They suggest that every village have a panchayat. They then list the number of villages in Uttar Pradesh, for example, and say that every village has a panchayat. There are 72,333 panchayats in Uttar Pradesh—there are 112,624 villages. It follows that some of the panchayats must be composed of members from more than one village. The village, thus, is a social unit one time and an administrative unit another. Apparently the government uses whichever is convenient.

I have included the above paragraphs to show that the Indian government has an essentially different viewpoint about the nature of local government than did the British or, as we shall see, than do the villagers themselves.
At the village level the traditionally dominant caste is still dominant—they are still able to control the affairs of the village. As I pointed out in the chapter on economic allocation some of the households in the village are no longer dependent upon the village for their source of livelihood. They are able to find income outside the village. To the extent that they are economically independent of the dominant caste they are independent of the political control of the dominant caste. The numbers of households are still few, however, and the dominant caste merely isolates or ignores them. The bulk of the households are still dependent upon the dominant caste for their livelihood. The panchayat still operates to settle issues which arise at the local level and this is still seen as the primary function of the panchayat.

I would hypothesize that to the villagers the connection between the panchayat and the Community Development Plan is only a grafted on concept because it is not an integral part of the concept of the panchayat as a deliberative body. To the villagers the panchayat is a deliberative body whose main function is not political but social. The officials at the state and national level saw the panchayat as primarily dealing with political problems. They did this because they did and do not understand the nature of political activity at the village level. At the state and national level the political arena is quite wide and they have long been accustomed to working
within it. They assured that the villagers would be able to do so as well. The attempt at the state and national level to change the nature of the village panchayat would be a complete failure, just as was the British attempt, except for one thing--The Community Development Plan. The Community Development Plan involves the expenditure of fairly large sums of money (in village terms) on projects at the village level and the Panchayati Raj and the Community Development Plan will share personnel.

The effect of including the disposal of community development funds among the other functions of the village panchayat has been to increase the likelihood of individuals other than the traditionally powerful running for a position on the official panchayat. The scope of political activity has widened in the village. In addition to land ownership there is now competition for Community Development funds.

In many villages there are two panchayats operating. The traditional panchayat still functions much as it always has and the new official panchayat functions mainly to dispose of development funds, but is gradually beginning to take over some of the functions of the traditional panchayat. The present primary responsibilities of the official panchayat include: "Construction, repair maintenance, cleaning and lighting of public streets; medical relief; sanitation; regulating the construction of a new building; assisting the development of agriculture, commerce and industry; the administration of
civil and criminal justice; the construction and maintenance of public wells, and the care and management of the common grazing grounds... assisting and advising agriculturists in the obtaining of government loans, development of cooperation, and establishment of improved seed and implement stores." Most of these responsibilities are new to the village. The administration of civil and criminal justice and the care and management of wells are about the only functions which might be included within the purview of the traditional panchayat.

The villages are not able to withstand the power of the state and so they are forced to include these new functions within their realm of political activity. Ralph Retzlaff provides what is probably the best analysis of the way in which the official panchayat operates in the village. He studied the activities of the first two official panchayats in a village which he called Khalapur. Three particular weaknesses prevented the first official panchayat from being very effective; first, the weakness of the elected leader of the panchayat; second, lack of understanding by the members of the panchayat about the powers and duties of the panchayat; and third, the irregular pattern of participation of the elected members. One of the first items of business the official panchayat considered was the troublesome problem of drunkenness in the village. Resolutions were passed prohibiting the manufacture, sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages These resolutions were supported and passed by a minority of
the panchayat members—the others having stayed away. Among those who stayed away were some of the more powerful members of the village. Khalapur is a Rajput village. Several of the Rajput factions within the village supported the resolution while several of the others refused to. The Rajputs, who would normally dominate the traditional panchayat, were unable to dominate the official panchayat because of this split. Passage of other equally unenforceable resolutions by the official panchayat led to almost complete inactivity by the end of the terms of the elected members. Because of this, elections for membership in the second official panchayat were contested in a different manner than in the first election. The basic difference was a concerted effort on the part of the dominant Rajputs to control the election. They did not want to get caught short as they had in the earlier election by dividing their forces. As well the other villagers had had time to see that the new panchayat was very ineffective because it had no way of enforcing its decisions without the consent of the Rajputs.

It is interesting to note that at the state level there is a realization that contested elections might tend to increase conflict in the village rather than decrease it. To avoid this possibility all candidates who filed nomination papers were named in a posted list for public scrutiny in order that other individuals might be able to question their eligibility. Each candidate had ten days after filing for nomination during which he could withdraw from the contest. The result is that
the real campaigning took place before the official election in many cases. The positions of the official panchayat are then filled by a process which is traditional—each candidate gathers his support from among those who would have supported him in the traditional panchayat.

I would hypothesize that the introduction of official panchayats into the village causes one of five things to happen; first, the official panchayat is taken over by the already existent unofficial panchayat because only members of the unofficial panchayat are allowed to campaign for membership in the official panchayat; second, the members and attempted activities of the official panchayat are largely ignored by the rest of the villagers because they lack any real power to direct activities in which event the official panchayat becomes inactive; third, the official and the unofficial panchayats maintain separate but active existence clashing frequently over village centered issues; fourth, the official panchayat becomes the mere lack of the already established village leadership; and fifth, the official panchayat becomes the seat of real power within the village.

The outcome of the contest between the official and unofficial panchayats varies with the state of local leadership, the kind of organization (those who are both for or against this new way can muster), and finally the amount of development funds available for dispersion by the official panchayat.
Earlier I defined political activity as that activity which centers around the control of land as the source of wealth within the village. The existence of development funds substantially enlarges the scope of political activity. Where before political activity could be said to be confined to the dominant caste in the village it is no longer possible to do so. Some of the seats on the official panchayat were reserved for untouchables and women neither of which were granted an official voice in the traditional panchayat. These people are drawn into the political arena to deal with only certain types of political activity, but since all of these activities are connected they must now be considered as part of the political membership of the village and as such have an effect on political activities which before were beyond their purview.

So far I have discussed the effect of the coupling of the Community Development Plan with the Panchayati Raj within a single village. I would hypothesize that the effect is even greater on villages which must share membership in the official panchayat with an adjacent village. In addition to the effects on a single village outlined above there is the effect of being forced to cooperate with the leadership of another village. This forced cooperation could lead to one of two courses of action. The first course of action might be complete inaction because the two groups of leaders stalemate one another. Villages have cooperated with one another in the
past but it did not happen frequently simply because there was little need or inclination to do so. It was more likely that adjacent villages would quarrel—usually over boundaries. The second course of action might be that the official panchayat of the combined villages is stronger than the traditional panchayats operating on their own in each of the villages. It is not very likely that the official panchayat can be captured as it is when involved with a single village.

I am not sure what changes will occur in the economic structure as the result of the changes in the political structure, but I tend to think that they will not be too far reaching in the short run. The funds channeled into the village through the official panchayat are being used to improve the village in terms of sanitation and education, but the bulk of the funds are being used to improve agricultural productivity. This can directly effect only those who own land. The landowners will find themselves wealthier than ever relative to those who own no land. Since community development is seen as a self-liquidating program this means that only in the short run can castes other than the dominant caste effect village activities. The funds controlled by the official panchayat must be used in the main to improve agricultural output. This in turn means that the dominant caste will be even more wealthy so that when the community development funds cease to enter the village they will have even fuller control over all others in the village who depend upon them for sustenance.
CONCLUSION

It is my considered judgment that the attempt to graft a new way of organizing political activity onto the traditional method will fail—has failed in fact. In the short run there is probably more participation by individuals who would not have participated within the traditional panchayat system, but the participation is essentially meaningless because it comes from a position of powerlessness. Channeling Community Development funds through the formal panchayat has appeared to give it life and make it a success, but there is an alternative way of looking at what has happened. The aim of the national and state governments is a reorganization of political activity. The effect of their practices has not been reorganization, rather it has been to increase the scope of political activity at least temporarily. Political activity is now centered around competition over control of land and control of Community Development funds. Since the state and national governments have earmarked the major portion of the Community Development funds for improvement of agricultural production they have built failure into the attempted innovation. No matter what kind of reorganization takes place the fruits of the reorganization go to the same people. The caste which is already dominant has the power to prevent the other castes from competing and does so. The only real effect is to provide the already dominant caste with another source of power.

The traditional panchayat has weakened and is becoming weaker with the passage of time. It has weakened because it
is unable to solve the problems which are beginning to con­front it. These problems are brought about as the result of increased contact and interaction with the world outside the village. As the outside world impinges on the village it can less and less be considered the relevant, local social unit.

So long as the other structures which I have discussed in the earlier chapters continue to function, direct frontal attacks by the national and state governments, which the introduction of formal panchayats constitutes, will not suc­ceed. As long as roles are differentiated within the village in terms of position within the household and position of one household relative to others, employing the presently used criteria, one cannot expect the introduction of new rules governing political activity to be effective—if they can even be understood.

Indian villagers are as fearful of change as anyone, whether they are high caste or low caste, and they are well aware that the Panchayati Raj is an attempt from above to force them to change. They may not know how or why the force is being applied, but they are aware that it exists, I am sure.

The Indian national and state governments are, I think, correct in attempting to change the economic structure of the village so that they can change the structures involved in political activity. Their method of applying economic force is ill advised in that it supports the existing structure
rather than creating new economic roles. The emphasis on improving agricultural production is a necessity in food poor India, but it cannot be expected to change the nature of political activity within the village.

The traditional panchayat is doomed--of this there can be no doubt, but the official panchayat has not had much of a role in this change. In the long run the Indian government will be supported by democracy at the bottom and the apparatus for achieving this may look very much like the official panchayat of the present day, but the development of a new type of political organization will evolve into existence not be legislated into existence. The reorganization will come about because the political arena is larger (more bases of power) not because someone from the top orders a revision of an already adequate method.
FOOTNOTES

1 As nearly as I can discern this term refers to the concept held by state and national leaders that government in India at the local level will be by role of village panchayats—that political activity will take place within the confines of an officially elected panchayat.


3 Hindustan Year Book, p. 496.

4 R. Dayal, Community Development, Panchayati Raj and Sahakari Samaj (Delhi, 1965), p. 71.

5 Ibid., p. 70.

6 This connection between the panchayat and the Block is a critical factor in the thinking of the officials at the state and national level. It needs some explanation. The Indian Community Development Plan uses the concept of decentralization. The national government lays down the broad outlines of the plan. Since each state has different kinds of problems and priorities it is left up to the state to further refine the program. The state government then passes the plan on to the district officials who continue to make more explicit the directives. Below the district level is the block level. Each block encompasses somewhere between 50 and 100 villages—there are exceptions in either direction. The major implication is that much of the work of the panchayat will be devoted to community development. Theoretically extensive communication should pass back and forth this line of authority so that the lower levels can have some influence on the formulation of policy. In practice there is little communication from the bottom upwards and this has hurt both the panchayat and the development plan.

7 Hindustan Year Book, p. 497.

8 Dayal, op. cit., p. 77.


11 Ibid., pp. 90-91.
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APPENDIX

The concept of caste is probably the most discussed aspect of Indian life. I have before me, in writing this appendix, nearly all of the classic discussions of caste. On some points there is complete agreement—and these I shall merely list—on other points there is controversy.

A caste is an endogamous group, or collection of endogamous groups, bearing a common name, membership of which is hereditary, arising from birth alone; imposing on its members certain restrictions in the matter of social intercourse; either

(i) following a common traditional occupation, or
(ii) claiming a common origin, or
(iii) both following such occupation and claiming such origin; and generally regarded as forming a single homogeneous community.¹

The word caste itself comes from the Latin word CASTUS meaning pure. The word was originally used by the Portuguese to denote what they thought was the Indian system of social classification to preserve the purity of blood.² The system which they thought they were describing has a very long history in India. There were four original castes (or, as they are sometimes called, varna—varna meaning colour). These four castes (Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras) are said to have been created separately from the mouth, the arms, the thighs and the feet respectively of the creator.³ These four castes are seen in the traditional literature of India as a unified whole. Each part is related to the other parts

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and each is necessary for the existence of the other. The origin of other castes comes about in one of two ways according to the traditional literature. The first way was by a series of crosses between members of the four original varna. Dutt provides a list of 29⁴ castes which come into existence in this manner. The second way that new castes are formed is when the members of the original varna failed to follow the prescribed sacred rituals. The number of castes gradually increases through time and the number is still increasing in India today.

Whatever the way castes are formed, there are thousands of them operating in India today. While there may have been little trouble identifying the number of castes in the traditional literature, such is not the case in modern India. The greatest point of controversy in present day discussions of caste revolve around attempts to establish boundaries around castes. The basic problem is that subgroups within a caste may themselves be endogamous. Since this is one of the criteria for defining a group as a caste, the problem rises immediately: Is the group a caste or a subcaste?

Adrian Mayer⁵ provides what I think is an excellent way out of this dilemma. He feels that there are effectively three levels of membership in a caste.

The lowest is that of an effective local subcaste population which I call the kindred of cooperation. This varies for each individual at any time, and around it there is a group which can be called the kindred of recognition. This is the population within
which marriage are made and/or kin links can be traced through mutual kin. These two features tend to go together, for people will not make marriages with families about which they know nothing, and the information runs along kinship channels. The kindred of recognition forms a large and rather amorphous body, being much the same for members of a single village's subcaste group. . . . Beyond these two kindreds are people who are recognized as members of a subcaste which is endogamous, named and separate from other castes. But it usually spreads over a wide area and is therefore not an effective group. Subcastes are mostly based on provincial distinction.

In reality the question of subcastes seems to be important only to those who are members of the caste. Those within a caste differentiate among themselves and those who are of other castes see all members of that caste, regardless of membership in one subcaste or another, as the same. Caste membership, in other words, is significant for relations with other castes and subcaste membership is significant for activities within the caste.

Thus for this study it is probably not important to worry about the problem of subcastes simply because the caste group at the local level is the kindred of cooperation and most of its external relationships will be with other castes and not with other subcaste groups.

Castes are always ranked in the village. There seems to be no problems deciding which caste is the highest and which is the lowest. In the middle it is not quite so clear-cut. As Ghurye remarks, "Excepting the Brahmin at one end and the admittedly degraded castes like the Holeyas at the other, the
members of a large proportion of the intermediate castes think or profess to think that their caste is better than their neighbours."

There are several ways in which ranking is accomplished. First, there are restrictions on who can eat with whom. There are two categories of food in village India—food cooked in water and food cooked in ghee (clarified butter). Water-cooked food will generally be accepted only from caste mates. Ghee-cooked food will be accepted from castes which are slightly lower than one's own. A high caste can accept water from a low caste providing it is contained in a particular kind of container and not if it is in a different kind. A very low caste individual can pollute a well for all others in the village so that the water is undrinkable until appropriate purification ceremonies are held—usually a bath of some kind.

Social intercourse is restricted. Individuals of the intermediate castes can mingle fairly freely but the high castes and low castes have to maintain a careful distance from one another. To be touched by a low caste person is polluting. In the south of India the shadow of an untouchable is as polluting as his touch. In some places the untouchable always keeps a stated distance from a high caste individual.

A Nayar may approach a Manbudiri Brahmin but must not touch him; while a tiyan must keep himself at the distance of thirty-six steps from the Brahmin, and a Pulayan may not approach him within ninety-six paces. A Tiyan must keep away from a Nayar at
twelve paces, while some castes may approach the Tiyan, though they must not touch him.  

It is not quite as rigorous a separation in the north of India--one does not have to maintain a distance, but merely not to touch.

A third source of rank involves the kinds of activities in which the castes may indulge. High castes are freer to take up any occupation that they want. Low caste individuals are usually tied to their occupations and any attempts to change would be met with violence on the part of the upper castes. High castes are able to perform certain religious rituals which the low caste individuals are not. The movement of high caste individuals through the village is free. Low caste individuals are confined to certain parts of the village. To leave them and come to the high caste part of the village is to court violence. The clothing which each caste wears is prescribed. I understand from conversations with a Bengali language instructor that in present day India even the kind of umbrella one has is determined by caste.
FOOTNOTES


3 Ibid., p. 4.

4 Ibid., pp. 7-8.


7 Ibid., p. 9.