

COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS IN MIDDLE INDIA,
THE CENTRAL PROVINCES, 1861-1921

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ABSTRACT

This study examines society in a province of colonial India over six decades: the Central Provinces from 1861 to 1921. In order to assess the colonial administrative system three activities are highlighted--policy formation, implementation, and the changing influences of Indian actions and institutions. Specific case studies of Indian communities and their arenas of activities then follow.

The study consists of three Parts. In the first the character of earlier administrations and the filling in of the area's social frontier before 1861 are described using the concept of four sub-regions within the administrative region. The British administrator's social setting of re-creating English enclaves is also analyzed as part of the background. The second Part stresses the limitations of British colonial rule because of its concentration on consolidative institutions, minimal expenditure on developmental and social service institutions, and its lack of control over economic forces and events. Especially reviewed are the way in which the introduction of Western education influenced different segments of the population, the types of local self-government institutions established and political developments, the efforts to provide health-care and demographic trends, and finally British land policies and Indian adjustments to them.

The last Part analyzes three case studies which reveal the differential effects of colonial rule. The first case study looks at the Marwari business family of Raja Gokuldas who benefited from their collaboration with the British during the Mutiny and afterwards. Gokuldas eventually built a commercial empire which

extended far beyond the confines of the province and included many banks, shops, markets, landholdings, and several modern factories. Second, the Baiga tribe were threatened by the new rules and procedures of the British administration which confiscated much of their land for forest conservation and pursued a policy of transforming the Baigas from forest to regular field cultivators. The third case study is of the low-caste Chamars of Chhattisgarh. They attempted to improve their social status and their economic position. As they were a large proportion of the farmers in the area, they benefited from some of the new economic opportunities provided by the construction of the railway in the late nineteenth century. This also produced increased opposition by landlords toward some Chamars in their villages and further problems at times of economic crisis such as the famines of the late 1890s. They, like the Baigas, adopted several methods in order to survive these changing and difficult conditions.

The examination of the colonial administration generally and of these three case studies specifically indicates the different ways through which Indian society and the British administration interacted with each other over six decades.

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CHAPTER I

APPROACHES AND TOPICS

In 1861 for the first time a large and diverse area of central India was brought under a single British provincial administration. The main purpose of creating the Central Provinces was to develop the area by introducing Western institutions, improving communications, and stimulating production, especially in agriculture. The area had been isolated from other parts of India and was considered backward. It stretched from the Vindhya hills in the north to the Deccan plateau in the south, and the Orissan hills in the east to the rich cotton-producing plain of Berar in the west. This study examines the history of Indian society under British rule in the Central Provinces over six decades from 1861 to 1921, concentrating on both the newly established Western institutions and the activities of selected Indian communities. Since this area of colonial India has not attracted much scholarly research in recent years, the two main purposes of the study are to provide basic information on the area, and to suggest several themes and make preliminary observations about them.

In the 1960s and 1970s several historians have criticized the historiography which was current during the colonial period and in part still endures. Bernard Cohn, Anil Seal and Tom Kessinger among others have generally suggested the earlier studies concentrated on the vicissitudes of British policy formation at the top levels of

administration.¹ This approach tended to ignore the uneven, piecemeal implementation of British policy at the regional and local levels and often failed to recognize changes and continuities within Indian society.

In accepting some of these and other suggestions, this study has adopted two approaches for reassessing the colonial period. One is to indicate the interconnection, or lack of it, between British policy and implementation while recognizing the initiative of Indians to develop alternative institutions and participate in activities which often paralleled the administrative structure. A second approach examines Indian communities in their own local setting to assess social, economic, and political continuities and changes.

Besides the need to reassess the colonial period by new approaches, one of the clear and basic motives for selecting the Central Provinces is that it has not attracted considerable attention and examination. D. Baker's thesis on the Central Provinces from 1919 to 1939 and Peter Harnetty's articles on its economic aspects from 1861 to 1921 remain almost the only recent research efforts. Two reasons for its past obscurity or unpopularity appear to be its inferior position during British rule in India and its extreme diversity. On the one hand the

¹See Bernard Cohn's review of historiographical trends in 1970, "Society and Social Change under the Raj," South Asian Review 4 (October 1970); 27-49. Anil Seal and Tom Kessing have reassessed changes during the colonial period from two extremes--from an all-India perspective and from a village. Anil Seal, "Imperialism and Nationalism in India," Locality, Province and Nation, ed. by John Gallagher, Gordon Johnson and Anil Seal (Cambridge: University Press, 1973), pp. 1-27; and Tom Kessinger, Vilayatpur: 1848-1968 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

British gave it comparatively little attention, and on the other hand its heterogeneity presented, and still continues to present problems for easy characterization and analysis.

Sources were collected during one year of research in London and three months tour of the area of the old Central Provinces in India. The sources consist primarily of the monthly proceedings of the Provincial administration, district settlement reports and gazetteers, biographical materials, and discussions with descendants of prominent families of the Central Provinces.

The topics of the dissertation are divided into three Parts. The first describes the British images of the Central Provinces and the life style of the British community. The second stresses the limitations of British colonial rules because of its concentration on consolidative institutions, minimal expenditure on developmental and social service institutions, and the lack of control over economic activities and events. The last Part analyzes three case studies which reveal the differential affect of British colonial rule. The first case study looks at the Marwari business family of Raja Gokuldas who benefited from their collaboration with the British during the Mutiny and afterwards. The second examines the tribal Baigas of upland Balaghat district and how British rule threatened their survival. The third case study is of the low-caste Chamars of Chhattisgarh. As a large proportion of the farmers in the area they benefited from new economic opportunities, but also were opposed by upper-caste and upper class Hindu landlords. Each of these case studies indicates different ways through which Indian communities changed during the initial six decades of colonial rule in the Central Provinces.

PART I. THE INDIAN AND BRITISH SETTINGS

PART I. THE INDIAN AND BRITISH SETTINGS

CHAPTER II

ADMINISTRATIVE AND SOCIAL REGIONS OF MIDDLE INDIA, 1500-1920

When the Central Provinces was created in late 1861, British administrators concentrated their efforts on two major tasks: the consolidation of the area and its development. Just four years before, the British-Indian Empire had passed through the most severe challenge of its existence. In the aftermath of the Mütiny the imperial structure from the top in London down to the districts in British-ruled territories came under review and reorganization. As part of that reorganization the separate but adjacent British areas of the Saugor and Narbudda Territories and the Nagpur Province were combined to form the new Central Provinces. Each area had separately felt the impact of direct British rule but neither area had achieved all-Indian prominence nor benefited fully from prolonged British administrative attention. By the creation of the new administrative unit of the Central Provinces, the British hoped to provide the area with the fundamental institutions of efficient and paternal colonial rule, to enlighten the backward people, and to end its isolation from the rest of India and the world.

The Central Provinces was one of the latest provinces formed in the British-Indian Empire. British rule had existed for about a century and a half in India's three coastal Presidencies, and more recently in most of the densely populated north Indian plains. Through experimenta-

tion and experience the British had formulated a package of administrative institutions and procedures, which they believed embodied some of their most advanced political and economic ideals as set in the Indian environment. During the latter half of the nineteenth century these basic institutions were introduced with little variation throughout the recently acquired areas of central India and in the peripheral territories of Assam, Burma, and the North-West Frontier Province. In these areas there was neither time for the leisurely collection of information about the local setting nor the need to repeat administrative experiments, that had resulted in a variety of administrative institutions and procedures. Experience in the older provinces had provided the broad framework and the guidelines within which the processes of consolidation and development could function in the new provinces.

For the initial organization of British administration, the Central Provinces was provided with an enthusiastic and energetic Chief Commissioner, Richard Temple. In the preceding fifteen years, Temple had served in what was then the new territory of the Punjab, and had held brief appointments in the central government. He was well acquainted with the ideals of British rule in India and with the history of administrative experimentation in the older provinces. In the Central Provinces, Temple at once set about the tasks of consolidation and development. The first steps of consolidation and security included a reorganization and redistribution of the army, the police, and the district administrative personnel and units. One of Temple's subordinate officers described some of his initial activities. "Municipalities, dispensaries, primary schools, district boards, dripped from his pen; he created, built, endowed, set up and verified. His energy was awe-inspiring. He went everywhere

and saw everything."¹ In an effort to provide for the future development of the province, Temple proposed schemes to construct railways, roads, bridges, navigation canals; schemes to open up iron and coal mines; and schemes to attract enterprising European tea and coffee planters to the highlands of central India. After five years of administration, in 1867, Temple moved on to other appointments, as Resident at Hyderabad and then to head the administrations of the older and more important provinces of Bengal and Bombay. In the Central Provinces, Temple was succeeded by John Henry Morris, who continued the tasks of consolidation and development though with less energy and at a slower pace. Under Morris' long term as Chief Commissioner (thirteen years), the administrative process plodded on; few of the principles of Temple's founding administration were changed though some of his more extravagant schemes such as European colonization and navigational canals for the Godavari river were dropped as impractical. Morris concentrated his efforts to extend Temple's principles, to provide continuity, and to integrate the area. In the last years before his retirement from the Central Provinces and from India, Morris saw the fruition of many of his efforts with the passage of several substantial pieces of legislation. He was especially pleased with the passage of the Land Revenue Act in 1881. It was the result of eight years of discussions and revisions, and it provided the province with a separate legal basis, for the first time, for the formation of land policies and programs.

The annual administrative report of 1887, twenty-five years after Temple had been made Chief Commissioner, reviewed a quarter century of

¹Alfred C. Lyall, quoted in Philip Woodruff, The Men Who Ruled India, 2 vols. (New York: Schocken Paperback, 1964), 2:61.

change. In commenting on the extensive construction of railways and roads, the report boasted,

Now there is probably no part of the Province . . . where the influence of civilization has not been felt . . . Sir Richard Temple would now hardly recognize the province which he once knew so well.¹

Summarizing the activities of the year under review, it mentioned,

The common people are on the whole well-off . . . The judicial work of the Province is promptly and efficiently disposed of . . . The people show themselves law-abiding and peaceful. Education has made decided progress . . . The people have loyally and efficiently taken considerable share in public business.²

In conclusion it predicted,

That the Central Provinces will continue to advance in material prosperity and in enlightenment the Chief Commissioner entertains no sort of doubts. The rate of progress can hardly be as rapid in the future as in the past, but it cannot fail to be real and steady if the Local Administration is not unduly hampered for want of funds.³

Such optimistic views of the success of consolidation and development were typical of Administrative Reports; they were penned by the heads of the administration. They tended to present an idealistic picture, and often sought to reinforce a Victorian sense of well-being and meaningful achievement. But behind such "evidence" and reports lurked difficult and persistent questions which were either briefly mentioned and slighted, or kept out of public administrative documents altogether.

These questions concerned the very processes of consolidation and development under colonial rule. How compatible were the two tasks of consolidation and development? The first tended to establish a secure, stable and static framework for British rule, while the second promised

¹ Central Provinces, Report on the Administration of the Central Provinces for the year 1886-87 (Nagpur: Government Press, 1887), p. xiii.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. xiv.

the benefits of rapid and cumulative change hampered only by periodic crises. How much did the two tasks have in common that enabled them to fulfill the promises of both tasks, by providing institutional flexibility to accommodate change especially during periods of violent fluctuations? With such a few English administrators, how deeply and extensively could the new institutions, derived from the British experience in other parts of India, penetrate the Central Provinces? Which Indian groups or segments of the provincial population would provide the best collaborators in the new colonial enterprise? And who would benefit or profit more than others in the long run?

Several references indicate that under the surface the tasks of consolidation and development were proceeding very slowly, if at all. One of Temple's fellow administrators wrote of the stubborn character of the Central Provinces.

The country is very backward and he [Temple] is determined to shove it forward; the country resists inertly as long as it can, tumbles back as often as Temple props it up, and when forcibly driven forward runs the wrong way, like a pig going to Cork market.¹

When getting down to specifics, even the 1886-87 Administrative Report conceded that,

The Police administration requires much attention and improvement . . . and much indeed remains to be done in the matter of communications.²

Although the Central Provinces had experienced fifty years of being "shoved forward" by British administrators, a report in 1912 pleaded,

¹ Alfred C. Lyall to his sister Sibylla, 11 June 1864, India Office Library Manuscripts, European F. 132, MSS #4.

² C. P., Ad. Rept. 1886-87, pp. xi-xii.

The Province must be allowed to take its place as fully typical of the rest of the Indian Empire and must not be regarded entirely as a backward tract lying outside the lines of progress along which the country as a whole is moving.¹

In spite of this imperative, a brief glance at the census statistics of 1881 and 1921 indicates the Central Provinces had changed little in its relative ranking with other provinces over that forty year period. On the basis of very fundamental characteristics such as population density, the number of towns, and literacy, the province still ranked near the bottom along with other "backward" areas such as Assam, and Bihar and Orissa.

Irrespective of the "lines of progress along which the country as a whole" was moving, the Central Provinces consistently retained a relatively low status, and could hardly be considered as average or "fully typical of the rest of the Indian Empire." Though changes occurred in some respects (i.e. population density from 113 to 132 per square mile, the number of towns from 52 to 67, and literacy from about 2.5 percent to around 4.6 percent) the Central Provinces was never able to sustain rapid, cumulative development, or what some have termed "take-off," in order to catch up with the other provinces in British India.

Explanations for its gradual improvement, though it failed to advance with regard to its all-India ranking, are neither simple nor immediately evident. At a bare minimum three factors may be considered in the search for an understanding of the processes of consolidation and

¹ Charles E. Low, Memorandum on the Condition of the People of the Central Provinces during the Decennial Period, 1901-1912 (Nagpur: Government Press, 1912, p. 1.)

RANKINGS OF INDIAN PROVINCES

TABLE 1

POPULATION DENSITY
PER SQUARE MILE

	1881	1891
Indian Provinces	181	226
Bengal	473	608
North-West Provinces and Oudh	412	427
Bihar and Orissa	373	409
Madras	217	298
Bombay	183	208
Punjab	170	207
Central Provinces	113	132
Assam	93	144

TABLE 2

NUMBER OF TOWNS OVER
5,000 POPULATION

	1881	1921
India . . .	1,561	
Madras	497	316
North-West Provinces and Oudh	298	435
Bombay	278	206
Bengal	242	130
Punjab	201	146
Bihar and Orissa . . .	75	
Central Provinces	52	67
Assam . . .	28	

TABLE 3

LITERACY, PERCENTAGE
OF THE POPULATION

	1881	1921
India	4.30	7.10
Madras	7.02	8.60
Bengal	4.45	9.10
Bombay	6.05	8.50
Punjab	3.47	4.00
North-West Provinces and Oudh	3.09	3.70
Bihar and Orissa . . .	4.70	
Assam	2.38	6.40
Central Provinces	2.45	4.60

SOURCE: Compiled from the Census of India for the year 1881 and 1921.

NOTE: Though density figures were recalculated for changes in area, the same is not true for the other two rankings. The figures for the Central Provinces are consistent except for literacy in 1921 which includes the Berar area. There were different methods of collecting literacy for the two periods. These tables thus only roughly indicate the relative rankings.

development in the period between 1861 and 1921: i) its background and characteristics peculiar to the area in the 1860's; ii) the interaction of British and Indian participants and institutions; and iii) the dynamics of events and forces beyond human control. The remainder of this chapter is mainly concerned with the first of these; the others are examined in subsequent chapters.

Regions, Sub-regions, and Regionalism

Geographically and historically the Central Provinces as created in the 1860's constituted part of a much larger area which separated the two great cultural areas of India, the Aryan north and the Dravidian south. This middle area was an extensive mass of forested uplands interspersed with river valleys and plains, sparsely populated, all of which made political unity and cultural interaction difficult during the pre-British period. The Narbudda river which flowed along the north of the province, historically marked the boundary between northern and southern India.¹ Along each side of the river were the mountain ranges of the Vindhya and Satpuras. The few military invasions which penetrated the mountain barrier passed through the Burhanpur gap, lying just inside the western border. Even fewer dynasties penetrated into the upland forests of middle India. Nor could the area boast of being the base for wealthy and powerful expansionist dynasties. Rather, portions of the area became the peripheral and frontier boundaries of imperial dynasties during the Mauryan, Gupta, and Mughal periods. Other small local dynasties

¹Winfred M. Day, "Relative Permanence of Former Boundaries in India," The Scottish Geographical Magazine 65 (December 1949); 114-116.

of middle India were at times subordinate allies of the imperial dynasties or succeeded in maintaining an isolated independence.

Some of India's religious and cultural developments also spread into middle India, as is indicated by monuments at Sanchi, Rupnath, Arang, and other places. Local sacred centers such as Amarkantak, Mahadeo, and Ramtek, and local religious myths associated with these places in middle India never achieved all-India prominence. Pilgrims from north India passed through eastern Central Provinces on their way to Jaganath at Puri, and merchants transported their goods along the Narbudda trade route down to the port of Bhrigu-Kachcha (modern Broach). The hinterland of middle India formed some of the last political, religious, and economic frontiers for the gradually expanding populations of India.

Socially, also, middle India was one of the last frontiers. During the last four or five centuries before British rule, populations from surrounding areas immigrated into middle India, cleared the forest and began to cultivate and develop various areas. These diverse immigrant groups brought with them a variety of institutions and beliefs to add to the already heterogeneous culture. As such, the influx tended to further complicate and weaken any concept of larger regional identity for middle India.

The peculiar pattern of British expansion into India in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was related to the broad geographic and cultural variations of the sub-continent. This influenced British penetration of middle India. By the 1860's direct rule predominated in the most productive and densely populated areas of India, while indirect

rule existed primarily in the sparse hinterland territories. Although the Central Provinces came under the system of direct rule, much of the rest of middle India came under indirect rule. The Central Provinces was almost an island encircled by a sea of "native States" such as Bhopal and Rewa to the north, Chota Nagpur and Kalahandi to the east, and the Nizam's territories of Hyderabad and Berar to the south and west. Even within the Central Provinces, one-fourth of the area was pockets of indirect administration--"Feudatory States" and "Zamindari" estates--in which local Indian chiefs retained much of their power and prestige. Many of these areas, such as Bustar and Fingeshwar, as well as Native States on its border, consisted of forested plateaus with sparse populations.

The borders of the province barely touched on other British provinces at four places. Administratively the Central Provinces thus became an intermediate link in the center of the directly ruled provinces of Bombay, Madras, Bengal, and the North-West Provinces and Oudh. But largely, the Native States buffered the province from the rest of British India and somewhat isolated the province administratively.

The Central Provinces exhibited considerable diversity within its boundaries. To some administrators the diversity of the countryside was a welcome relief from the uniformity of other parts of India. One wrote,

During the next fourteen years the Central Provinces became my home. They were in extraordinary contrast with the provinces I had left. Instead of the flat alluvial Ganges plain--a sea of crops during eight months of the year, and the rest a sun-scorched desert--there were always forested hills, and even mountains, on the horizon or around one.¹

¹Joseph Bampfylde Fuller, Some Personal Experiences (London: John Murray, 1930), p. 35. Fuller arrived in 1882.

On the other hand, this diversity almost caused Temple to abandon his efforts to portray the main characteristics of the province in his first Administrative Report.

The country . . . possesses physical and external features so numerous and varied, that to describe them all . . . would be impossible. But I shall attempt such a description.¹

Geographically the wide Satpura plateau was bordered by more productive river valleys. Each area was noted for its different crops: wheat predominated in the northern Narbudda valley, juar and cotton in the southern Nagpur plain, and rice in the eastern Chhattisgarh plain. Even greater diversity was found in the intermediate forest plateau. There some of the people lived by cultivating patches of valley land near the headwaters of rivers; others practiced shifting cultivation combined with hunting in the dense forests; while a third group grazed cattle on the savannah tracts. Linguistically the population spoke mainly Hindi in the north and Marathi in the south, though a few scattered groups spoke Urdu, Munda and Dravidian languages. Similarly the ethnic character of the people was diverse, for the recent immigrants in the area included north Indian, Maratha, and Darvidian castes who settled amidst the local tribal population.

The Central Provinces was, in fact, a microcosm of the larger south Asian sub-continent. Both were heterogeneous territories whose peoples were divided by geography, ideology, and organization into many smaller societies. The studies of O. H. K. Spate and Bernard S. Cohn give evidence of the difficulty of defining the Central Provinces

¹Central Provinces, Report on the Administration of the Central Provinces up to August 1862 (1862; reprint ed., Nagpur: Government Press, 1923), p. 1.

or dividing it into precise and acceptable sub-regions.

In Spate's regional geography of India and Pakistan, the Central Provinces area is split into six regions: in the north, the "central Vindhya Country;" in the middle, the "Satpura-Maikal" region and the "Mahanadi Basin;" in the southwest the "Maharashtra" region; and in the northeast "Chotta-Nagpur."¹ Spate's sub-regions relate particularly to the river valleys: The Wardha valley of Maharashtra, the Narbadda-Son furrow within the central Vindhya Country, and Chhattisgarh within the Mahanadi Basin.

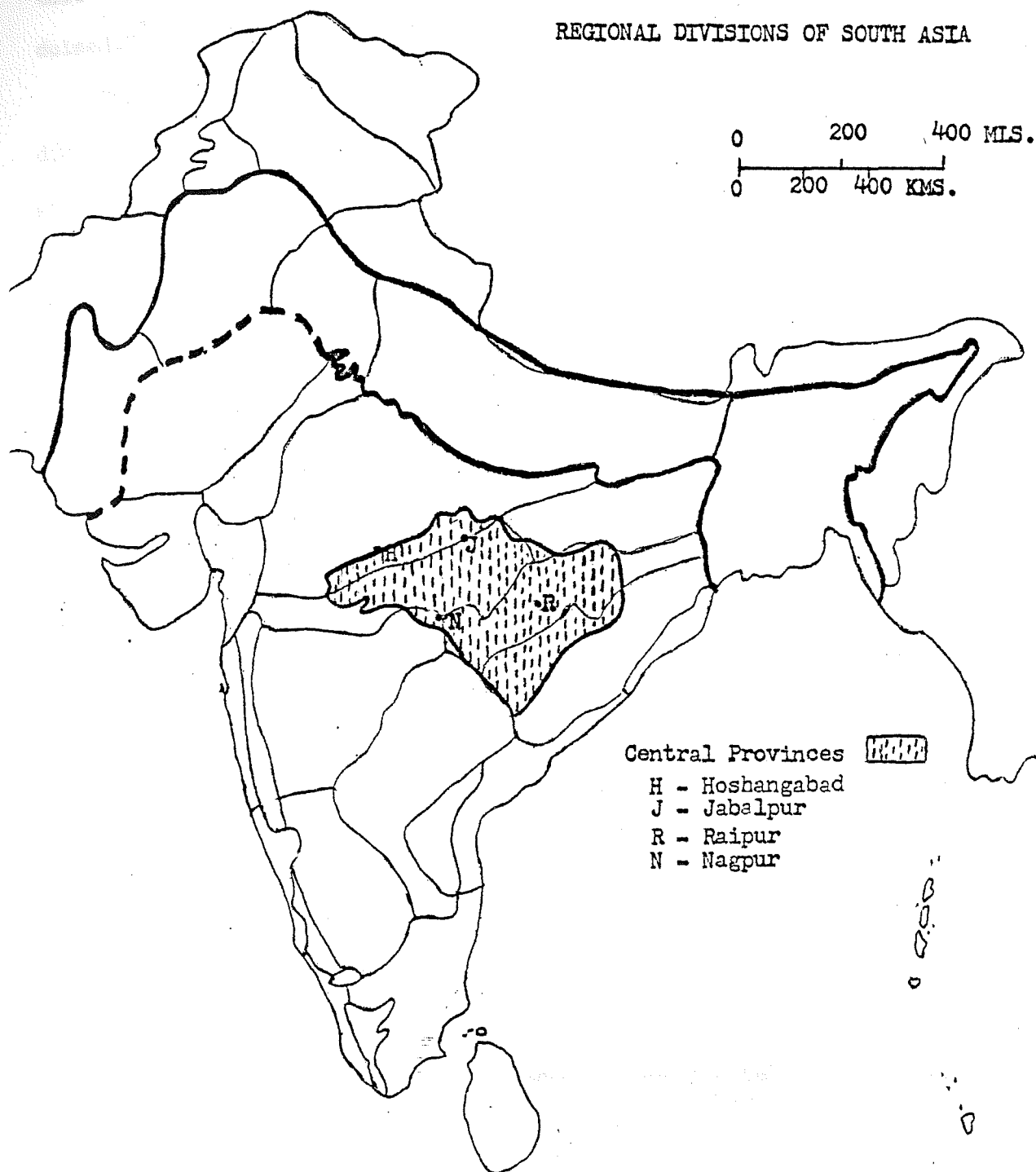
In Cohn's analysis of historical regions, parts of the Central Provinces fall into one or another of his different categories: the Narbadda, Tapti, and Godavari river valleys form major agricultural areas or "nuclear" historical regions. The western and northern parts of the Central Provinces lay adjacent to the "shatter zone" or route area of Malwa. The Chhattisgarh plain of eastern Central Provinces is a "cul de sac," or region of relative isolation. His definition of a "march or frontier region" is most applicable to those "zones or regions between plains and hills, in which the plain's Hindus are extending their political, economic and cultural control over the hill peoples."² The spread of Hinduism among hill tribes was described by many people, such as James Forsyth when he toured the hill area of the province in 1862-64 and found groups who had accepted Hinduism. This was also noted

¹O. H. K. Spate, India and Pakistan: A General and Regional Geography (London: Methuen, 1954); see Figure 62 between pages 352 and 353.

²Bernard S. Cohn, "Regions Subjective and Objective," in Thomas Metcalf, ed., Modern India: An Interpretive Anthology (London: Macmillan, 1971), p. 42.

MAP I

REGIONAL DIVISIONS OF SOUTH ASIA



Source: O. H. K. Spate, India and Pakistan: A General and Regional Geography, (London: Methuen and Co., 1954), Figure 62 between pages 352 and 353.

by a Chhattisgarh settlement officer who wrote in the late 1920's that the tribal "Kanwars and Gonds . . . are almost completely Hinduised."¹

The extremes in social and cultural characteristics of the province did not show strong evidences of interchange between areas within the province or the complete breaking down of distinctions. This left the province without a cohesion and larger identity often found in other geographic regions. Immigrant groups often retained affinities with their original homelands and though Hindus settled and lived among tribals, no particular recognizable form of regional culture emerged. The Central Provinces does not fit precisely a definition of a "region," in the most accepted meaning of the term. The clearest coherent units, rather, are four sub-regions in the province.

The Administrative Region and the Historic Sub-regions

Administrative units of nineteenth century colonial India rarely coincided with cultural regions and in one way this was truer for the Central Provinces than for other British provinces. Whereas most provinces contained one or two core-culture regions, such as Tamilnadu in Madras and Maharashtra in Bombay, the Central Provinces contained only minor ones. There was, however, precedence to form these into a single administrative unit as historically both the Gond Raja and Maratha dynasties had ruled over most of what became the Central Provinces.

¹James Forsyth, The Highlands of Central India (London: Chapman and Hall, 1871), Chapter IF; C. D. Deshmukh, Final Report on the Revision of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Raipur District (Khalsa) in the Central Provinces, effected during the years 1926-31 (Nagpur: Government Press, 1932), p. 21.

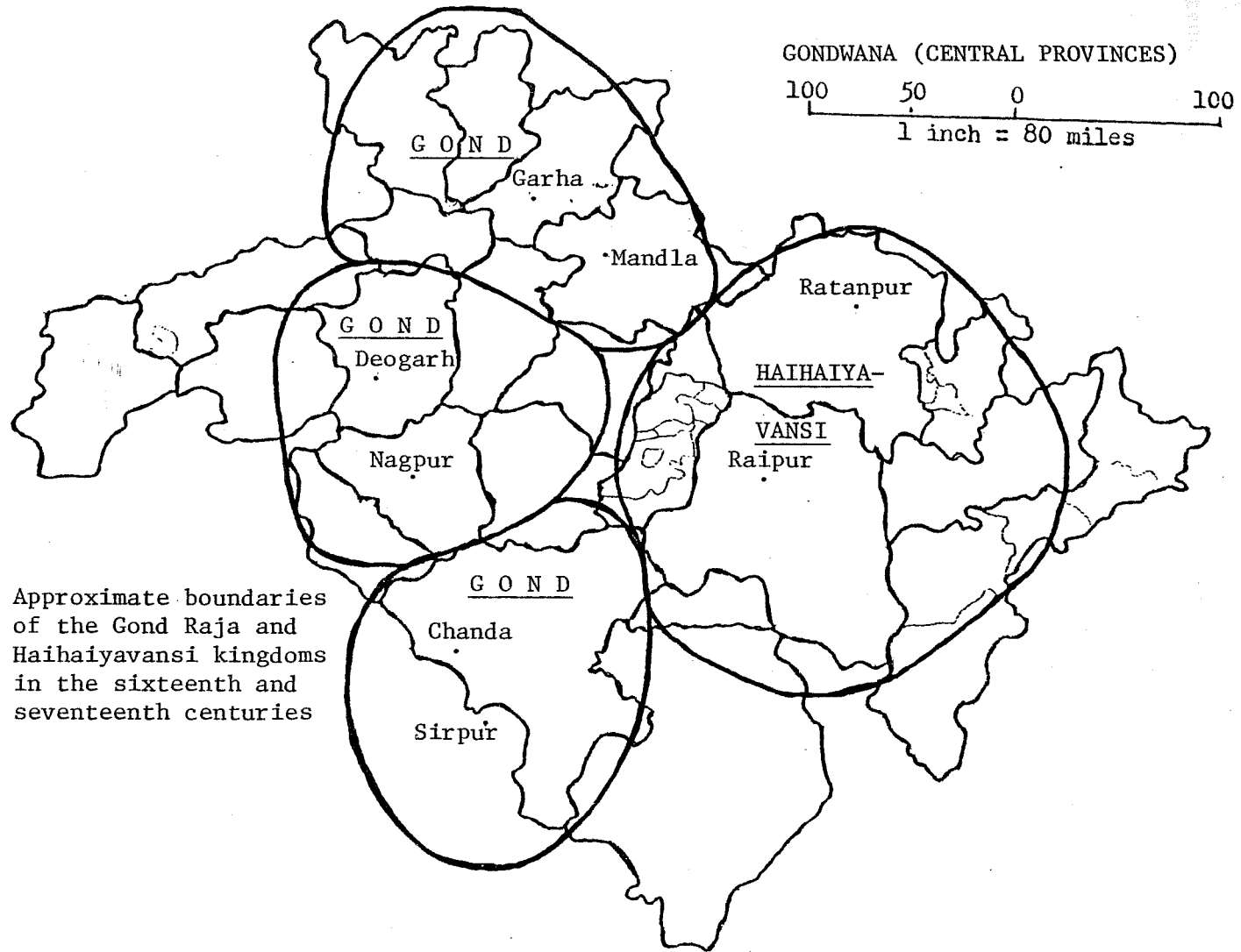
Of the two, Gond Raja rule had been less unified in spite of the fact that it was more indigenous than the Maratha Bhonslas. This is indicated by a close examination of the two dynasties before the 1860's.

Gond Raja dynasties were founded at three centers in the provincial area during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and maintained a relatively independent existence until the middle of the eighteenth century. At no time did they unify Gondwana, or the land of the Gonds, under a single Gond king, though they and most of their subjects shared common ethnic origins.¹ The Garha-Mandla kingdom in the north extended control over most of the upper Narbadda valley and the adjacent forest areas. The Deogarh-Nagpur kingdom dominated most of the upper Wainganga valley, while Chanda-Sirpur in the south consisted of territory around the confluences of the Wardha and Wainganga with the Penganga. At the height of its power the Garha-Mandla kingdom included the Central Provinces districts of Jabalpur, Mandla, Narsinghpur, Saugor, Damoh, and parts of Balaghat, Seoni, and Hoshangabad; the Deogarh kingdom included Chhindwara, Nagpur, Wardha and parts of Hoshangabad, Betul, Seoni and Bhandara districts; while Chanda included that district and parts of Bhandara.

Each of these Gond Raja kingdoms separately passed through three successive stages: the first one of comparatively peaceful expansion and consolidation; the second of contact with Mughal emperors or their subordinates and nominal allegiance to the Mughal Empire; and the third

¹Eyre Chhatterton, The Story of Gondwana (London: Pitman and Sons, 1916), provides a popular historical narrative of the Gond dynasties and of the Gonds. I have omitted reference to the smaller Gond Raja kingdom of Kherla in Betul.

MAP 2



Approximate boundaries
of the Gond Raja and
Haihaiyavansi kingdoms
in the sixteenth and
seventeenth centuries

of internal dynastic struggles which eventually resulted in Maratha intervention. In Garha-Mandla, for example, Sangram Shah of the late fifteenth century was renowned both for enlarging his kingdom and encouraging the peaceful settlement of the upper Narbadda valley. In the mid-sixteenth century, Sangram Shah's daughter-in-law, Queen Durgavati, organized a courageous resistance against the invading Mughals under general Asaf Khan. The story of her efforts, and her final defeat and death are still recounted as an important part of local folklore.¹ Though regular ties with Delhi were established and Garha-Mandla retained as a Jagir for the remainder of the sixteenth century, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, Delhi returned half of the territory to the management of the Garha-Mandla Rajas, presenting the other half to the Gond Rajas of Deogarh. During the middle of the seventeenth century Raja Hirda Shah paid his respects to the Delhi court and was praised for his wise and peaceful reign.² A dispute between claimants to the throne brought temporary Maratha intervention in 1732. From 1742 onward, the Marathas demanded a regular heavy tribute, but the governors of Saugor, known as the Maratha Pandits, did not annex the kingdom until 1780. The head of the Maratha confederacy, the Peshwas, awarded the territory to his Maratha allies, the Bhonslas, in 1791.

At about the same time both Deogarh and Chanda passed through similar military, political, and administrative changes. Muslim contact and

¹Madhya Pradesh District Gazetteers: Jabalpur, ed. P. N. Shrivastav (Bhopal: District Gazetteers Department, 1968), pp. 84-89 provides one account of Queen Durgavati.

²Central Provinces District Gazetteers: Balaghat District, ed. Charles E. Low (Allahabad: Pioneer Press, 1907), pp. 182-91 summarizes a Gond song honoring Hirde Shah, including his visit to Delhi.

control was almost as superficial at the center and the south as it was in Garha-Mandla, though there it had entered from the west instead of the north. In the early eighteenth century Bakht Buland of Deogarh visited Delhi and was converted to Islam. He returned with Muslim craftsmen. However he did not attempt to convert his subjects nor discard many Gond Raja customs. It was he who moved his capital from the plateau down to Nagpur on the plains. Little did he realize the significance of this move. The site soon became the capital of the Bhonslas and eventually became the focal point of administration under the British in Central Provinces.

Border territories on the extreme wings of the Central Provinces remained outside the Gond Raja kingdoms and came under very different influences. In the northwest, the area, which became the districts of Nimar and Hoshangabad, was open to the influences and the events of Malwa and Khandesh, while in the southeast, Chhattisgarh continued an isolated and independent existence under a local dynasty.

In the northwest, the Narbadda valley towns of Burhanpur in Nimar district and Handia in Hoshangabad district lay on the main road between north India and the Deccan. At various times before and during Mughal rule Burhanpur became the headquarters of Muslim administration for neighboring areas and over the Deccan. Hoshangabad district became the center of territorial disputes between the Bhopal rulers, the Maratha Peshwas, Holkar, Scindhia, the Bhonslas, and local chiefs. The Bhonslas eventually dominated most of the district and signed it over to the British in the treaties of 1817-18.

In the east, the founding of the Rajput Haihaiyavansi dynasty in

the nuclear area of the upper Mahanadi valley predated the rise of Gond Raja rule by several centuries. The dynasty originated as the eastern province of the tenth century Kalachuri or Chedi kingdom. They ruled from a capital at Tewar near modern Jabalpur. By the eleventh century a branch of the Chedis had settled in Chhattisgarh and in the twelfth century became independent. Soon after, when the Chedi dynasty fell, all administrative and dynastic ties were lost between the upper river valleys of the Narbadda and Mahanadi. For over six centuries Chhattisgarh remained under the loose control of the Haihaiyavansi rajas, neither expanding into neighboring regions nor succumbing to invasions.¹ Their kingdom included the Central Provinces districts of Bilaspur, Raipur and most of Sambalpur. Two events occurred during this time. In the late fourteenth century dynastic control divided between a northern, older branch at Ratanpur (Bilaspur district) and the younger Raipur branch in the south. In the middle of the sixteenth century the Ratanpur raja visited the Delhi court. But Chhattisgarh was so far removed from the invasion route between north and south India, it hardly felt any of the Muslim influence which the Gond Rajas experienced. The Haihaiyavansi rule in Chhattisgarh came to an end in the middle of the eighteenth somewhat by geographic accident, for the Chhattisgarh plain lay directly on the route between the Nagpur base of the expansionist Maratha Bhonslas and the wealthy coastal plains of Orissa and Bengal

¹Cecil U. Wills, "The Territorial System of the Rajput Kingdoms of Medieval Chhattisgarh," Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal 15 (1919): 197-262.

which they wished and attempted to conquer.

In contrast to the Haihaiyavansi rule which endured for more than six centuries and the indigenous Gond Raja dynastic period which lasted more than three centuries, the Marathas ruled their areas for less than a century. They reached the zenith of their power during the last years of the eighteenth century, during which time they extended their rule over the fading Gond Raja kingdoms, Chhattisgarh and parts of eastern India.

The general growth of the Maratha empire had its beginning in the early eighteenth century when the Maratha Bhonsla family established their right to collect taxes in Berar country, just west of the Nagpur plain. Twice, in 1734 and in 1743, the Nagpur Gond Rajas appealed to the Bhonslas to intervene in succession disputes. The second time the Bhonslas took over Nagpur and made it their capital and base for further expansion. During the middle decades of the eighteenth century, Bhonsla armies marched east through Chhattisgarh on their way to raid the east coast and Bengal. In 1741 the Chhattisgarh capital fell but firm control over the eastern Central Provinces area was not established until 1744. In the north the Maratha Peshwa armies successively pushed up the Narbadda valley defeating local rulers, such as the Nawab of Bhopal, and replacing them with governors, like the Maratha Pundits of Saugor. From the late eighteenth century until the defeat by the British in 1817, the Bhonslas managed the Narbadda valley. Here, as in Chhattisgarh, the population remained non-Maratha. Only around their recently acquired home territory of Nagpur was the majority of the population Maratha in origin.

Soon after the turn of the century the Bhonsla fortunes began to change. In 1803 they suffered a serious defeat by the British and their kingdom's wealth was drastically reduced. In their army the 18,000 cavalry was considerably cut, 25,000 infantry were never replaced, and almost half of the artillery was lost.¹ The British stripped the Bhonslas of their east coast territories, part of Sambalpur, as well as their income from Berar taxes, so only a little more than half of their former annual revenue remained. In an attempt to recover their losses they increased taxes in the remaining areas and collected as fully as possible, even by violent means. Militarily limited by the treaties, they, like the rest of the Maratha confederacy, could no longer exercise control over their lowest ranked troops, the Pindaris. Between 1806 and 1816 Pindari bands annually left their bases in the central high-lands north of Nimar, and made extensive raids for pillage and extortion of wealth. The Narbadda valley especially felt the brunt of their activities.²

Incensed by the disorder for which they were indirectly responsible, the British decided to temporarily abandon their policy of non-intervention in central Indian affairs. Between 1816 and 1818 British troops pursued and dispersed the Pindaris. They used the largest number of troops (120,000) ever concentrated before in one locality against the 30,000 Pindaris.

¹Richard Jenkins, Report on the Territories of the Raja of Nagpur (1827; reprint ed., Nagpur: Antiquarian and Scientific Society of the Central Provinces, 1866), pp. 84, 125.

²Philip McEldowney, "A Brief Study of the Pindaris of Madhya Pradesh," The Indian Cultures Quarterly 27 (1971): 55-70; or "Pindari Society and the Establishment of British Paramountcy in India" (M. A. thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1966).

About the same time, a new claimant to the Bhonsla throne, Appa Sahib, came into open conflict with the British. He was defeated at Nagpur but escaped for a few years into the protection of some of the highland Gond Raja chiefs. A few of the Bhonsla governors, such as Chimna Patel of Lanji, on the eastern Nagpur plain, loyally followed the Bhonsla claimant's example of resistance but they were overwhelmed by British forces.¹ Elsewhere, around Chanda in the south, a rebellion of Gond chiefs had devastating results. Chanda had been a prosperous cotton trading town in 1803 with about 5000 houses. By 1818 only 2800 remains.² In eastern Chhattisgarh a tribal chief, Ram Rai, attempted to establish a small independent estate.³ This also called for British "pacification" forces. By 1818 these pockets of resistance were subdued and there followed a decade without further violence.

The British consolidated their position in the north by forming a new province of the Saugor and Narbadda Territories and put it under the control of an Agent of the Governor-General. They divided the remaining Bhonsla territory into four large districts. During the minority of the Bhonsla prince, from 1818 to 1828, the Nagpur British Resident ruled these districts through British superintendents. In both the new province and the Bhonsla districts the British attempted to

¹Jenkins, Nagpur, p. 169; and Balaghat Dt. Gaz. (1907), pp. 50-55.

²Jenkins, Nagpur, p. 140.

³Central Provinces District Gazetteers: Raipur District, ed. A. E. Nelson (Bombay: British India Press, 1909), p. 63. Also in Jenkins, Nagpur, pp. 172-3 and Madhya Pradesh District Gazetteers: Raipur, ed. Rajendra Verma (Bhopal: District Gazetteers Department, 1973), p. 72.

raise taxes to the abnormally high level of the preceding Bhonsla Raja, with sometimes unfortunate results. A British official in the 1860's looked back to this tax settlement of 1821 in the Hoshangabad district and spoke of it as "the worst settlement every made." It had been made when the British officer,

had to deal with a depopulated country and an impoverished and dispirited people, whose ties to the villages they inhabited had been loosened by fifteen year of suffering and oppression. He probably was one of those sanguine men who held the opinion . . . that the benefits of peace and security conferred by our rule would at once commend themselves to native feeling, and would attract capital and population, so as to cause a complete revolution in the state of things then existing. This was one of those tremendous mistakes, the effects of which many years of subsequent moderation and justice have hardly been able to wipe away.¹

A special inquiry into the condition of the Saugor and Narbadda Territories was finally made in 1834. It confirmed that the heavy British taxation had produced a British administration characterized by "an extensive system of fraud and peculation."² Reforms followed; the taxation was reduced and new laws of civil justice were enforced.

Already the advent of British rule in the Territories had resulted in the abolition of practices which were the most repugnant to British administrators. Both the public sale of widows and sati were prohibited. In the 1830's a campaign to suppress murderous gangs called thugs was begun. Almost a thousand were hanged and their relatives and agents (informers) were imprisoned in a concentration camp at Jabalpur where

¹ Charles Alfred Elliott, Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the District of Hoshangabad (Allahabad: Government Press, North-Western Provinces, 1867), p. 45.

² Robert Merttins Bird, Note on the Saugor and Narbadda Territories (Sudder Board of Revenue, North-Western Provinces, 1834), p. 3.

taught to manufacture tents and rugs.¹

Some of the new laws and procedures of British justice did not find immediate approval or total acceptance. In 1842 two landlords in the Territories refused to obey a court order to pay tax arrears or have their land confiscated. Other near-by landlords followed their example and took up arms against the British. For more than a year British forces failed to suppress this rebellion, known as the Bundela Uprising.² So, too, in Chhattisgarh in 1856 a local landlord, Narayan Singh, unlawfully removed grain from a merchant's shop to provide his cultivators with seed grain. Earlier, in 1819, his father, Ram Rai, had resisted British "pacification." Though Narayan Singh immediately informed British authorities of his action and his reason for it, he was imprisoned. From his martyred position in the Raipur jail, he became a public symbol of unjust British laws which fired further revolt and resistance in 1857.³

Bhonsla rule over Nagpur and Chhattisgarh had ended inauspiciously in 1854, as the Maratha kingdom lapsed to the British for lack of a recognized legitimate heir. But the old administrative units of the Gond Rajas and Bhonslas were not unified under a single British province for another seven years. During these intervening years the area came under the influence of the wider Indian revolt of 1857, followed by

¹William H. Sleeman, The Thugs or Phansigars of India (Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1839), pp. 74-75, 100-101. More than 400 of those executed came from the central India area around Jabalpur.

²Madhya Pradesh District Gazetteer: Sagar, ed. V. S. Krishnan (Bhopal: Government Central Press, 1969), pp. 65-66. Also Madhya Pradesh, The History of the Freedom Movement in Madhya Pradesh, chief ed. Dwarka Prasad Misa (Nigpur: Government Printing, 1956), pp. 41-48.

³Raipur DG (1973), pp. 74-75; Raipur DG (1909), pp. 61-62, 62n-65n.

the final stages of "pacification" in central India. During the revolt, Indians in British military units in north India mutinied, receiving support and assistance from landlords. The strongest center of resistance in the Central Provinces area was in the neighborhood of the Bundela Uprising of fifteen years earlier. In Chhattisgarh, Narayan Singh escaped from jail, collected troops and fortified his village. When the British arrived, he retreated, and they burned the village to the ground. Though he surrendered the next day (2 December 1857) without fighting, he was soon tried at Raipur and eighteen days later publicly executed by being "blown from a gun."¹ A little more than a month after this, seventeen Indians who mutined were also publicly executed by hanging.² At Jabalpur the Gond Raja family, who were the last surviving descendants of the Garha-Mandla dynasty, prepared to revolt against the British. Their plans were discovered and both the father, Shankar Shah, and his son, Raghunath Shah, were blown from guns.³ In rebellion against the British, Sarju Prasad, the ruler of Bijeragogarh (just north of Jabalpur district), killed his British appointed minister and maintained independent control of his petty state for over a year. He eluded capture until 1864, when he was sentenced to life imprisonment; but on his way to prison he committed suicide at Benaras. The British

¹Tied to the mouth of a cannon which was then fired.

²Raipur DG (1973), p. 75; Raipur DG (1909), p. 62.

³Jabalpur DG (1968), pp. 103-05.

confiscated his state and attached it to the reconstructed Jabalpur district. They provided a small pension for his son.¹ Military operations dispersed most of the mutineers by the end of 1858. After six decades of their initial intervention the British finally brought the Central Provinces area under their control.

The administrative boundaries of the Gond Raja kingdoms and the Maratha Bhonsla territories formed a precedence for making the Central Provinces an administrative unit. But the five or six centuries of administrative and political history preceding the formation of the Central Provinces also indicate the persistence of separate sub-regional political networks and the superficial nature of a larger regional unity. Neither the Gond Rajas nor the Bhonslas were ever able to develop and provide the unifying symbols, ideologies and institutions which might have overcome geographic, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural sub-divisions. The underlying ethnic and even cultural unity of Gondwana was never combined into a larger political unit by the separate Gond Rajas. Even though the Maratha Bhonslas spread a single administrative system over a large area of central India, as heirs to the Gond Raja and Haihaiyavansi kingdoms, their rule was comparatively short and they were foreigners except in their base area around Nagpur. In 1861 the British in turn became the heirs to the larger administrative entity of the Gond Rajas and the Bhonslas and intended to introduce a single administrative system.

¹Central Provinces District Gazetteers: Jabalpur District, ed. A. E. Nelson (Bombay: Times Press, 1909), p. 339; and IFP, Judicial, July 1867, #14-19 and #24-26.

The Social Frontier

Besides the administrative history, the social history of the Central Provinces area indicates strong sub-regional ties. The original diversity of a sparse population and the inflow of other groups into this social frontier produced even greater diversity during the five centuries before British rule.

Three characteristics are striking about the origins of the diverse population found in the Central Provinces by 1861. First, for many their arrival in the province was relatively recent, during the last two dynastic periods. Second, they had not come from any one area nor even from one direction, but from all surrounding areas and some of them from long distances. Third, the process of immigration occurred in waves or at peak periods which generally coincided with invasions or upheavals in adjacent territories, or to add support to ruling princes, or for trade, or similar reasons. Many invaders and migrants found themselves in favored situations among the relatively backward people.

This diversity of its population and its causes contrasted to characteristics of society found in many other parts of India. In the densely-cultivated areas of northern India, the majority of the population had often resided there for many centuries and any traces of immigration had been obscured by time. When there were shifts in population it was largely when the migrants occupied lands adjacent to the parent village. Long-distant migrants who had arrived in the last six centuries formed only a small percentage of the population. Originally they had come from a single direction, either further up the Ganges plain or from the northwest, Afghanistan and beyond.

Society in the Central Provinces shared one characteristic with other parts of India. The functional unit of society was the jati or sub-caste. The jatis formed comparatively small and localized sub-caste groups, who with other somewhat related groups made up the classical but non-functional divisions of society or varnas.¹ While the process of social interaction and circulation had been structured in northern India for several centuries, in the Central Provinces, because of immigration and the slow process of stabilization, jatis had to establish their position initially, then settle into a new pattern of social interaction. Compared to north India the Central Provinces was a young country and in commenting on the "extreme youth" of the area, one Central Provinces officer remarked:

Here the memory reaches a very short way back, and a small period of time covers as much mental space as many centuries do in the ancient communities of the Doab A period which would be considered trifling elsewhere appears to be of enormous duration . . . here.²

Almost any district in the Central Provinces illustrates the nature of the immigration process. Hoshangabad district in northern Central Provinces provides one example. The internal geography of the district consisted of a central, fertile Nerbudda valley running east to west with the Vindhya hills rising sharply to the north and Sutpuras rising gradually in the south. Before the sixteenth century much of the population belonged to tribal groups and various localized castes. These

¹Iravati Karve, Hindu Society--An Interpretation, 2d. ed. (Poona: Deshmukh Prakashan, 1968), Chapters I and II.

²Hoshangabad SR (1867), p. 159. Elliott was quite familiar with society in northern India as he had been a settlement officer there, before coming to the Central Provinces, and had written a history of Unao district.

included the Munda-speaking Korkus, the Dravidian Gonds, Narmadeo (Narbudda) Brahmins and claimants to Rajput and Ahir or Gaoli caste status. Migrants after 1500 came from three directions during three peak periods. From northern Indian and Bundelkhand, immigrants entered and settled in eastern Hoshangbad, while Malwa immigrants entered through Handia in the west. The last ones, from Maharashtra, Khandesh, and Marwar, entered the district by proceeding up the Narbudda valley. The peak immigration periods occurred at the turn of the seventeenth century, during the late seventeenth century, and in the middle of the eighteenth century. These periods roughly corresponded to the time just following the Muslim invasion by Asaf Khan of the Garha-Mandla kingdom, the beginning of Aurangzeb's rule in the Deccan, and the establishment of Maratha rule in Hoshangabad. Each of these events exposed Hoshangabad district to immigration from the outside as illustrated by specific jati histories. Around 1600 the Lehora Gujars migrated from around Gwalior and settled in eastern Hoshangabad district. Three groups trace their origins to the middle immigration period—the Kirars from Dholpur, the Chauria or Deshi Kurmis from Gwalior, and the Raghuvanshis first from Rajasthan to Gwalior and then to Hoshangabad, All three settled in the eastern and central parts of Hoshangabad district. The third migration period initially saw the arrival of Mundle Gujars and Jats from Marwar, and of Bundelkhand and Pardeshi Kurmis from Bundelkhand and Oudh respectively. The most recent groups included the Deshwalis from Marwar and Khandesh, Bias or Pardeshi Rajputs from Oudh, Tilohia Kurmis from Khandesh and a few Maratha Kunbis. Most of these last groups settled the remaining areas of Hoshangabad district, i.e. the western part of the district and some of the center. In the

western-most tahsil of Hoshangabad district, Mundle Gujars settled southern Harda while Jats chose the northern part. The Pardeshi Kurmis cleared the forests around Itarsi (central Hoshangabad district) and began cultivating the land.¹

Hoshangabad is not atypical of the rest of the Province. An examination of almost any other district reveals similar processes: the recent arrival of several groups, and evidences there were peak periods of immigration that corresponded to political pressures and upheavals within and outside the Central Provinces area.²

In the Jabalpur district, Sangram Shah's reign, the Muslim invasion, and the establishment of Maratha rule also appear to have stimulated migration. However, because of its distance from Maharashtra and its closer proximity to northern India, few Maratha groups settled in Jabalpur district; the majority of immigrants came from Bundelkhand and the Ganges plain area, later designated as the North-West Provinces.

In contrast to this, the majority of the population around Nagpur consisted of Maratha castes such as Kinbis and Mahars. In addition there was a small sprinkling of Malwa and north Indian castes brought in during Bakht Buland's reign. By the time the Bhonsla Marathas established Nagpur as their base in the early eighteenth century, the surrounding area was already densely populated with Maratha groups.

¹Ibid., pp. 59-64.

²The following is based on district gazetteers and settlement reports, as well as articles on different castes found in Robert V. Russell, The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India, 4 vols. (London: Macmillian, 1916).

The Chhattisgarh plain appears to have acquired most of its population at an even earlier date than Nagpur and most of the rest of the Central Provinces. Tribals such as the Gonds, Baigas, and Binjh-wars, and the low caste Chamars vaguely trace their arrivals to a time prior to 1500. The Haihaiyavansi ruler, Kalyan Sai, in the sixteenth century attracted a few Kanaujia Brahmins to his court. They soon separated from north Indian Brahmins and formed Chhattisgarhi Brahmin jatis. Just before and during the early period of Maratha rule, several north Indian Bania families immigrated into the Chhattisgarh area; but both the Brahmin and Bania immigrations were of small numbers of families rather than of larger groups. The Teli and Halba castes of Chhattisgarh are unable to give a specific date for their arrival, though it may have been around or soon after the sixteenth century. The traditions of both castes show confusion over the area of their origins; some tracing it to Orissa, some to the Deccan, while others point to Maharashtra.

In a few areas of the Central Provinces the clearing of forests and the settlement of the country still continued into the nineteenth century. In the southwestern valley of Balaghat district, Powars had just arrived in the preceeding century. After the 1860's the Central Provinces government induced Powars along with Gonds to clear land, construct irrigation tanks, and cultivate rice in areas above the valley.¹

In addition to the predominat tribal, low caste and cultivating caste population, several smaller castes were attracted to the Central Provinces for government services or to trade as the frontier was con-

¹Balaghat DG (1907), pp. 46-63, 98-101.

quered. Various Brahmin groups and Kayasths provided the main families who obtained positions in different administrations. Bakht Buland appointed the Kayasth ancestor of Dadu Gulab Singh of Seoni as army paymaster, while the Garha-Mandla Gond Rajas appointed one of the ancestors of Beohar Raghbir Singh of Jabalpur as their minister. Both families appear originally to have come from northern India.¹ In Nagpur the Chitvavis family, belonging to the Maratha Prabhu caste, sometimes designated as a scribe caste, served the Bhonslas as official secretaries. By the 1860's Maratha Brahmin families over much of the Central Provinces represented the remnants of locally appointed governors and officials under the Bhonslas. These included the Bhuskutte family of Hoshangabad, the Raghunath Rao family of Jabalpur, and several families in Chhattisgarh such as the Raghoba Mahadiks of Rajim and the Danis of Raipur.²

Even after the establishment of British rule a few families were attracted from the outside to government service in the Central Provinces. Among these were Maratha Brahmin educators from Poona and Bombay, and Calcutta lawyers such as Bepin Krishna Bose. Though a few northern and western Indian banking families immigrated before the Maratha period, it was during the height of the Bhonsla power and afterwards that a large number of Marwar and Khandesh mercantile families established their residences and businesses at the expanding trade and administrative

¹Russell, Tribes and Castes, 3: 409-10; Central Provinces District Gazateers: Seoni District, ed. R. V. Russell (Allahabad: Pioneer Press, 1907), p. 71; and Jabalpur DG (1909), pp. 144-45.

²Raipur DG (1909), pp. 125-26.

centers of the province. Even during the British period, mercantile castes continued to push into the area, first during the cotton boom of the 1860's, next with the wheat boom of 1870's and 1880's and finally when the railway opened up the rice plains of Chhattisgarh after the 1880's. This type of immigration is exemplified by the Marwari families of Gokuldas in Jabalpur and Abirchand in Nagpur from Ragisthan, and the Muslim Borha or Kacchi merchants from Gujerat.

The expansion of the Central Provinces population by the accumulation of immigrants exhibited several diverse characteristics. Though in many cases the immigrants were the first to occupy new lands, in other cases they settled among people already cultivating valley lands. The immigrants not only extended cultivation to new lands, but also intensified cultivation in others. The quantitative aspect of this immigration process is difficult to determine, as few estimates of population and cultivated areas exist. Except for the cultivated lands immediately adjacent to large rivers, however, the Central Provinces appears to have been sparsely settled even up to the seventh century. The Ain-i-Akbari and other documents reported that wild elephants could be obtained in the Hoshangabad and upper Narbudda areas.¹ Two centuries later the British found wild elephants still available, but only in the eastern forests of the province. During a three-year campaign the British captured and tamed the 200 or so remaining wild elephants. Having served its purpose the Khedda department was abolished in the late 1860's.²

¹Abul Fazul, Ain-i-Akbari, tran. H. Blockman, 2d ed., edited by D. C. Phillott (Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1939), p. 129.

²IFP, General, December 1864, #46-48; June 1866, #10 and 13; January 1867, #26-29; May 1867, #33-39; and July 1867, #37-39.

On the other hand, when Kurmi immigrants from the Doab settled in Jabalpur district around the middle of the sixteenth century, they chose the central portion of the district because it "most resembled the broad and open tracts of their fatherland."¹ The area appears to have already been well cultivated.

Such indirect evidence of the pre-British period implies that large forests covered much of the Central Provinces area, enough to support herds of wild elephants. At the same time, some of the Central Provinces was already well cultivated before the migration occurred.

In one respect the population in several districts of the British period appeared homogeneous. Almost half of the population belonged to only a few castes and tribes. In most districts more than a fourth of the population consisted of tribals plus the largest Hindu caste. (See table.) Yet a closer examination of the functional social units, sub-castes or jatis, indicates the deceptiveness of this homogeneity. Each tribe consisted of several smaller groups. Most writers described various sections of the Gond tribe, and members of the tribe claimed the traditional twelve and a half sub-division.² In Jabalpur at least five

¹W. Nembhard and A. M. Russell, Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of Jabalpur District (Nagpur: Chief Commissioner's Office Press, 1869), p. 24.

²Raipur DG (1973), p. 114n names forty-one sub-divisions of Gonds; Stephen Hislop, Papers relating to the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces, ed. Richard Temple (Nagpur: Chief Commissioner's thorough early investigation of the tribe.

TABLE 4

SOCIAL CATEGORIES IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES
AND IN SELECTED DISTRICTS: THE MAIN
CASTES AND TRIBES, 1901

Central Provinces			Hoshangabad District		
Caste or tribe	Population in thousands	Percentage of total population	Caste or tribe	Population in thousands	Percentage of total population
Gonds	2,000	20.0	Gonds	49	11.0
Korkus	100	1.0	Korkus	23	5.0
Other tribes	391	3.9	Brahmins	34	7.6
Chamars	740	7.5	Rajputs	28	6.3
Mahars	620	6.3	Gujars	22	4.9
Telis	593	6.0	sub-total		
Malis and Kacchis	394	4.0	of above	156	34.8
Ahirs	790	8.0	Tribals plus		
Kunbis	395	4.0	Brahmins	. . .	23.6
Kurmis	247	2.5	Total	447	100.0
Lodhis	247	2.5	Jabalpur District		
Brahmins	400	4.0	Gonds	79	11.6
Rajputs	350	3.5	Kols	46	6.8
sub-total			Bharia		
of above 7,267		73.2	Bhumias	22	3.2
Tribals plus			Brahmins	64	9.4
other large			Lodhis	41	6.0
castes--			Kurmis	35	5.1
Chamars,			sub-total		
Mahars, Telis,			of above	287	42.1
Malis, and			Tribals plus		
Ahirs	. . .	56.7	Brahmins	. . .	31.0
Total	9,877	100.0	Total	681	100.0

TABLE 4--continued

Nagpur District				Raipur District			
Caste or tribe	Population in thousands	Percentage of total population		Population in thousands	Percentage of total population		
Gonds	46	6.1		Gonds	216	15	
Kunbis	152	20.2		Chamars	245	17	
Mahars	125	16.6		Telis	4232	16	
Brahmins	23	3.1		Ahirs or Rawats	145	10	
sub-total of above	346	46.0		sub-total of above	838	58	
Tribals plus Kunbis and Mahars	. . .	42.9		Tribals plus Chamars	. . .	32	
Total	752	100.0		Total	,441	100	
Balaghat District							
Gonds	73	22.6					
Marars	42	12.8					
Powars	41	12.6					
sub-total of above	156	46.0					
Tribals plus Marars	. . .	35.4					
Total	325	100.0					

SOURCES: Imperial Gazetteer of India (1907), and Balaghat District Gazetteer (1907).

Brahmin sub-castes existed. Telis in Chhattisgarh claimed several sub-castes.¹ These sub-divisions were once again related to the migration process. The first arrivals of various castes developed their own groups in isolation. They were usually accorded lower status by later arrivals. As in the case of the Chhattisgarh Brahmins, other Kanaujia Brahmins considered the earlier immigrants had become defiled or debased by their long residence in the wilds, among non-Hindu tribal people.² Similarly the designation "Jharia" or "jungli" often identified the earliest Teli, Kurmi, and Kunbi sub-caste immigrants. This indicates, then, that even though various groups immigrated at different times from the same area to the same district of Central Provinces, their social status was determined by the length of their residence in the province.

As indicated previously, immigration did not end with the advent of British rule in the nineteenth century, but when compared to the previous 500 years, it was negligible. The immigration that did continue was usually of specific types. Small numbers of both merchants and government officials continued to arrive. Migration similar to that of the Ganges plain, over short distances, continued within Central Provinces as farmers took up lands in the sparsely populated areas. In addition, seasonal migration of agricultural laborers as had developed in the decades before the 1860's continued. At one point in the 1870's British administrators became alarmed by this type of migration. One

¹Jabalpur DG (1909), pp. 101-102; and Russell, Tribes and Castes, 4: 544-45.

²Raipur DG (1909), pp. 92-3.

newspaper reported that large numbers of persons were migrating westward from the Bhandara, Balaghat and Chanda districts into Berar. The article suggested that this was due to the administration's heavy taxation and harsh rule. Upon investigation, the matter was clarified by both the Central Provinces and Berar governments. The migration was found to be an established pattern of seasonal laborers going to Berar to earn wages in the cotton harvest there.¹

Clearly by the end of the nineteenth century, the characteristics of population movements in the Central Provinces corresponded more closely to that in other parts of India, even though this was a comparatively recent stabilization of the population. During the previous six centuries a large part of the population had arrived from outside the area. These settlers in this social and economic frontier brought with them varying ideas of social structure and organization. Although many of them lost contact with their original homeland and formed new jatis, they generally reduplicated their past structural patterns of social relationships in the new setting of the Central Provinces. These multiple patterns and traditions of the migrants added to the already diverse characteristics of the population which had existed in 1500 or before.

The Administrative Region after 1861

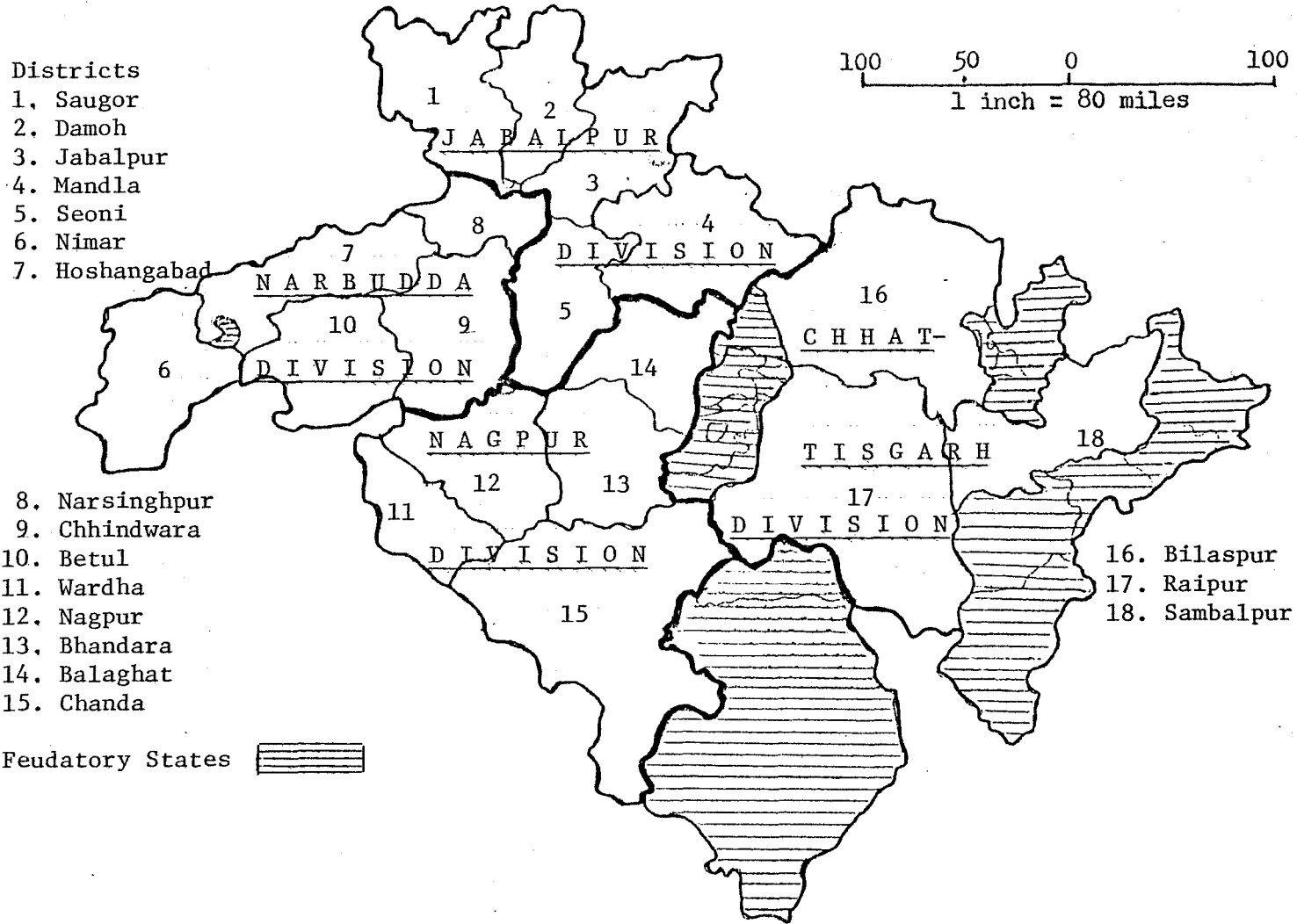
The Central Provinces emerged in the 1860's as a product of the administrative inheritance from the Gond Rajas and the Maratha Bhonslas,

¹IHP, Revenue, September 1870, #8, p. 813; Ibid., 10 June 1871, #4 and 5, pp. 633-636; IARCP, October 1871, #47, p. 413. The newspaper article referred to is an extract from the "Central India Times" in the "Indian Economist," 15 August 1870, p. 18.

and of the social inheritance from the gradual accumulation of an immigrant population from a variety of Indian areas. After 1861 many policies of the new British administration tended to integrate both the administrative region and its sub-regions, while the recognition of Marathi and Hindi as official languages in their respective areas, and the development of railways placed emphasis on differences. Twice in the late nineteenth century the Government of India questioned the wisdom and necessity of maintaining the Central Provinces as an administrative unit. Both times British administrators in the province successfully fought off the challenge. Then in the twentieth century significant boundary changes produced new configurations of the administrative unit. The most enduring administrative units throughout the period were those of the separate and relatively small districts, and the four "Divisions."

From the beginning the administration organized the nineteen districts of the Central Provinces into four divisions, which generally coincided with previously administered sub-regions. The Jabalpur division in the north centered around the upper Narbudda valley and the old Garha-Mandla kingdom. It included the Saugor, Damoh, Jabalpur, Mandla and Seoni districts. The Narbudda division in the middle Narbudda valley with its headquarters at Hoshangabad, covered the five districts of Narsinghpur, Hoshangabad, Nimar, Betul and Chhindwara. The Nagpur division consisted of the Maratha districts of Nagpur, Wardha, Bhandara, Chanda and Balaghat. Raipur, Bilaspur, and Sambalpur districts formed the fourth division of Chhattisgarh with its headquarters at Raipur. Added to these districts was a small, separate unit in the extreme

DIVISIONS AND DISTRICTS IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES



1884/85.

southeast called the Upper Godavari district. Its population was predominately Telegu speaking, and after being administered for a little more than a decade by the Central Provinces it was transferred to the Madras Province.

Each new division comprised an agriculturally productive core area surrounded by more forested districts on its periphery. The population tended to be less dense and more tribal in those outlying areas. During the six decades under review this pattern persisted.

The languages spoken in each division also remained fairly constant; Marathi in the Nagpur Division, Hindi in the Narbudda and Jabalpur Divisions, and a distinctive Hindi dialect, Chhattisgarhi, in the Chhattisgarh division. At the outer border of the province at three places the institutional structure, ethnic composition and languages overlapped neighboring boundaries. Nimar to the northwest retained strong influences from prolonged Muslim contact, and culturally faced toward Khandesh. Chanda in the south faced toward the Deccan and contained a minority who spoke Telegu. Even though Sambulpur, in the east had been within the Haihaiyavansi kingdom, it was predominately influenced by Orissa and contained an Oriya speaking population. In 1905, it was transferred to the province of Bihar and Orissa.

The new divisions continued several pre-British, sub-regional characteristics. Each division included districts quite diverse. Another decision of the administration perpetuated the isolation of sub-regions from each other. In the 1860's the administration determined that of the 111,000 square miles in the Central Provinces, 28,000 would continue to be administered indirectly as "feudatory states" or Zamindari

TABLE 5

DISTRICTS AND DIVISIONS OF THE CENTRAL PROVINCES
POPULATION (IN THOUSANDS), AND CULTIVATED
AREA (IN SQUARE MILES)

District and Division	Area	Population		Cultivated		Tribal
		Total	Per square mile	Total	Percent	Percent
<u>Jabalpur Division</u>						
Jabalpur	4,269	620.2	145	1,441	34	22.4
Saugor	4,005	498.6	122	1,083	27	8.1
Damoh	2,457	262.6	107	619	25	12.0
Seoni	3,608	421.7	117	1,008	28	43.6
Mandla	5,638	202.5	36	628	11	61.2
<u>Narbudda Division</u>						
Hoshangabad	3,997	440.4	110	2,351	59	20.0
Narsinghpur	1,916	336.8	176	893	47	17.5
Nimar	2,694	190.6	71	444	16	16.9
Betul	3,863	258.3	67	1,040	27	40.3
Chhindwara	4,032	296.9	74	942	23	40.9
<u>Nagpur Division</u>						
Nagpur	3,734	639.3	171	1,794	48	6.3
Wardha	2,392	343.5	144	1,359	57	11.3
Bhandara	3,922	608.4	155	1,279	33	14.7
Chanda	10,000	537.3	54	1,077	11	24.4
Balaghat	2,608	171.0	66	341	13	28.3
<u>Chhattisgarh Division</u>						
Raipur	8,453	952.8	113	2,973	35	22.5
Bilaspur	7,131	699.5	98	1,894	27	22.0
Sambalpur	5,632	452.3	80	2,520	45	33.4
Central Provinces	80,565	7,919.8	98	23,686	29	23.0

SOURCES: Census 1867, App.--Statistical Tables; IRAP, Famine, December 1888, #15, "Condition of the Lower Classes."

NOTES: All statistics based on 1867 Census, except Tribal per cent which is based on the 1888 report.

Districts in the Divisions are listed to indicate the core areas followed by the less populated, less cultivated districts.

Estates.¹ The rulers of those fifteen areas, though subject to defined agreements for British supervision, would remain managers of their estates. The largest Feudatory State, Bastar in the south, contained 13,000 square miles. The remaining 15, 000 square miles surrounded Chhattisgarh and separated Chhattisgarh division from the Nagpur and Jabalpur divisions. The encirclement of Chhattisgarh by these areas isolated it and isolation remained one of the division's historical characteristics. Though in the late nineteenth century the administration tried to bring the Zamindari areas under closer British supervision, the rulers legally resisted. When the issue was brought before the English Privy Council in the early twentieth century, the Central Provinces administration failed to obtain a clear decision, which would allow a closer integration of the Zamindari areas with the directly administered districts.² The Feudatory and Zamindari states of the province continued to block the development of broader provincial integration under British rule in the same way that Native States continued to present integrative problems elsewhere in India.

The government's official position on languages for the Central Provinces led to controversy. The official languages used by British provincial governments were Persian and Urdu. From Mughal times they had persisted in the courts, and a group of Indian officials had developed a vested interest in their continued usage. Persian and Urdu were used

¹Richard Temple, Report on the Zamindari and other Petty Chieftains in the Central Provinces in 1863 (Reprint ed., Nagpur: Government Press, 1908).

²J. F. Dyer, Introduction to the Land Revenue System of the Central Provinces (1921; third impression, Nagpur: Government Printing, 1956), pp. 71-73.

in the Saugor and Narbudda Territories and before the 1860's had been introduced into the Maratha Bhonsla government and the Nagpur Province. Several efforts to introduce Hindi and its Devanagri script into northern Central Provinces after 1835 failed. In the 1860's one of the first concerns of the Central Province administration was to introduce Marathi, instead of Persian and Urdu, into the Nagpur division. As one of the Chief Commissioners declared:

The adoption of a foreign tongue (Urdu) in the Courts of Justice is unavoidably unpopular and it leads to the almost exclusive employment of Hindustani ministerial officials, who are foreigners to the natives of Nagpur Marathi should be declared by Government to be the Court language in the four districts of Nagpur, Bhandara, Chanda and Wardha.¹

Marathi became the official language of Nagpur division in 1865, but Urdu remained the language in the north. The introduction of Marathi soon caused problems. Many of the English administrators in the division did not know Marathi and thus could not understand most of the government correspondence carried on in their own offices. A Chief Commissioner recommended that Central Provinces civil servants be grouped into two linguistic units. British administrators in northern Central Provinces would continue to learn Urdu and be recruited mainly from the north Indian civil service, while those in the southern Central Provinces would be recruited from Bombay and learn only Marathi. The Government of India opposed such a proposal and instructed the Central Provinces government that their officers should become proficient in both languages.²

¹Richard Temple, 21 March 1865, in CPHP, March 1872, #31, pars. 8 & 9.

²IFP, General, April 1868, #72-74, pp. 76-77.

The entire issue of official languages for the Central Provinces was not finally decided until 1871, after an Indian group from Jabalpur petitioned the government in favor of Hindi, instead of Urdu. The Chief Commissioner agreed that the official language should be "the language of the people." Both the petitioners and the Chief Commissioner presented statistics which showed that Hindi was definitely the popular language of the northern province. A few British officials opposed Hindi, describing it as an "inferior tongue." But the Chief Commissioner concluded that "two great errors" had been made by previous administrations.

First, mere official convenience was consulted, instead of keeping to the broad principle that we should recognize but two official languages--the language of the governing nation (English) and the language of the people; and, second, we did not apprehend the strong affection felt for the Hindi language by the mass, and believed erroneously that by persevering in the use of Urdu we could naturalize it.

It is my view that not even in the North-West Provinces has Urdu taken such a hold on the people that it will very long be able to maintain its place as the official language.¹

The Chief Commissioner's forecast proved correct, though the decision produced much stronger controversy there than in the Central Provinces. The policy decisions of the administration in the 1860's and 1870's concerning official languages ensured that local government proceedings would be carried on in a language which most of the population understood. Those decisions re-emphasized the cultural division between northern and southern Central Provinces.

¹R. H. Keatinge to GOI, 20 September 1874, in CPHP, March 1872, #39, p. 54.

The improvement of communications, especially the railways, also emphasized this northern and southern division of the provinces. In 1867 railway lines were completed between Nagpur and Bombay in the south and between Jabalpur and Allahabad in the north. Mail continued to be carried by tonga (a one-horse carriage with two wheels) along the road over the Satpura plateau between Jabalpur and Nagpur until 1870. In that year the railway line between Jabalpur and Bombay was completed. The Bombay lines to Jabalpur and Nagpur divided at Bhusawal just west of the Central Provinces border. No direct railway link between the north and south over the Satpura plateau was constructed until the twentieth century. Until then the journey, and the mail, between Nagpur and Jabalpur took almost twenty-six hours, or about the same time necessary to travel to Bombay from either of the two largest cities in the Central Provinces by rail. Chhattisgarh remained the last sub-region to be brought into railway communication with the rest of the province. Between 1888 and 1892, however, railways were completed in almost all directions from Chhattisgarh-west to Nagpur and then beyond to Bombay, east to Calcutta, and north to Jabalpur and the Ganges plain beyond. Thus by the early 1890's the two trans-India lines between Bombay and Calcutta lay within the Central Provinces, the northern one passing through the Narbudda and Jabalpur divisions, and the southern one passing through the Nagpur and Chhattisgarh divisions. Until the end of the second decade of the twentieth century, the Satpura plateau continued as a geographic barrier and hindered transportation and communication between northern and southern Central Provinces.

The steps taken by the Central Provinces administration to organize the province into two linguistic areas, recognizing Marathi as the official language in one and Hindi in the other, and parallel developments of railways in both areas made for a form of integration in diversity. But the Central Provinces administration soon faced a challenge to those integration efforts from officials outside the province. In the early 1870's the Government of India proposed that the Central Provinces should be divided and parcelled out to the Bombay Presidency and other provinces. The main purpose of the proposal was to compensate Bombay for its loss of Sind to the Punjab as that transfer was under consideration. The Chief Commissioner and other officials indignantly opposed the dismemberment of Central Provinces, calling it a "retrograde" measure and a "blunder." They questioned why the decision to create the Central Provinces as a provincial administration, which had been made a little more than a decade before, should now be reversed. The province had been formed because its various sections constituted a compact geographic area, which was unmanageable by other separate provincial administrations. In the short period of its existence, the Central Provinces had "begun to settle down into an independent career of its own, with distinct traditions and separate local interests." Its officials were "animated by the strongest feeling of esprit de corps and pride in their special charge."¹ One official pleaded that the province's true

¹ Charles Grant, 27 December 1872, in IFP, Political, April 1876, #26, p. 44.

raison d'etre was,

to carry the benefits of good government to some of the wildest tracts and least civilized races of India. One-half of the province is as it were emerging out of darkness The Central Provinces' Government . . . has done much and promises to do much more to develop the material resources of its least advanced tracts and spread the benefits of civilized Government among backward and helpless populations.¹

Central Provinces officials recognized that the province differed linguistically and ethnically in its northern, southern and eastern sections, yet other provinces contained just as heterogeneous and anomalous populations.² They also emphasized that the Maratha population in the Central Provinces, who had lived among Gonds and north Indians, was quite distinct from the less-mixed Maratha population in the Bombay Presidency. Central Provinces officials concluded that they could find no positive grounds for dividing the administrative unit of the Central Provinces. It was argued further that after ten years of rigorous and careful introduction of "all the numerous off-shoots of European government," the Central Provinces needed a period of rest rather than change.³ In addition a new land-tax system had just been imposed; the people of the province should be allowed a period of time to adjust to it. In the light of these and other considerations, the Viceroy concurred that "in their present backward condition" the Central Provinces

¹W. B. Jones, n. d., in *Ibid.*, #27, pp. 47-48.

²J. H. Morris, 18 January 1873, in *Ibid.*, #25, pp. 34-35; and Grant, p. 40.

³Morris and Grant's letters in *Ibid.*

needed the "local and fostering care of a Chief Commissioner."¹

The round of discussions in the early 1870's did not end the controversy. It was revived in 1888 partly because again it was proposed to transfer the Sind from the Bombay Presidency to the Punjab and to compensate Bombay's loss with areas from the Central Provinces. All the old arguments on both sides were repeated and official and unofficial replies were much the same as during the first round of arguments.² On the surface it seemed that the chief argument for dismemberment was that it would benefit other areas. There was no apparent concern to do what was best for the Central Provinces. During all this time, no official had ever seriously proposed that the Central Provinces might be split into smaller units, making Nagpur, northern Central Provinces, and Chhattisgarh into separate provinces. The possibility of developing each of these three areas into larger, core sub-regions as new British administrative units by attaching adjacent Native States, was also not seriously considered. This may have been due to the memory of the Dalhousie annexations and the war of 1857. When a large number of Native States had been transferred to direct British rule at that time, it had not been a popular or completely successful move. Nonetheless, in the twentieth century both of these possibilities of enlarging the area and reorganizing it into new units occurred. First the area was enlarged in 1903; in the 1920's the Congress party based its organiza-

¹Viceroy, letter, 1 April 1876, in *Ibid.*, #29, p. 50.

²This second round of discussions is contained in CPHP, General, August 1888, #24, and enclosures.

tions on linguistic units; and finally the province was split in the 1950's while native states were added to the new units.

In 1903 Berar was added to the Central Provinces since the government felt Berar was too small for a separate provincial administration. As a productive cotton area, Berar increased the administrative wealth of the new "Central Provinces and Berar." The addition also doubled the Marathi-speaking population. Rivalry occasionally developed between these two Marathi areas over issues such as the location and development of educational facilities. The people of Berar also complained that two-thirds of its share of taxes were shiphoned off for development in the poorer districts of Central Provinces. The new addition also had political significance. Berar provided a direct link between Nagpur and the active national movement in Bombay and Poona. Even by 1906 Nagpur had become a focal point for nationalist rivalries. The Extremist wing of the Indian National Congress organized the Nagpur area so completely that the Moderates decided they could not hold the All-India National Congress Meeting in Nagpur and moved it to Surat in 1907. The split between those two factions which materialized at Surat had its origin at Nagpur.

In the early 1920's as Congress sought to "popularize" the nationalist movement, provincial organizations were formed on linguistic and cultural criteria. The Central Provinces and Berar was divided into two language areas, the Hindi speaking and the Marathi speaking provincial organizations. "Mahakosala," the Puranic and traditional designation for the upper Narbudda and Chhattisgarh area, was chosen as the name of the Congress provincial organization in the northern and eastern parts. The name for the Marathi provincial organization was

"Central Provinces-Marathi" or "Vidarba," to give historic reference to an ancient kingdom of Berar.¹

The idea of forming organizations on linguistic and cultural characteristics culminated in the reorganization of administrative units after Indian attained Independence in 1947. As a result of the decisions of the States Reorganization Committee in the 1950's Nagpur and Berar formed the eastern part of Maharashtra state, while Mahakosala, the northern and eastern portions of the old Central Provinces and Berar, was combined with several Native States such as Rewa, Bhopal and Gwalior to form the largest state of India, Madhya Pradesh. Bhopal, instead of any city in Mahakosala, was chosen as the new capital. What a Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces had in 1872 considered to be impossible, "and in no place more impossible than in Central India," had at last become a reality by the 1960's. He had said that it would be impossible "to separate the people over whom we rule according to a philological or ethnological system, and give to each separate nation-- if one is pleased to term it so--a separate Government." In 1872 "the exigencies of British Government of India" did "not permit of a division of territories strictly according to nationalities."² By the 1950's some of the different cultural regions within the old administrative units of British India had developed vigorous "regionalisms" or sub-national consciousness. The new, large state of Madhya Pradesh in central India was not one of these. Geographic, social and cultural

¹M. P., Freedom Movement, p. 306.

²IFP, Political, April 1876, #25.

diversity was to continue within the state's administrative boundaries. A larger regional identity remained weak, diffuse, and sub-divided in the new Madhya Pradesh.

Summary

The Central Provinces was created as a new British administrative unit as part of the general reorganization of the British Indian Empire in the middle of the nineteenth century. Two of the main purposes behind its creation appear to have been the consolidation of British rule in central, hinterland India, and the development of the comparatively backward area. Yet in spite of a considerable amount of administrative effort and energy, and though improvements occurred in the next six decades, the province still lagged behind and remained near the bottom in its all-India ranking.

Some of the explanations for this position of inferiority lie in the extreme heterogeneity of the area and the fact that British efforts either intentionally or unintentionally tended to perpetuate this diversity while providing a facade of administrative uniformity. The studies of Spate and Cohn characterize the diverse sub-regions of middle India. Spate indicates how the upland forests isolated the various sub-regions. Cohn identifies some of the nuclear valley and plain historic areas which supplied the base for these sub-regions.

The four sub-regions emerged during the several centuries of administrative and social history before British rule. They consisted of the Narbudda valley in the north, the Nagpur plain in the south, the Chhattisgarh plain in the east, and the intermediate forest plateau in the center. Local dynasties, mainly Gond Rajas, ruled each of these sub-

regions from the sixteenth century onward and felt the indirect influence of the Mughal empire during that and the following century. Each sub-region also came under Maratha Bhonsla domination in the second half of the eighteenth century. However the Gond Rajas never united into a single kingdom; they had as much or more contact with the Mughals as with each other. In most of the Central Provinces area Maratha Bhonsla rule had been consolidated during the half century before the period of sporadic British "pacification" began around 1800. But it was during the six centuries before British rule was finally formalized in the 1860's that the area passed through a silent, gradual social and economic revolution during which it acquired a large number of its diverse castes as migrants moved into the area. A large amount of virgin land may have existed before the sixteenth century, and its availability probably attracted settlers from almost all directions: from Malwa, Rajasthan, the Ganges plain, Bundlekhand, Marwar, Khandesh and Maharashtra. The new settlers not only initiated the cultivation of much of the farm land, they carried with them and implanted a variety of social and cultural practices. The process of immigration further intensified the distinctions of the sub-regions. The Marathi-speaking people of the Nagpur plain looked back toward the Maharashtra heartland, while the Hindi-speaking people of the Narbudda valley looked to Aryavarta as their homeland. Chhattisgarh remained almost as isolated and introspective as ever, while the relatively un-mixed tribal population of the highlands stood out in even greater contrast to the recently settled sub-regions.

After the creation of the Central Provinces in 1861, British po-

licies and other developments reinforced some aspects of the sub-regional units in the area. The formation of administrative Divisions generally coincided with previous political, social and cultural sub-regions. The creation of Feudatory States and Zamindari Estates tended to isolate the divisions from each other. The establishment of official languages and the construction of railways emphasized the separation between northern and southern Central Provinces. The last agriculturally productive area to acquire railway facilities was also historically the most isolated: Chhattisgarh. No railways crossed the middle Satpura plateau to connect northern and southern Central Provinces until the twentieth century.

The threatened dismemberment of the province in the early 1870's and the late 1880's aroused provincial officials to plead for the retention of provincial unity, first because they wanted time for their policies to take effect and later because they felt their "success" or "progress" would be undermined. In the early twentieth century the province was enlarged to include Berar, which doubled the Marathi-speaking population. The provincial officers never succeeded in incorporating the indirectly administered Zamindari estates with the rest of the province.

All these factors of the pre-British and British periods emphasize the diversity of the province as well as indicate how these diversities were grouped around sub-regions. Perhaps no other British province exhibited as great a spectrum of material and human diversity as was contained within the boundaries of the province in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In any locality the population provided

a pageant of cultures and historic ethnic communities; they each perpetuated something of their origins and what had been distinctive of their previous environments. Before the 1860's the area had been one of the youngest in India, socially and economically--a frontier that was in the process of being settled. The distinctive geographic characteristics of the area and the establishment of administrative units by the Gond Rajas and the Maratha Bhonslas provided the precedence upon which British administrators brought the sub-regions together into a regional administration. But this wider regional unit did not develop into an enduring identity, partly because the administration failed to link together the sub-regions. Socially and culturally people in the sub-regions looked either within their area-grouping or toward others outside the province to whom they were linked culturally or linguistically. Rarely did they form ties with another sub-regional grouping of the province. If they had done so, they might have created a totally new regional identity.

The failure of an emerging regionalism could not be attributed alone to the failure of administrative policies. Yet they had considerable influence. At one point the British administration recognized the futility of persisting in a policy to "naturalize" the foreign language of Urdu in the province; still the British continued to try to "naturalize" their English ideas and institutions of administration in middle India. Some of the ways in which these efforts affected Indians and their activities ~~form~~ the topics of the following chapters. This chapter has emphasized the necessity of taking into account the four sub-regions, especially when examining Indian communities of the Central Provinces during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

CHAPTER III

THE BRITISH COMMUNITY AND ITS INTERACTION WITH INDIANS

In any study of colonial rule it is useful to examine the character of the rulers themselves. This chapter examines the character of the British colonial community and their relationship with Indians in a province in central India in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It indicates first who the Englishmen were, then the character of the social environment in which they lived, and finally how they related to Indian society around them.

The ethno-centric British colonial society which developed along with the creation of a provincial administration in the Central Province after 1861 differed more in degree than in kind from British colonial societies at Benares and Guntur five decades earlier.¹ British Communities in India still looked back to England, and to her Englishmen in India, for cultural and moral sustenance; they attempted to recreate little England enclaves wherever they lived and worked, remaining socially and culturally segregated from the Indian community. England and various parts of India, however, had become closer and more accessible to each other during the intervening decades. Transportation had improved and

¹Bernard S. Cohn, "The British in Benares: a Nineteenth Century Colonial Society," Comparative Studies in Society and History 4 (January 1962): 169-199; and Robert Eric Frykenberg, "British Society in Guntur during the Early Nineteenth Century," in Ibid., 4: 200-208.

furloughs for the English were more frequent. By the late 1860s the Suez canal had opened; in India, at the same time, railways linked northern Central Provinces with Bombay and Calcutta and a terminal line penetrated from Bombay into southern Central Provinces as far as the capital at Nagpur. Since the days of the hybridized English-Indian Nabobs of the late eighteenth century, fewer and fewer Englishmen showed their admiration for Indian customs and practices by imitating and adapting their life style to that of a maharaja.

In addition to greater contact and communication with England and between English social centers in India, other changes were taking place. British administrators worked under stricter regulations; they received a more thorough professional training, and they had higher salaries. All these changes worked to end the relative isolation of Englishmen from Englishmen in India while the same had extricated most Englishmen from close, personal involvement in Indian life. Within the province, small groups of Englishmen were still often isolated from one another in district outposts, but the opportunities and occasions for social contact and intercourse had so increased that their physical and cultural isolation seemed less severe.

Compared to British communities in other provinces, British society in the Central Provinces was never large. Like other British communities, most of the members concentrated in one or two provincial towns and a station at a higher elevation in the hot season, while the rest were dispersed to many district outposts. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the four to five thousand British residents of the province constituted less than four percent of the entire British population in India. (See table.) Of the major provinces only Assam had a

TABLE 6

ENGLISH POPULATION IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES

	British born residents 1881	Per- cent	Europeans and allied races 1921
North-West Provinces	20,184	22.7	United Provinces 25,161
Punjab	17,590	19.8	Punjab 21,955
Bombay	13,772	15.5	Bombay 31,889
Bengal	10,583	11.9	Bengal 22,730
Madras	5,883	6.6	Madras 10,836
Burma	5,346	6.0	Bihar and Orissa 6,346
Central India	4,978	5.6	Central Prov- inces and Berar 5,892
Nizam's Territories	2,956	3.3	Assam 2,768
Central Provinces	2,774	3.1	
Assam	795	0.9	
Total	89,015	100.0	Total 157,649

Central Provinces

	European Christians 1867	Per- cent	British subjects 1911	Per- cent
Nagpur	2,462	50.6	1,463	21.5
Jabalpur District	1,018	20.9	3,871	56.9
City	. . .	. . .	3,822	. . .
Balaghat	. . .	. . .	61	0.9
Other	1,389	28.5	1,413	20.8
Central Provinces	4,869	100.0	6,808	100.0

SOURCES: Census 1867; Census of India for 1881, 1911, and 1921.

smaller number of British residents. More than two-thirds of these British residents were stationed at the two largest towns: Nagpur, the capital, and Jabalpur, the northern trading and administrative center. Almost half (40 percent) of all British residents in the province were British soldiers, living in separate military cantonments, mainly at or near these two towns. Excluding these troops in the large towns, the British population was dispersed to sixteen other district headquarters and small outposts, such as Balaghat. By 1911, out of 6,808 British subjects in the province, 1,463 or twenty-one-and-a-half percent lived in Nagpur, 3,822 or fifty-six percent in Jabalpur, while, in comparison, there were only 61 or nine-tenths of one percent in the hill district of Balaghat.¹

Excluding the British troops, most of the English community were directly involved in the provincial administration. They consisted of administrators in various departments along with their wives and children. Unlike some other parts of India, the Central Provinces never included a substantial number of non-official Englishmen. There were no indigo or tea planters and only a few commercial agents and missionaries. Though the first Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces had proposed a scheme for European colonization on the sparsely populated highlands, it never attracted any English colonizers. A few foreign exporters stationed their agents in the province. In the early twentieth century, these traders were supplemented by a few engineers, managers, and agents when manganese mining began in the Satpura plateau. At about that time missionary effort increased. Before the famines of the late nineteenth century, the few

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See Census of 1911, Central Provinces vols. by J. T. Marten (Allahabad: Pioneer Press, 1912).

missionaries had lived in the large towns managing the activities of their educational and charitable institutions, such as Hislop College, Nagpur. There had been three exceptions: Stephen Hislop, O. J. Lohr, and J. Lampard. Stephen Hislop of the Scottish Free Church had worked with Gond tribals in the Nagpur area in the 1840s and 1850s. O. J. Lohr founded a mission in a Raipur village to work with the Chamars in the 1860s. In Balaghat district, J. Lampard began work with Baihar Gonds and Baigas in the early 1890s. It was the famines, however, which stimulated missionary efforts in the province. Within one decade (1891-1901) the number of Indian Christians almost tripled, mostly because of the "conversion" of famine orphans.¹ Even with the gradual increase of commercial and missionary activities, the main character of the British community in the province remained official. One observer characterized Nagpur society in the early twentieth century as "desperately official." It was

rather unique; other big Indian stations had a healthy mixture of civil, military, and commercial folk, but in Nagpur it was all civil. Even the parson was an official.²

The status of British administrators in the province remained low as compared to other provinces. Living conditions were more difficult and primitive, especially in the first decades of British provincial rule. The pay and prospects for promotion were almost the worst in India. In the mid-1860s while Alfred Lyall was traveling from Agra to his new appointment as District Commissioner in Hoshangabad, he reflected, "All civili-

¹Imperial Gazetteer of India, Central Provinces, Provincial Series (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1908), pp. 30-31.

²James W. Best, Forest Life in India (London: John Murray, 1935), p. 99.

zation ceases abruptly as soon as you leave the Ganges valley." After his first Christmas at Hoshangabad he remarked on how very dreary and stiff the celebrations were compared to the cheerful society of Agra.¹ He determined that he would not stay at Hoshangabad more than two years.²

Three decades later (in the 1890s) Henry Sharp expressed a different reaction to conditions in the province. By then government buildings, officials' houses, and a network of railways had been constructed, and this improved living conditions in most of the headquarter towns. But Sharp was stationed to one of the up-country towns, and he accepted things as they were, adjusting to the simple life. He expressed his enjoyment of the

pleasant simplicity and unconventionality of life Nobody minded if your dwelling was of sun-dried bricks covered over with a roof of untidy thatch, your ceiling-cloth scampered across by rats and other beasts, and your furniture of the shabbiest wicker-work Things were used and enjoyed in common. The custom had only recently ceased of taking your own knives, forks and spoons when you went out to dinner. But you still took your own servant Your door was always open, literally and metaphorically, to all comers--including fowls of the air and beasts of the forest Not all the visitors were harmless I should be sorry to say, least I be thought to exaggerate, how many scorpions and black kraits I have killed in the house.³

Not all British administrators acclimatized themselves so easily and appreciated the living conditions in the remote areas of the province as Sharp did. Only two years before (1889), the provincial administration

¹Alfred C. Lyall, letters, 3 May 1864 and 5 January 1865, in Lyall papers.

²Ibid., 11 June 1864. Lyall soon became the Commissioner of Berar and then advanced to higher government appointments.

³Henry Sharp, Good-bye India (London: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 16-17. Sharp arrived at the place and during the time which is the setting for R. Kipling's story of a British officer's son and his pet mongoose, entitled Rikki-tikki-tavi.

had requested the Government of India to improve the pay and position of its commissioned officers. The Chief Commissioner informed the central government that Central Provinces officers were "at presently gravely dissatisfied with their position and prospects," though they did not allow their personal grievances to interfere with their public duties. The Chief Commissioner realized that the Central Provinces was not a popular place for service in comparison with other parts of India. Most officers in the province had selected the North-West Provinces or the Punjab for service after passing their examination in England, but they had been sent to the "jungle of the Central Provinces" irrespective of their choice. The Central Provinces had a worse climate; and its officers were never selected for prize appointments in the general service. Even though the railways had made the province more accessible, the Chief Commissioner recognized that "the Central Provinces will never hold a high place in popular estimation as a desirable residence."¹ Improved pay scales were granted, but two decades later the position of Central Provinces administrators had again fallen behind other areas. Once more in 1913 the case of the Central Provinces officers was reviewed extensively with a similar conclusion that "it would be inequitable any longer to deny the members of the Central Provinces commission equality of treatment with their conferees in the Punjab."²

There were two factors which helped to compensate the Central Provinces official community for its sense of isolation and inferiority. One was the

¹Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces to the Government of India, 17 November 1890, CPHP, November 1890, #15, par. 10.

²Government of India to Secretary of State for India, 3 January 1913, in CPAP, Appointments, January 1914, #2, par. 14, p. 16.

development and perpetuation of a close "family tradition" among them. The other was the re-creation and maintenance of British social and cultural customs wherever officials went in the province.

The development of family tradition among the British community grew out of several circumstances. Officials were tied to each other by more than their common cultural and national background. Especially in the 1860s several administrators were related by marriage to others, and by common experiences of training and service with each other. During Richard Temple's appointment as Chief Commissioner, his cousin, Harry Rivett-Carnac, and his younger step-brother, John A. Temple, served under him. Several of Richard Temple's fellow officers from the Punjab also joined the Central Provinces administration. They included Henry Morris, W.S. Brooke, John S. Campbell, Robert Egerton, Hector Mackenzie, W. B. Jones, F. Venning, and Malcolm Low. Among some of these men there were additional ties. John Campbell's brother, George Campbell, became the second Chief Commissioner after Richard Temple. Malcolm Low's father, John Low, had commanded troops in the province during the Third Maratha War of 1818-1819. Besides these, Charles Bernard's uncle, John Lawrence, was Richard Temple's mentor in the Punjab. Charles Grant came from a family which had served in the East India Company.

Although the decade of the 1860s was unusual for the high number of family and provincial ties, similar situations also existed in the following decades. Both brothers Charles H. T. Crosthwaite and Robert J. Crosthwaite became Chief Commissioners in the late 1880s. The son of Charles Crosthwaite, Henry Robert Crosthwaite, achieved prominence as a Central Provinces administrator in the first two decades of the twentieth century. The brothers Lindsey and John W. Neill filled secretarial posts and headed de-

partments during the last decades of the nineteenth century. Of nine Chief Commissioners after Temple and Morris, two more came from the Punjab (D. Fitzpatrick and B. Robertson), four from the North-West Province (C. H. T. Crosthwaite, J. Woodburn, J. P. Hewett, and J. O. Miller), two from Bengal (A. Mackenzie and A. MacDonnell), and one from Bombay (F. Lely). None came from Madras. Such a pedigree of family and provincial ties indicates one of the ways in which Englishmen in the province felt a strong sense of community.

The policies and ideas of Chief Commissioner Henry Morris gave further shape to strengthen the family feeling among the official community after Temple's departure in the late 1860s. Morris not only used various informal procedures to bring administrators closer together, but also insured that his methods would continue after his long tenure in office (thirteen years in the 1870s and early 1880s) by personally training several young officers. Morris stressed the importance of open and frank discussion, and of regular visits and communication between British officers at all levels--between the heads of departments, between the separate department heads and their subordinates, and between divisional commissioners and their district officers. In the appointment and transfer of officers he tried to reduce the distinction between military and civilian members of the administration by utilizing their knowledge of the local countryside and their particular talents of supervision and bureaucratic management.¹ About two-thirds of the core group of administrators, i. e. those who belonged to the Central Provinces Commission, were military officers who

¹Andrew H. L. Fraser, Among Rajahs and Ryots (reprint ed., Allahabad, Chugh Publications, 1970), pp. 24-25.

became civil servants under "staff" appointments in the early 1860s. By the mid-1870s less than half of the Central Provinces Commission were military officers. Their numbers steadily dwindled until only one or two remained in the commission by the turn of the century.

Morris equally stressed warm social relations between officers as much as cordial administrative relations. When J. B. Fuller arrived at the summer capital of Pachmarhi for his new appointment as head of the Agriculture Department, the first question which Morris put to him was "Can you dance?"¹ Morris's policies and ideas concerning the relationship between administrators eventually "led officers from other Provinces to describe the Central Provinces Administration as a 'happy family'."²

Morris left the Central Provinces in 1883 and until 1907 most of the Chief Commissioners were "outsiders" who had no previous experience in the province but had served in other parts of India. Nevertheless subordinate administrators effectively perpetuated and elaborated the "family tradition" during the two-and-one-half decades of rule by "outsiders." One such administrator, Andrew Fraser was in a special position to feel the influence of Morris's policies. Arriving in 1871, Andrew Fraser rapidly advanced to different positions in the secretariate and was in charge of different departments by 1877. For the next six years he was directly under the supervision of Morris at Nagpur. Later, when he was appointed (in the late 1880s and early 1890s) Commissioner of the eastern division (Chhattisgarh), Fraser instituted a system of monthly conferences with district officers. Every last Saturday and Sunday of the month officers came to meet with one another and Fraser. Those conferences produced

¹Fuller, Experiences, p. 38. ²Fraser, Rajahs, p. 25.

valuable discussions on administrative problems and also provided a "relief from the monotony and loneliness of District work." They engendered "a sense of solidarity" toward government activity in the Division.¹ When Fraser advanced to the highest post of the province in the early twentieth century, for three years he extended the system of conferences to include annual discussions between commissioners and heads of departments at Pachmarhi during June.²

Fraser's career and his promotion of close relations between officers provided a continuity of a particular style of provincial administration from Morris's time into the twentieth century. But Fraser was not alone: other officers reinforced the provincial tradition and carried it even further into the twentieth century. The careers of J. B. Fuller, Reginald H. Craddock, Benjamin Robertson, and Frank Sly were interrelated with Fraser's and with each other's. Fuller first served in the Central Provinces under Morris as Director of Agriculture, at the time when Fraser was Morris's secretary. In the late 1880s Frank Sly began his civil service career in Sambalpur and Raipur under Fraser, who was Divisional Commissioner. During those years Fuller's assistant in the Settlement Department was Reginald H. Craddock. In the early 1890s Fuller, Craddock, and Benjamin Robertson were in Nagpur together: Fuller was Settlement Commissioner, Craddock continued as assistant to Fuller and later became Settlement Officer for Nagpur district, and Robertson joined the Central Provinces from Bombay to conduct the census operation of 1891. In the mid-1890s Craddock continued as Nagpur Settlement Officer and periodically relieved the Settlement Commissioner while Fraser was Commissioner of

¹Ibid., p. 40. ²CPHP, July 1902, General, #36.

Nagpur Division. Sly continued also as Settlement Officer in Hoshangabad while Robertson was District Commissioner in neighboring Nimar. Both were briefly under Fuller when he became Narbudda Divisional Commissioner during 1894. In the late 1890s Robertson again served under Fuller, this time as District Commissioner of Jabalpur when Fuller was the Divisional Commissioner. When Fuller left the province in the early twentieth century, Robertson succeeded to the Commissionership. Both of them, as well as Craddock as Settlement Commissioner and Sly as Raipur District Commissioner, came under Fraser's direction when he attained the Chief Commissionership from 1899 to 1901. Fuller and Fraser went on to head the two Bengals in the early twentieth century. The remaining three officers eventually advanced to the Chief Commisionership of the province and succeeded each other, Craddock in 1907-1912, Robertson in 1912-20, and Sly, 1920 onwards. The interrelated careers of these five officers and others provided both continuity and strength to the provincial tradition.

The effects of a strong provincial tradition among subordinate officers during the years of the "outsiders" did not go unnoticed by either the officers or the Chief Commissioners. Fuller, for instance, finding that Chief Commissioner Dennis Fitzpatrick did not support his policy of government rent fixation, simply waited until the next Chief Commissioner, Alexander Mackenzie, who approved his ideas, was appointed. In a similar vein, Fuller instructed Anthony MacDonnell during his first months of Chief Commissioner in the details of land revenue policy. He pointed out MacDonnell's mistakes and suggested ways in which MacDonnell's ideas could be revised to conform to provincial policy.¹ MacDonnell's predecessor

¹ Fuller, Experience, pp. 46-47, 54-55.

Mackenzie, had found that "his programs of reform were hampered by disagreement with military members of the provincial commission." In the early twentieth century Chief Commissioner John O. Miller reported that his predecessor, Frederick Lely, had had to persist against local officers' ideas to get his policies accepted. Miller himself felt "the Central Provinces officers [formed] somewhat a family party and [discussed] matters among themselves to an extent unknown elsewhere."¹

Thus from almost the beginning and all during the six decades of British provincial rule in the Central Provinces, a strong tradition of close and personal relations between local British officials emerged and endured. It was based on the common family, provincial, and military character of the first decade which Morris strengthened and promoted as a continuing pattern. Later, others ensured the family tradition persisted into the twentieth century.

The development of a family tradition was only one way in which the British community succeeded in accommodating itself to isolation from British life in England and in other Indian provinces. In daily life they discovered others ways to retain their British social customs and cultural heritage. The members of the British community lived in three different social contexts--one was in the large towns such as Nagpur, Jabalpur, and the summer capital of Pachmarhi; the second was as smaller groups in district headquarters and outposts; the third, as officers periodically toured the Indian countryside by themselves. In each of these social

¹John Miller to A. MacDonnell, 27 July 1905, Anthony MacDonnell Papers, Oxford University, England, e. 215, p. 45.

contexts British officers developed ways to retain their English life styles in India.

Nagpur, Jabalpur, and Pachmarhi were the centers of the largest British communities. The most important officers resided at the capital of Nagpur. They included the Chief Commissioner, his secretarial staff, the heads of departments such as Land revenue, Education, Police, Public Works, Forest, the Divisional staff, and the district administrators. Almost all of these journeyed to the summer capital of Pachmarhi for three months each year. They were joined by other British administrators from other divisions and departments. A large number came from Jabalpur, which was often considered the second capital of the province. The town plan of Jabalpur typically represents the way in which a physical and social English enclave was separated from Indians. The town consisted of four sections. The old and crowded Indian residential and business center was located north of the Umti stream. South of the stream and north of the railway tracks most of the government buildings and offices had been constructed. Beyond the tracks European officers lived in spacious houses separated from the cantonment of British troops by a parade maidan (field). A secondary market center, called the Sadr grew up in the area south of the tracks which served the needs of the European population. Similar types of segregation were found in Nagpur and other district headquarters. Pachmarhi, the summer capital, was almost entirely a European town. Originally only the site of a hunting lodge, the local administration selected it as their summer retreat. At 4,800 feet elevation it gave relief from the summer heat for the officials. By 1872 the main buildings and residences had been constructed. By the early twentieth century its population swelled to around six thousand during the summer months when British

officers arrived with their families and servants. The climate was not as cool as Simla or England, but it was the closest approximation in the province.

Gradually social life among the British community developed in the large towns and the summer capital. There were teas, dinners, dances, and various ceremonies to attend, and Christian and English festivals to celebrate. In addition there were English recreational activities. By the late 1860s Kamptee, a suburb of Nagpur, had a race-course.¹ In the late nineteenth century scores of people developed a craze for golf. Participants at Nagpur's new golf course were regularly reported in the English paper, the Pioneer.² Chief Commissioner MacDonnell played golf for the first time at Pachmarhi, but he could not understand why people raved about it. By the early twentieth century Nagpur presented a social atmosphere similar in most ways to other large centers of British communal life. Official members of the British community came into close and almost continuous contact with one another—they worked "in one another's offices," saw "one another and their wives every evening in the club," and played "tennis together most days in the week." Nagpur had its Gondwana Club and Jabalpur its Narbudda Club. One Forest Department officer even complained that the highly developed official etiquette in Nagpur went too far, that he and his bachelor friends were forced to remain at dinner parties until the lady of the highest rank had departed. Calling at the residences of superior officials "was considered so important that a junior

¹Pioneer(Allahabad), 1 January 1870, p. 5.

²Ibid, 28 December 1890. Fraser, Rivett-Carnac, and Craddock are mentioned.

officer could always get away from office."¹

The social life of British officials outside Nagpur, Jabalpur, and Pachmarhi was not as formal and grand. Yet, even the small groups of British residents at district headquarters maintained a separate British community through their contact and activities. Like the larger towns, the British officers lived separately. At Balaghat one of the smallest district headquarters, the officers' houses were located far to the west of the town and the railway station. East of their houses was a "buffer zone" of public buildings, schools, and the town hall. Further east was the market of Guzri Chauk, then Devi lake with Indian residential wards around it, and finally the railway station.²

By the early 1880s at least five to ten British officials with their families lived at each district headquarters. British social and administrative activity in a "Humdrum District" centered around the three most prominent administrators—the district commissioners, the British Superintendent of Police, and the Civil Surgeon. As described by a Central Province junior civil servant in early 1880s, each of the "board of Guardians" of Humdrum District had thankless, routine tasks to perform at the office. The head of the district spent most of his time "either writing or hearing writing read."³ His position was over-rated, as he possessed little "original authority," rather he was "only a ganglion in the nervous system of administration." He could "do little without reference to superior authority," he simply drove his Indian subordinate administrators, the tahsildars. The District Superintendent of Police

¹Best, Forest Life, pp. 99-100. ²Balaghat Dg (1907), p. 311.

³Pekin [Lewis Kossuth Laurie], In the C. P.--Sketches in Prose and Verse (Allahabad: Pioneer Press, 1881). p. 102.

was the District Commissioner's "co-aduster and terrible shadow." enforcing the law by investigation and punishment. He spent most of his time, however, listening to his clerk sing-song and nasal voice reciting police diaries sent in from outposts, and keeping alert to determine if he should record a particular crime as having "occurred" or "not occurred." In doing this for his reports, he needed to fine a balance between showing crime was on the wane, but that his peace-keeping service was still vital.² Occasionally he escaped the office drudgery to rush to the scene of a reported crime to take evidence on the spot. Neither the District Commissioner nor the District Superintendent of Police normally remained posted at the same district more than two years. The Civil Surgeon, on the other hand, was rarely transferred. For this reason he was the "patriarch" of the district, a fund of local lore, and a source of the latest gossip within the British community.¹ He rarely practiced medicine, leaving service to his assistants at the dispensary. Nevertheless, he needed to make his daily rounds to check and initial lists prepared by his assistants. More, important, he often held the post of Jail Superintendent and dealt with the details of prisoner discipline and their work as oil pressers, stone breakers, or weavers. Annually he went out on vaccination tour and also noted the "filthy state of village sanitation," writing "admirable suggestions on sanitation improvements" which "could not possibly be carried out."²

¹Ibid., pp. 111-112.

²Ibid., pp. 115.

Apart from this monotony of work, the administrators carried on a simple social life among themselves. Often they dined together for early morning breakfast. In the evening the Civil Surgeon joined in a game of badmitton "with the D. C.'s wife for his partner, and the D. C. and D. S. P against him." Each Sunday they came "together for baking penance in the oven-like" and "much buttressed" little church under its iron roof, the District Commissioner reading "the prayers and the others murmuring responses in the intervals of mopping,"¹

Social life was enlivened by the occasional visits of various officials. Two or three times a year the priest of the Established Church came to the district to minister to the European congregation and inquire about the condition of the Indian Christians. He would conduct the European services before going to the bazaar to receive reports from the local Indian catechist. Soon he returned "gladly to his European flock," who enjoyed his company most when he forgot his religious position and played lawn-tennis or conversed cheerfully with them after dinner.² In their separate residential quarters, in their social, recreational, and religious activities, the small British communities at district headquarters maintained English life-styles.

In the third setting, that of touring the Indian countryside, the English administrator was physically the most isolated from the British community. There was neither the lively activities of official society at the capitals nor the daily rounds of the Guardians of the Humdrum

¹Ibid., pp. 114-15. ²Ibid., pp. 119-20.

district headquarters. Yet, lonely camp life had its own pleasures and excitements. And the touring administrator was not completely isolated from communication with the British community; his daily mail brought family and personal letters, official correspondence, and news literature on events in the province and the Empire. English food, drink, manners, and attitudes were maintained in the relative solitude of the Indian countryside and forest.

Annual touring groups ranged in size and importance from the Chief Commissioner's large entourage visiting district headquarters for the purpose of holding darbars (official audiences or public meetings) to a lone forest officer inspecting fire lines accompanied by one or two servants. On some occasions there were special tours, such as the tridecennial settlement investigations, or for famine work. But the most usual touring group consisted of a lone British officer with his staff and servants, going out on the annual winter inspection duty. J. B. Fuller, as Settlement Commissioner, recounted his own experiences in the Central Provinces.

During the five months of November to March one toured by camping I had two tents, with smaller ones for my clerk and servants. One went on in the very early morning--some twelve miles--to the next camping ground, where it was pitched by the time of my arrival

In the course of the morning ride from one camp to the other I ordinarily inspected three or four villages This brought me to the next camping ground about ten o'clock, and thence onward to dinner time I was engaged in office work I generally put in six or seven hours at the office table. My papers reached me by special runners Generally I received two mail bags full each day I often took a late afternoon--and sometimes a whole day--for shooting.¹

¹Fuller, Experience, pp. 40-41.

Shooting game was not only a most enjoyable sport in the jungles of the Central Provinces, but English officers rationalized it as a necessity while they were away from their usual food supplies of the district headquarters. Henry Sharp created his own food resources--while on tour, he kept a buffalo in camp for milk and butter, and chickens for eggs. At first he contented himself with Indian unleavened bread (chapattis); later his higher position and salary allowed him to hire a cook to bake bread in camp. Meat was a real problem as it was "practically unobtainable in the villages; and to carry about a flock of sheep [was] apt to be a nuisance. So one shot birds and beasts and lived on game,"¹ Though Sharp shot for meat, he also found it a most enjoyable sport in India. It was almost better than hunting back home in England, for in India it was

inexpensive There are no limits, no marches--all the world is before you. You wander where you will, and none can stop you; for there are no game laws, nor, except in government forest, any restrictions. In small game shooting there is none of the artificiality that robs the sport in the British Isles of some of its charm.²

Other autobiographies of Central Provinces administrators are full of similar fond memories of their hunting experiences while camping or while living in the forests.³ Condemned to the "jungles of the Central Provinces" British administrators enjoyed a sporting life reminiscent in some ways to aristocratic recreation in England.

¹Sharp, India., p. 27.

² Ibid.

³ Besides Sharp, the other autobiographies which describe wild game, hunting elephants, tigers, etc., are Fraser, Rajahs, Forsyth, Highlands, and Best, Forest Life.

The creation of a distinctive social and cultural world among the members of the British community had a double-edged effect. On the one hand, it brought British residents of the Central Provinces closer together and softened the harshness of their exile from their English home. On the other hand it buffeted them from the intrusion of India into their lives and reinforced the isolation of the British community from Indian society. All this tended to separate the rulers from the ruled and limit, if not exclude, most interaction except on a formal and administrative level.

The British community consequently had a very limited and uneven interaction with the Indian population of the Central Provinces. Few Indians came into direct, personal, and long-term contact with the English community or with individual English administrators. Villagers had the least contact. Occasionally an officer passed by their village on tour, or requisitioned some villagers for a hunting expedition. In the towns and at district headquarters Indians became accustomed to the "white faces," but, unless they were somehow involved in the provincial administration or with the British community, their contact was slight.

Three sections of Indian society did have more contact with the British community--(i) personal servants of British families, (ii) Indian assistants to British officers, and (iii) some of the Indian urban elite. Personal servants sometimes became closely attached to British families, but their servile position restricted them from full participation in the British community. Nor did servants transmit much of their rudimentary Anglicization to other Indians as they and their families frequently lived in special servants quarters in the

British section of town; and they also often accompanied their masters from one post to another.

A few Indians, as administrative assistants or as prominent urban leaders, attained positions in which they came into fairly frequent and free contact with members of the British community. These Indians had to transcend several barriers which divided the British community from the general Indian population. There were barriers of education, knowledge or acquaintance with the English language and culture, and membership in a family which the British community recognized as obtaining a high social and economic standing. Even when Indians overcame these, other barriers still remained which excluded them from complete and equal participation in the British community. Social institutions, such as the clubs, allowed only English membership. One British administrator noted the detrimental "two-fold effect on relations between Europeans and Indians" because of these clubs. He observed that they tended, first, to make Europeans

a self-contained and rather isolated community. The British meets the Indian in the office, in the law courts, in business premises, but social contacts, which would produce much mutual understanding, are often slight and formal. In the second place, Indians resent being excluded from European clubs This produces a regrettable cleavage.¹

One Indian newspaper editor of Hoshangabad also remarked on the aloofness of Europeans toward Indians which prevented the development of "mutual friendship and sympathy." He recounted a recent, unusual event when a British administrator invited Indian friends to his daughter's wedding

¹Sharp, India, pp. 21-22

and said, "it would be well if other Europeans followed his example."¹

Besides exclusive British social institutions, recreational activities of the British community were beyond the reach of most Indians and attracted few Indian participants. It was only after four decades of rule in the Central Provinces that the decennial review (1901) observed that a small number of educated Indians had finally began to imitate some aspects of European life styles:

They build larger and better houses, more often the model of those occupied by Europeans They dress more in European styles many smoke cigarettes, drink soda water and cool it with ice; . . cricket, tennis and other games are more popular.²

Game hunting was also difficult for most Indians. Except for a few Indians with special status, the population was prohibited from owning and using guns by the Arms Act. Unlike the Englishmen who constantly wrote of their hunting exploits in the Central Provinces, Indians had little experience and wrote very little about it. The first book on hunting in the province written by an Indian finally appeared in 1938.³

The limited influence of the British community on the lives of Indians is evident in other ways. Upper-class Indians, even those associated with the British community, adopted only a few English social and cultural customs. Indians working in professions associated with

¹Mauj-i-Narbadda, 1 May 1891, in Selections from the Vernacular Newspapers, or SVN. Unless otherwise indicated all quotes and references from Indian language newspapers are in the SVN, pp. 341-42.

²Frank Sly, Memorandum on the Condition of the People of the Central Provinces during the Decennial Period, 1892 to 1902 (Nagpur: 1902), par. 33.

³P. C. Bose, Hunting in the Central Provinces (n. P.: 1938).

the new colonial administration expressed criticism and resentment against the superior and exclusive world of the British rulers. Only on special occasions, such as the celebration of the Queen's Jubilee in 1887, did a slightly larger number of Indians find an opportunity to symbolically participate in the world of the British ruling community.

The activities of a few Central Provinces' families exemplify the trends of the influence of British culture in the lives of upper-class Indians. The Chitnavis family of Nagpur became the most renowned of Indian collaborators with the British during the first decades of the province. As a high-caste Maratha Prabhu family, they had followed the Bhonsla rulers from Berar to Nagpur in the middle of the eighteenth century. At the Nagpur Bhonsla court they had served as secretaries and ministers until the middle of the nineteenth century. When the Central Provinces was formed in the 1860s, the British had given Gangadhar Rao Chitnavis the title of landlord over a large and wealthy estate. Both of his sons, Madhav Rao and Shankar Rao, were sent to Poona and Bombay for higher education in British-supported colleges. On the death of his father in 1871, Madhav Rao took charge of the family estate. From then until his own death in 1929, Madhav Rao actively participated in both Indian and British organizations. He helped in the establishment of the Rajya Sabha in 1886, and later attended meetings of the Indian National Congress and joined the Cow Protection Society (Gorakshini Sabha). For several years in succession he was elected to the presidency of the Nagpur Municipal Committee, and was made the first Indian representative for all of the Central Provinces on the Governor-General's Legislative Council in the mid-

and late 1890s. Madhav Rao's brother, Shankar Rao, joined the Indian provincial civil service in 1873 and rose to become one of the first two Indians to be appointed District Commissioner. Shanker Rao also visited England with his wife in the 1880s. She was quite exceptional for an Indian woman, insisting on accompanying Shankar Rao wherever he was posted, learning English on her own, and acquainting herself with English manners so she could entertain English officials in her home. She wrote of her travel and other experiences in a Marathi book,¹ The activities of the Chitnavis family exemplify an unusual degree of participation in the two worlds: both the British community and Indian society.

The Bose family also exemplifies this combination, though the family did not arrive in Central Provinces until shortly after the province was formed. Bepin Krishna Bose grew up in a Vaishya family outside Calcutta and attended college in that city. He married the daughter of a Bengali public works engineer in the Central Provinces and began law practice at Jabalpur in 1872. But Nagpur promised a more lucrative practice, so he moved there in 1874. He soon began to participate in numerous activities, one of the first being a debate with Mr. Fraser on Utilitarianism. He also joined the municipal committee and boards of higher educational institutions. In 1888 he was appointed to the post of Government Advocate which he held off and on for several years. In the first decade of the twentieth century he succeeded Madhav Rao, serving three terms as the member from the Central Provinces on the Legislative Council. Bose wrote briefs and

¹Amcha Jagacha Pravas, "Our Tour All over the World," listed in The Commercial and General Directory of the Central Provinces and Berar, ed. Shridhar Narayan Huddar (Nagpur: T. N. Joshi, 1939), p. 962.

pamphlets for various Indian organizations such as the Nagpur Landholders' Association. He promoted the activities of the small Bengali community in the province, especially supporting the education of Bengali boys. Bose participated in the worlds of British officialdom, of Indians in the Central Provinces, and of the dispersed Bengali community.¹

The Association of the Aulad Hussain family with the British community consisted primarily of official ties. In the middle of the nineteenth century the British awarded a compensating pension to the Aulad Hussain family because of the murder of their father, Sabit Ali, by a rebellious Hindu ruler in northern Central Provinces.² Alad Hussain rose to various positions in the administration, reaching the height of his service when he was appointed Settlement Officer for Jabalpur and Seoni districts in the 1890s. Although he was acquainted with English, he felt more at home with his mother tongue, Urdu. As Settlement Officer he translated the Settlement Code into Urdu and wrote his Settlement Reports in that language.³ Aulad Hussain's son, Syed Ali Muhammad, after a college education at Agra, joined the Central Provinces provincial service. Along with Shanker, he became the first Indian to be appointed as a District Commissioner in the province.⁴

¹Bepin Krishna Bose, Stray Thoughts on Some Incidents in My Life (Madras: G. A. Natesan, 1923?).

²IFP, Judicial, July 1865, #5-11, "Murder of Meer Sabit Ali of Bijeragogarh;" and on the same subject, IFP, Judicial, September 1865, #19-20. Aulad Hussain also refers to this in his Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Jabalpur District (Nagpur: Secretariat Press, 1896), p. 5.

³Aulad Hussain, Madhya Pradeshika Bandobast Ain (Jabalpur: 1895).

⁴Nyaya Sudha, 23 March 1892, p. 108, and 28 May 1892, p. 185.

The Chitnavis, Bose and Hussain families represent upper-class Indian families who participated in the life and culture of the British community in varying degrees. Only a few other Central Provinces families attained similar positions which allowed them to bridge directly the worlds of the British community and Indian society.

Those in a position somewhat below these prominent families, were a larger number who were aware of the activities of the British community though they did not associate freely with Englishmen. They included lawyers, doctors, teachers, lower Indian officials, and newspaper editors. They expressed their opinions about the influences of the British presence especially in non-English newspapers. The Indian-language press developed rather late in the province, from the 1870s onward, and voiced the sentiments of this second segment of Indian society. Much of their criticism centered around the British community's feelings of superiority and ethnocentricity. These Indians felt excluded from almost all British policy-decisions and became offended and expressed their displeasure about the demeaning disregard and ignorance of the English about Indian customs, activities and every-day life. Their sentiments appeared in Indian-language newspapers from the 1870s to the 1890s.

One of the objections of this section of Indians was the superior position of Englishment. The discrepancy in salaries between British and Indian officers, who had served the same length of time, irritated Indians. Twice in the late 1880s newspapers called for the reduction of high salaries given English officers. They claimed that India was too poor to afford this luxury.¹ The Khandwa Subodh Sindhu hinted

¹Nyaya Sudha, 2 June 1886, p. 114-15; and Subodh Sindhu, 18 August 1886, p. 599.

that the British government's purpose in paying such high salaries was "to enrich its countrymen at the expense of the natives," and to pay such high salaries to Englishmen was "downright robbery." Contrary to one British Finance Committee's recommendations, the newspaper suggested that the number of English officials and the amounts paid them be reduced and the number of lower Indian officials increased.¹

The same section of Indians expressed their frustrations for being unable to influence British policy. Though they presented their opinions to the administration on British laws and policies, they received little recognition or consideration. During the controversy over the Ilbert Bill in 1883, the Nyaya Sudha reported that the Chief Commissioner of the province "did not consider it worth while to consult a single native."² Later in the same decade, when the land revenue and tenancy laws were under revision, the Legislative Council requested people to submit their opinions. Several individual Indians, different associations, and various newspapers offered their suggestions. But the opinions of "hundreds of men in the Central Provinces. . . were not taken into consideration by the Legislative Council."³ Another newspaper concluded that because of the utter disregard of public opinion, the "Legislative Council could be abolished without the least disadvantage,"⁴

¹Subodh Sindhu, 12 February 1889, pp. 105-06.

226 September, p. 810. ³Subodh Sindhu, 13 November 1889, p. 722.

⁴Nyaya Sudha, 13 November 1889, pp. 721-22. The same paper had earlier run a series of articles when the Tenancy Act was being formulated. Nyaya Sudha, 8 November 1882, pp. 764-67; 29 November, pp. 820-24; 6 December, pp. 849-50; and 13 December, pp. 868-72.

Another aspect of British administrators' activities which annoyed Indians was the British disrespect and disregard toward Indians of recognized status and position. It seemed to some Indians that Englishmen, whether deliberately or accidentally, treated Indians as inferiors. Examples of this type of treatment were reported by the Nyaya Sudha in 1887 on the occasion of a darbar (ceremonial meeting) in northern Central Provinces. The Chief Commissioner was to meet with the titled Indians (darbaris) of the Narbadda and Jabalpur Divisions at Jabalpur on the morning of February sixteenth. To begin with, the British administration had failed to maintain a proper list of darbaris in their order of precedence. Consequently some darbaris did not receive invitations, "while ordinary peasants were invited." When the darbaris finally arrived at the proper time (9:30 A.M.) "they found to their disgust" that the Chief Commissioner was still breakfasting with the District Commissioner; "they therefore had to stand in the sun for a long time." During the meeting they were not seated in the proper order of precedence, so "there was a great deal of ear-burning among the darbaris." No seating arrangements had been made at all for the four young Chhattisgarh princes who were students at Jabalpur's Rajkumari College.¹ On another occasion (1895) police kept high-ranking darbaris and zamindars from greeting the Chief Commissioner at the railway station on his arrival in Raipur.² At still another ceremony at Nagpur, the descendants of the pre-British ruling family, the Bhonsla Raja and his brother, "had to stand like other gentlemen,"³

¹Nyaya Sudha, 9 March 1887, p. 167.

²Subodh Sindhu, 31 January 1895, p. 59.

³Nyaya Sudha, 21 August, 1893, p. 340.

When the same Bhonsla Raja was insulted by an English ticket collector at the Nagpur railway station, the Nagpur Railway Gazette (English), rather than apologizing, called for a censure of the Raja's behavior. An Indian newspaper dolefully remarked, "There was a time when high European officers had to enter the Court of the Bhonsla rulers with great respect, and now a European boy and an ordinary editor are able to insult and abuse the descendant with perfect impunity." The newspaper ended with stoic consolation--"Such great changes are brought about by time."¹

Indian newspapers objected to the derogatory British treatment, not only of darbaris, but of others. At a sub-committee meeting of the Saugor Municipal Board, the only European present, J. May, threatened to beat a Brahmin clerk with his shoe (as leather is considered ritually polluting, this would be an extreme insult) if the clerk ever again forgot to remove his footwear upon entering the sub-committee room. The Indian editor remarked--the Brahmin clerk "is a very respectable gentlemen and able to give lessons in manners for years to Mr. May who is a lad hardly out of his teens,"² In 1895 Nagpur students were upset by the anti-Hindu remarks of a missionary. In Rev. Evan's speech at Hislop College, he "abused the principal Hindu gods to his heart's content." The students disapproved in a loud voice and showered abuses on him as he left. The newspaper complimented the students for their "praiseworthy moderation."³

¹Subodh Sindhu, 24 February 1892, p. 68.

²Nyaya Sudha, 17 July 1893, p. 290.

³Subodh Sindhu, 23 January 1895, p. 57.

At various times Indian newspapers also objected to British activities which used or exploited or misused Indians. One was the Westernized prostitution of Indian women for Englishmen. In 1874 the Jabalpur Samachar complained that the prostitution registration procedures were so lax and informal that they effected "virtuous women." Any woman, who was not living with a husband or for other reasons, could be brought before a lower court judge and registered as a prostitute. The editor personally visited the court and learned of cases where women's reputations were ruined on a simple, uninvestigated complaint.¹ In 1888, the Subodh Sindhu strongly condemned the orders, that they should ensure British soldiers were provided with a sufficient number of prostitutes.² The Mauj-i-Narbadda of January 1893 decried the conduct of a Hoshangabad official who employed one servant to procure women for him. It mildly suggested that the Chief Commissioner look into the matter.³

Mistreatment of Indians was noted in other circumstances, In 1892 English soldiers in Nagpur cruelly beat an old "Indian baker." Though the Nyaya Sudha asked that an example be made of the assailants, the soldiers received only six-weeks' imprisonment, without any fine or compensation to the hospitalized Indian.⁴ In 1873 the Jabalpur Samachar reported that the Hoshangabad District Superintendent of Police had gone hunting with two police constables. Both Indian assistants were attacked by a tiger; one died. The paper politely requested English officers not

¹Jabalpur Samachar, July and August 1874, pp. 415-18.

²23 May 1888, p. 343. ³8 January 1893, p. 37.

⁴10 August 1892, p. 298, and 21 September 1892, p. 358.

to employ public servants for private business, and in this case requested the English police officer to compensate the deceased's family.¹ A year later the same newspaper reported that the Civil Surgeon of Bhandara District, Dr. French, had tied an Indian to a tree on a hunting excursion "to serve as tiger bait." The man luckily freed himself before any harm came to him.² Finally, an English newspaper, the Pioneer, reported in 1891 that shooting accidents around Jabalpur had recently increased in number. Two persons had narrowly escaped serious injury, and a third was fatally wounded. The death had been caused when the District Commissioner accidentally shot the Indian.³ The English newspaper made no suggestion that the deceased's family should be compensated.

So, while an upper section of Indian society participated in the activities both of the British and Indian worlds, at least in a superficial way, another section existed on the fringe, almost entirely excluded from the British community. Though they worked in professions associated with British rule, this section was both highly envious and critical of British administrators and of their official and non-official activities and attitudes. They envied the position and power and pay of the British officials; often they tried to influence the direction of British policy by expressing their opinions about the revision of laws. They criticized the derogatory manner in which Englishmen acted and thought about Indians and Indian values. When Englishmen insulted, snubbed, harmed, or killed Indians, they

¹July 1873, pp. 463-64 ²1 April 1877, p. 173.

³Pioneer, 16 January 1891, p. 5

became defensive and even dared to instruct Englishmen how to correct their behavior and advised them on how to compensate Indians for those insults. This section of Indian professionals experienced the deep frustrations inherent in their existence on the fringe of the British colonial world. Their suggestions for policy changes, their publicity of unhealthy interactions between Englishmen and Indians, and their advice for correcting abuses fell on deaf ears. Only the exceptional Englishman read (or could read), subscribed to, or paid serious attention to local Indian language newspapers, and few skimmed through the confidential translations of selections from those papers that the Government collected for their information. Rather than attending to the mild criticisms and advice of Indians, English administrators concentrated on the Indian activities and attitudes which displayed support for the world of the British community,

There were periodic occasions when Indians publicly participated in and seemed caught up in the British world. One example was when India celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign, in June 1897.

During the Diamond Jubilee observance of Queen Victoria's rule as Empress of India, Englishmen were joined by Indians to celebrate British rule in India. This occasion differed in several ways from the Silver Jubilee festivities of a decade earlier,¹ Instead of being sponsored and managed by the provincial administration, non-administrative organizations and individuals were encouraged to plan the activities. The

¹See the reports in the Indian press in SVN of 1887.

actual celebrations were greatly effected by two conditions that prevailed at the time: the province was suffering from its worst famine of several decades, and the monsoon rains, when they did come, fell intermittently during the days of the celebration in late June.

Most of the festive activity was concentrated at the four Divisional headquarters. At Nagpur, both a Divisional headquarters and the provincial capital, a public meeting at the Town Hall launched the celebrations. In spite of heavy rain, the building was "literally packed" with a representative assembly of the population. Speeches were read, loyal hymns sung, and the Manager of the Empress Mills, Benzonji Mehta, closed the proceedings by leading the assembly in "three hearty cheers for the Queen-Empress."¹ The Divisional Commissioner announced his gratitude at "such a spontaneous demonstration of loyalty," and felt the affair had been "carried off with much éclat."² Several prominent Indians held receptions at their homes; even "many of the European Community" attended. G. M. Chitnavis and other Indians arranged for the poor to be fed in the city and in the Sitabaldi area. In the European Civil Station area all the poor Christians of several denominations, including some non-Europeans, were fed, entertained by acrobats, jugglers, a band, and fireworks, and given a packet of tea as a memento. The "middle class community" (probably Anglo-Indians)

¹District Commissioner, E. R. K. Blenkinsop, to Commissioner of Nagpur Division, 5 July 1897, CPHP, November 1897, General #23.

²W. A. Nedham to Chief Commissioner, 17 July 1897, Ibid. These official comments on the celebrations seem tinged with exaggeration, e.g. "representative body," "spontaneous demonstration."

collected a subscription which provided tea and sports for the children and a dance for the adults. By these arrangements, the Commissioner felt, the main object of the celebration had been accomplished-- "no class of the community [had been] neglected or omitted from the public rejoicing."¹ In addition 205 prisoners were released from the Nagpur Central Jail.

However, one activity proved a failure. Originally the Nagpur Municipal Committee had selected members of a provincial delegation to personally present an address of congratulations and loyalty to the Viceroy at Simla. In the end, each one of the delegates excused himself, "for different reasons, principally illness."²

Raipur was the headquarters of the most isolated Division, Chhattisgarh, in eastern Central Provinces. The population there evidently had not yet developed the clear class distinctions which the Nagpur Commissioner had observed. Yet the festive activities continued for three whole days, the longest period for any of the Divisional Headquarters. During that time, public offices were closed, and the laborers on the town's famine relief works were given three days' wages and told to go home.³ The celebrations began on the morning of the twentieth of June at the Town Hall, where school children performed physical drills and sang the National Anthem--first in English by the Mission School boys, then in Hindi by others, and finally in Urdu by

¹Ibid.

²Central Provinces to Government of India, 1 November 1897, Ibid.

³Commissioner A. D. Younghusband, to Chief Commissioner, 10 September 1897, Ibid.

the Urdu Branch School children. Most of the students received sweets and some were awarded cloth which had been woven by famine-distressed weavers. Next the City Girls' School was visited. More sweets and cloth were distributed and the National Anthem again sung. Finally sweets were distributed to the paupers in the poorhouse and to the inmates of the leper asylum and the orphanage ward. In the afternoon about three thousand of the town poor (or more than one-tenth of the town's 1901 population) were fed a free dinner, "consisting of a mess of rice and pulse mixed." The morning of the twenty-first opened with activities to reclaim Lendi tank. It was converted "into a people's park" to be known as "the Victoria Diamond Jubilee Commemoration Park." Sixty trees were planted and a fountain declared open with a speech by a prominent local lawyer, Hari Singh Gour. The second Madras Infantry conducted regimental sports on the parade ground that afternoon. In the evening the Commissioner entertained European residents with a dinner followed by fireworks and illuminations. Unfortunately the illuminations "did not come off well owing to the wind." On the twenty-second the police and office servants held sports events near the Commissioner's Court House. The District Commissioner reported that the activities of "these days were characterized by cheerfulness and loyalty."

The town of Jabalpur, headquarters of the northern-most Division of the province, celebrated the Jubilee on the twenty-first and twenty-second of June. Unlike Nagpur with its class distinctions or Raipur with its government-subsidized participants of students, poor, military, and police, the celebration at Jabalpur was organized along

religious lines. Although there was an overall Jubilee Committee, the Hitkarini Sabha, the Anjuman Islamia, and the Oriental Club all had separate committees and activities. The membership of these associations was almost exclusively Hindu, Muslim, and British respectively. As a result of the general meeting a month before the celebrations, fifteen hundred rupees were pledged in subscriptions. The money fed two thousand paupers with puris and sweetmeats on the twenty-first of June at Raja Gokuldas' garden. Of it, Rs. 253 was used to purchase a special silver casket to contain an engrossed and printed congratulatory address to be presented to the Viceroy at Simla. Raja Gokuldas, the most prominent landlord and business man of the town led the Simla delegation.¹ Also, on the twenty-first the Oriental Club held a morning thanksgiving service with speeches of praise for Her Majesty and an evening musical service. The following morning the Hitkarini Sabha met "to give expression of their joy on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee." It was well attended in spite of bad weather. Speeches were made, Hindi poems read, and three pundits "dilated one after the other upon the virtuous and noble life led by the Empress," The meeting closed with three cheers of "Maharani Victoria ki jai."²

The Anjuman Islamia also met the same morning at their High School Hall. The Hall and courtyard were decorated with garlands and flags "in regular order like brave and faithful soldiers." The ceremony

¹Although the delegation included another Indian and a European it was hardly representative. Ballabhdas, the other Indian, was Gokuldas' nephew and Mr. Wright was manager of Gokuldas' cotton mills at Jabalpur.

²President, Hitkarini Sabha, Jabalpur, to District Commissioner, 7 July 1897, Ibid.

included a "long and fervent speech" by Maulvi Saiyid Ali Ahmad Khan, an original Arabic poem by professor Abdul Jabar, and Persian and Urdu poems by the teacher Muhib Khan and the student Abdul Kadir. In conclusion a prayer was offered for Her Majesty's long life. Five thousand of the city's poor "were fed sumptuously," as Muslims received bread and meat and Hindus khichree and ghee. Fireworks were planned at the Anjuman Islamia school in the evening, but rain postponed them until the evening of June twenty-fifth, when "one hundred and one bombs were fired in salute."¹ Like Nagpur, the Jabalpur celebration included the release of prisoners, in this case two hundred and twenty-seven.²

Hoshangabad was the seat of the fourth Division. The district's celebrations were unique in that in no other District had so many towns--five in all--celebrated the festival. Besides the headquarters town of Hoshangabad, Seoni-Malwa, Sohagpur, Harda and Pachmarhi all celebrated the Sixteenth Year of Queen Victoria's reign. In Hoshangabad, on the morning of the twenty-second "all classes of the community" gathered at the Government High School to present "eulogistic" speeches in English, Hindi and Urdu, on Her Majesty's reign. "All classes" included "Hindus, Muhammadans, Gonds, Korkus, and Native Christians,"³ In addition the students were "urged to be loyal to the Queen and never to mix in politics." Following the meeting about two thousand poor people were fed from a subscription fund. Two hundred thirty-four prisoners received remissions. Other towns also held celebrations.

¹President, Anjuman Islamia, Jabalpur, to District Commissioner, 3 July 1897, Ibid.

²B. Robertson, District Commissioner, Jabalpur, to Commissioner, 12 July 1897, Ibid.

³H. A. Crump, District Commissioner, Hoshangabad, to Commissioner of the Narbadda Division, 30 July 1897, Ibid.

At Harda three thousand poor were fed; Europeans and Indians joined in sports followed by a nautch (Indian popular dance presentation); the Police and Volunteers paraded, and a commemoration service was held at the church. At Pachmarhi a commemorative church service was held on the twentieth of June, attended by the Chief Commissioner and most of the English community. In the evening the Chief Commissioner gave a State dinner; and subsequently, money was raised by a subscription to purchase food for the poor. Unfortunately, in Hoshangabad district "the inclemency of weather" destroyed illuminations everywhere.

These celebrations of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign in 1897 formed one of the high points of British colonialism in the province. The variety of activities and organizations involved in the celebrations provides a capsule glimpse of British-Indian society in the province at this special occasion when relations between the British community and the Indian population was perhaps the most extensive and convivial ever during colonial rule. Reports on the celebration noted both the similarities and differences evident in the different Districts. Nagpur had its "classes," Raipur its officially subsidized or supported groups, Jabalpur its ethno-religious associations, and Hoshangabad its five separate festive centers. All followed some similar patterns. In all there were both general and special group meetings, where loyal speeches were made, the national anthem sung, and the Queen cheered. In addition, prisoners were freed in the Queen's name, the poor entertained and fed, sports events held, and fireworks illuminated, where the monsoon cooperated. The focus of attention was

the Queen-Empress, honored with such high esteem and at such a distance by the Indian participants that she almost seemed to acquire an abstract, ideal and quasi-religious quality. Indeed many of the activities were reminiscent of Indian religious festivals with pious offerings of words, money, sweets, and food for the deity. It is hard, thus, to know exactly how the Indian participants perceived the celebration--as a symbolic affirmation of British rule, or just one more Indian festival among others. The failure of the Nagpur delegates to go to Simla, and the unrepresentative character of the Jabalpur delegates who did go, does not altogether lend support to the British official opinions that it was a spontaneous occasion, or that it was an all-inclusive, enthusiastic demonstration of loyalty to the distant Crown.

Even during the Jubilee celebrations, the activities tended to reiterate rather than dispel the impression of a separation of the British community from the rest of the population. At each town the British community held exclusive gatherings--at Nagpur in the Civil Station area, at Raipur with the commissioner's private evening dinner, at Jabalpur with the Oriental Club's thanksgiving and musical services, and at Pachmarhi with the Chief Commissioner presiding over European activities. Throughout these celebrations, which symbolically celebrated the ties between India and England, the English retreated for some activities into their social and cultural world apart from Indians. Perhaps it is not surprising that the Nagpur delegation may have lacked some enthusiasm, or that the recipients of sweets and food may not have fully understood who was the distant and abstract Empress of India. To many Indians the Diamond Jubilee celebration may not

have appeared a very appropriate time for praising British rule, nor a very jubilant occasion in the lives of those who were literally dying during the wide-spread famine that coincided with the celebration.

However, the Diamond Jubilee did represent an unusual event in the interaction between the British and Indian worlds of the province. For two or three days, more Indians than ever before were momentarily drawn into association with the British world. Normally few Indians were more than remotely conscious of or had more than official contact with the British community. Only a few prominent Indian families such as the Chitnavises and Boses succeeded in developing closer associations with the British world. The fringe section of Indian professionals were not really included in the British world. They were conscious and critical of the effects of the British presence, but largely ineffective in participating or influencing the activities of the British community or the administration. The rest of the population rarely came into contact with or were offered more than a distant glimpse into the life of the British community within their own country. Momentarily the Diamond Jubilee celebration offered an occasion which gathered together participants from prominent Indian families, professionals, officially supported groups, the lower section of the urban population, and the British community to commemorate British colonialism. Still the British community remained primarily within the walls of its own world.

The survey of these decades has drawn attention to a number of important developments and interactions. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries a small but active British community

was created, developed, and maintained in the Central Provinces, It was homogeneous in character, consisting mostly of British officials and their families, and it modeled its social and cultural behavior on the examples of other British communities in India and England. Though the British community was small in numbers and dispersed to over eighteen different district centers, its members developed a "family tradition" which ensured close communication and periodic meetings. Small enclaves of English life were found in a number of settings: in the larger towns, in district headquarters, and even while on tour. Members of the British community lived physically apart from the Indian population, pursued typical British recreational activities, and maintained domestic habits of English clothes and food as much as possible.

One of the main reasons for the limited social and cultural interaction between the English and the Indians was the character of this British community. Rather than taking clues and models for social behavior from Indians in the Indian setting, members of the British community looked outside and beyond the province. Most Indians were excluded from the British community. Consequently there was little, and sometimes no direct contact or opportunity to interact between the two communities.

With the arrival of the British administrators to the Central Provinces in the 1860s, still another world of activity was added to the already diverse Indian setting. Though these worlds were adjacent in time and geography, there was little interaction. A few Indians gradually adapted English dress, language, recreational activities,

and even religion. But there were few if any English who took on equivalent and corresponding Indian aspects of behavior or thought. The underlying reasons for this are several, and would emphasize the position of British administrators as foreign colonial rulers, most of whom grew up, furloughed, and retired in England, after spending their working years in India. As administrators in India, their status, pay, and position was determined by an English colonial system. They lived independent of Indians and of the local social structure and economic conditions. In their British enclaves they were Englishmen in India but not of India. As this chapter shows, a primary goal of British administrators was to re-create an English way of life at the exclusion of Indian influences as much as possible. Only a small section of Indians were able to penetrate into the periphery of the British world while most Indians felt excluded from all but official contact with the colonial community.

PART II. THE BRITISH COLONIAL SYSTEM

CHAPTER IV

BRITISH COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION:

INTRODUCTION AND EDUCATION

From the beginning of the creation of the Central Provinces in 1861 it was the goal of the British administration to construct a governmental system providing for the improvement and development of the area. The Government of India Resolution establishing the Central Provinces noted that the previous forms of administration - of the Saugor and Narbadda Territories under the control of the North-Western Provinces, and a separate Province of Nagpur - did "not present that unity, completeness and efficiency which are requisite in order that justice may be done to the condition and prospects of Territories so largely capable of improvement." Therefore the Government intended to create a new provincial administration encompassing those two areas which would provide the new province "with the greatest advantage to the management of the resources and to the development of the capabilities of the whole area."¹ Part II examines the activities of the British provincial government to develop the Central Provinces during the six decades from 1861 to 1921.

Though the Government resolution creating the Central Provinces en-

¹Government of India. Resolution, 2 November 1861, in Memorandum and Resolution on the Amalgamation of the Saugor and Narbadda Territories with the Provinces of Nagpur (1861; reprint ed., Nagpur: 1922).

visioned the use of government institutions to promote development, very few departments dealt with the improvement of the province. Rather they concentrated primarily on law, order, and taxation; only secondarily on providing rudimentary social services; and least of all on economic development. With the imposition of a provincial government most of the procedures of British rule which were designed to consolidate their position in India were brought to the Central Provinces. The wholesale importation of these procedures meant that there was little imaginative attempt to revise the form of provincial administration into what was needed to fit the particular character of middle India, or to meet the specific needs of its economic development.

Raghaven Iyer suggests that there were four dominant imperialistic themes or theories of Government that inspired the British administration and justified their ideas and policies: trusteeship, guardianship, utilitarianism, and evangelism.¹ All were animated by a mixture of paternalism and laissez-faire. On the one hand, British administrators sought to teach and lead Indians in ways to improve their condition in British terms; on the other hand they sought to provide institutions which would free Indians to develop in their own chosen ways. Administrators formed policy based on this mixture of enlightened Western despotism and non-interference. Prevailing attitudes of Victorian idealism and optimism often clouded over inherent contradictions of British policy.

One task of the new government was to form policies based on current governmental theories. The effective implementation of these policies was quite a separate and more difficult activity. The hierarchical

¹Raghavan N. Iyer, South Asian Affairs, No. 1 (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois Press, 1960).

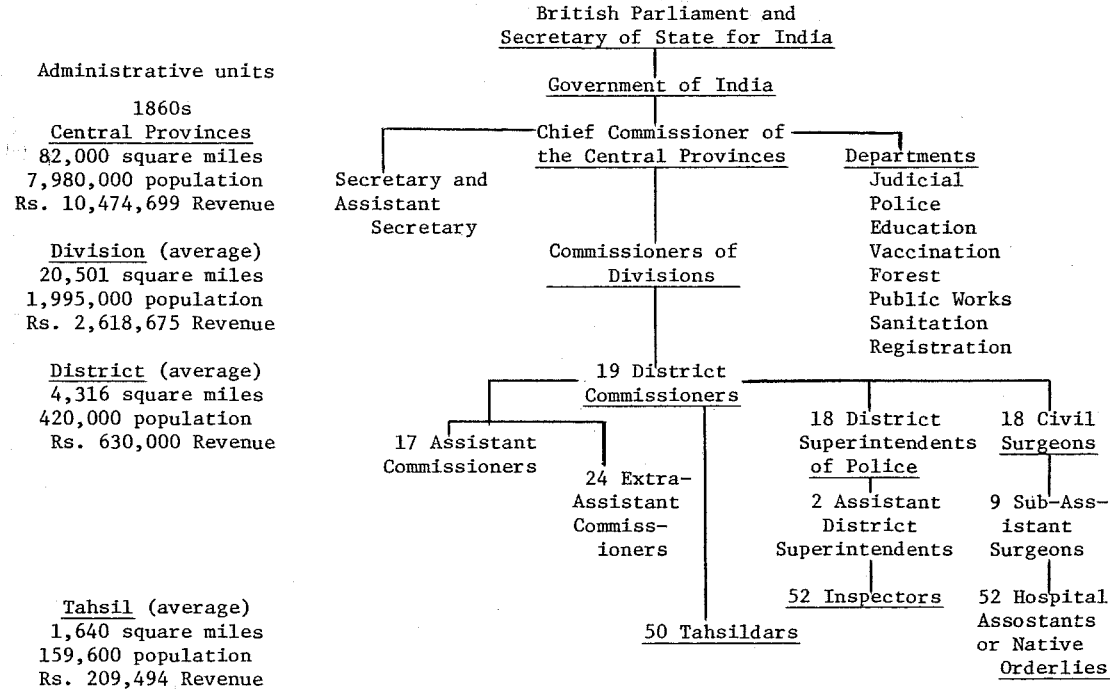
structure of provincial government imported and superimposed on the Central Provinces tended to divide the policy-making from the implementation functions of administration at the district level. British administrators above the district level debated, decided and finalized provincial policy. British administrators at the district level and below attempted to implement these policies through Indian officials. The division of governmental functions at the district level involving higher and lower levels of administrators tended to create two separate worlds. Those British administrators at the higher levels usually based their policies on English theories with only occasional and superficial reference to empirical information about Indian society and with only rare consideration of Indian opinion. Under the supervision of lower-level British administrators, the Indian officials sought to implement that policy in the context of local Indian society.

The tendencies of the British to segregate policy from implementation and to disassociate British administrators from Indian officials, isolated the higher levels of administration and local society. British provincial administration lacked the ability to penetrate into the lives of a majority of the population in the Central Province and therefore had a minimal affect on them. The Indians whom the British administrators influenced most were those connected with the provincial administration either as part of administration or involved in its institutions. They mainly consisted of lower officials, educators and students, the urban population, and taxpayers, in particular those designated as landlords to pay the land revenue.

This Part II examines the Central Provinces administration and its

FIGURE 1

STRUCTURE OF ADMINISTRATION



SOURCE: Central Provinces Gazetteer (1870), pp. cxxxviii-cxli.

interaction with Indian society during six decades from 1861 to 1921. The analytical framework makes three distinctions. The first is between policy and implementation, that is between goals, ideas, and the intentions of British administrators, and the achievements and results of British rule. The second is between two levels, an upper provincial level and a lower district level of administration and the majority of Indians only partially affected by British administration but mainly affected by other events and changes. The third is between the two types of departments. Social service departments include education, health, and local government such as municipal committees and district councils. Consolidative departments consist of judicial, police, and taxation. Thus Part II examines two types of administration activity and its interaction with changes occurring within Indian society. The changes in Indian society consists first of educational changes, political evolution, and population growth; and second, land policy and taxation, and agrarian relations. Judicial and police activities are not examined separately.

As the first Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces from 1861 to 1866, Richard Temple formulated the structure of the provincial administration. His first annual report on the administration of the province contains a wealth of information and impressions.¹ He expressed both a concern for the everyday establishment and management of the administration and a vision for the future development of the area. The judicial, police, and taxation systems needed to be organized; substantial begin-

¹Central Provinces, Ad. Report, 1861-62.

nings had to made in education, health services, local government; and plans had to made for other improvements. Temple estimated that the total provincial revenue from all sources was just over Rs. 8 million. Of this, about Rs. 3.25 million, or a little less than 40 percent consisted of expenses for the civilian government. Rs. 1.1 million, or 13 percent was paid as pensions and subsidies to recently deposed Indian rulers of the Central provinces. Rs. 2.9 million or over 33 percent went for the military. The remainder, somewhat more than Rs. 1 million or about 12 percent, was for "material improvements," mainly public works. The accompanying table lists the expenditures of the civilian administration under Temple.

In addition to detailing his reorganization of the administration, Temple stressed the importance of other measures for the improvement of the province. He suggested that the payment of land tax (about 64 percent of all taxes) by landlords of the cultivated parts of the province should be made permanent and unalterable. He was confident that if the central Indian government would except this principal of land taxation, it would stimulate the "industry, enterprise, and self-reliance of the agriculturalist, the application of capital, and the accumulation of wealth."¹ He also investigated the possibility of attracting European colonists to settle unoccupied lands of the province, confident that with "European capital and enterprise, it may be possible for the axe and plough to invade the ancient domain of the Forest and Prairie."² Such European

¹Ibid., p. 42.

²Ibid., p. 91.

colonization in the Central Provinces, he regarded, as the "hope of the future." Temple also made a preliminary assessment of the forest and mineral wealth of the province,¹ and placed emphasis on the improvement of communications and transportation. He wanted to put the postal and electric telegraphic communications on a sound footing (frail and rotting posts constantly interrupted service in the rainy season) and he had plans to improve the roads. He gave encouragement to private companies to build an extensive railway system across the province.² His administrative reorganization was to be implemented within a couple of years while his plans for the development of the province would take several years.

During the five year period (1868-1872) after Temple's administration, the annual income of the provincial administration averaged over Rs. 8.5 million, while expenditure within the province rose to over Rs. 4.5 million.³

The table showing provincial expenditures for various departments and activities indicates that the primary role of government was to promote law and order. The judicial and police activities including expenditure for salaries and office supplies always exceeded 50 percent of provincial funds. Social services expenditures for education and health never averaged as much as 17 percent. Expenditures for public works averaged 17 percent during the first three decades but were increased during the famine-troubled 1890's and 1900's to around 33 percent.

¹Ibid., chapter 13, sections 3-4.

²Ibid., chapter 5, sections 3-4, and chapters 6-7.

³Joseph Bampfylde Fuller, Review of the Progress of the Central Provinces during the Past Thirty Years and of the Present and Past Condition of the People (Nagpur: Secretariat Press, 1892), pp. 20, 25.

TABLE 7

CENTRAL PROVINCES ADMINISTRATION, EXPENDITURE AND INCOME
(Money in thousands of rupees, annual averages)

	1868-69 to 1890-91		1890 to 1900		1902 and 1904	
	Amount	Percent	Amount	Percent	Amount	Percent
<u>Expenditure</u>						
General						
Administration	749.6	16	458	8	554.5	8.0
Judicial	730.8	16	1,454	25	1,576.0	22.5
Police	1,285.2	28	1,429	25	1,497.0	21.5
Jails	480.7	10	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .
sub-total	3,246.3	70	3,341	58	3,627.5	52.0
Education	462.0	10	368	6	433.5	6.2
Medical	215.4	5	331	6	364.5	5.2
sub-total	677.4	15	699	12	798.0	11.4
Public Works	702.2	15	1,622	28	2,401.5	34.4
Other						
Expenditures	. . .	. . .	87	2	150.5	2.2
Sub-total, all	. . .	. . .	5,749	100	6,977.5	100.0
Miscellaneous	. . .	. . .	2,612	. . .	3,947.0	. . .
Total	4,625.9	100	8,289	. . .	10,924.5	. . .
<u>Income</u>						
Land Revenue	6,112.4	64	6,969	47	8,535.5	51.0
Excise	1,728.4	18	2,401	16	2,255.5	14.0
Stamps	1,016.9	11	1,629	11	1,504.5	9.0
Assessed Tax	302.9	3	480	3	361.0	2.0
Cesses or Pro- vincial Rates	336.2	4	1,021	7	1,347.0	8.0
Forest	. . .	. . .	1,031		1,253.5	
Registration	. . .	. . .	116	15	91.5	16.0
Other	. . .	. . .	1,090		1,406.0	
Total	9,496.8	100	14,737	100	16,754.5	100.0

SOURCES: Fuller, Progress, pp. 20-24; and Imperial Gazetteer: Central Provinces (1908), pp. 120-21.

*Includes for 1890-1900 such items as Charges for tax collection 1,750 thousand, Pensions--508 thousand, Famine--15 thousand, etc.

Though the general division of administrative expenditure changed little, the activities of government shifted gradually during the six decades of provincial administration under review. Temple's energetic administration in the 1860's saw the foundation of a provincial bureaucracy which exhibited many features similar to other Indian provincial administrations. But even by 1868 Henry Morris (Temple's successor) noted a shift. Rather than Temple's activities of "initiation," Morris emphasized "consolidation and development,"¹ and his long term as Chief Commissioner until the early 1880's was largely characterized by an effort to continue the structure of the Temple administration and to sit back and examine its affects on the province. As a result of this examination, several substantial places of legislation were formulated and passed in the decade of the 1880's. The last three decades until 1920 were used to amend that legislation and to revise administrative activity, mainly to deal with the economic problems which the famines of the 1890's had first revealed.

Other broad shifts in the character of the administration occurred during thsoe six decades. Until the middle of the 1880's the Chief Commissionership was held mostly by administrators who had previously served in some capacity in the province. Between then and 1907 many of these Chief Commissioners came from other provinces. The period was characterized by rapid turnovers. Terms were often only two or three years, compared to Morris' thirteen years. Those who served in the Central Province included Alexander MacKenzie, Anthony MacDonnel, John

¹C. P., Ad. Rept. 1867-68, p. iv.

Woodburn, Charles Lyall, Denzil Ibbertson, John Hewett, Frederic Lely, and John Miller. During these years the subordinate staff of the province provided the only continuity. Frequent changes among these "outsider" Chief Commissioners often resulted in divergent views. One Chief Commissioner said of his predecessor, he "did not understand the question" of land revenue settlement and "let himself be betrayed into raising the . . . rent too high;" he was obstinate in making the amendments.¹ None of these Chief Commissioners of the middle period had been in charge of another province in India before; but subsequently, making use of their training in the Central Provinces, they advanced to the top positions of other provinces.

This importation of "outsiders" led to a gradual shift in the character of the administration. From the 1880's onward, the administration's policies and problems were viewed more in the broader context of the British Indian Empire. The relative isolation of the provinces was less noticable, and its peculiar administrative procedures and concerns became more standardized and general. This was especially so in the late decades of the period under review when investigative commissions frequently toured India, and concerns arose and legislation was formulated in connection with such matters as irrigation, rural debt, cooperative societies, and land transfers.

There were then two recognizable periods during these six decades of administration. Roughly the first half was a period of inauguration and consolidation of British provincial administration, while the second half was a period of revision and standardization in the light both of

¹Anthony MacDonnell, letter, 6 April 1891, MacDonnell papers, pp. 40, 43.

local economic events and all-India influence.

Education

From the beginning of the Central Provinces administration in 1861 social services received far less priority than other departments such as law and order. Policies and programs for education, health and local government were highly colored by and based mostly on English ideas and institutions. The purposes and structure of education as introduced closely followed British school models. So also with respect to health programs; British administrators promoted ideas and practices of contemporary Western medicine, while Hindu, Muslim, and other local practices and their doctors were disregarded. Local government suffered a similar treatment. The British made a little attempt to collect information about pre-British local governmental institutions or lend support to them. Instead, they established Municipal Committees, District Councils, and eventually a Provincial Council. These essentially British civil institutions were usually expected to be financially self-supporting and this severely limited their effectiveness. During the six decades from 1861 to 1921 these social and local government institutions had checkered history, being alternately promoted and ignored as personnel in the provincial administration changed. As a result they affected the lives of only a small upper segment of the provincial population. This section examines the first of these three social service institutions—education.

In the 1880's the British made an assessment of education in the Central Provinces and considered the situation far from satisfactory. One report states that they found the people "thoroughly uneducated

In no part of British India can there be found a population lower or darker in this respect." There were no places of Indian learning, "no educated youths anywhere."¹ In the southern part of the province, for example, there were few educated Maratha Brahmins to fill government offices, so Indians were drawn from other provinces and these were considered "foreigners" during these early years. One of the assessments about education indicates the British were beginning to form an education policy which distinguished between different social classes.

Among the great agricultural community the complete preservation of the upper and middle classes is, perhaps, a happy circumstance. They are, indeed, rude and uneducated, but they exist and maintain their relative position. In all districts there is a middle class, a degree below the upper class, but clearly above the mass of the rustic people. If this middle class can be gradually enlightened and civilized, it will serve as a lever to lift up the mass of the people from the slough of ignorance and apathy.²

These British assessments reflect three implications which had significance for the future of education in the Central Provinces. First, educational efforts were to be directed mainly toward the agricultural "middle class," whom the British recorded as the village landlords or malguzars. Second, it was assumed an educated middle class would raise the lower classes from their uneducated state. Third, it was intended that at least some of the newly educated Indians, especially the Maratha Brahmins, would fill subordinate administrative posts.

Efforts to encourage education in the Central Provinces waxed and waned over the six decades. Already in the early 1860's an education department had been established with its inspectors, a few government

¹C. P., Ad. Rept. (in the 1860's), quoted in H.R. Crosthwaite, Co-operation: Comparative Studies and the Central Provinces System (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink, and Company, 1916), pp. 23-24.

²Ibid.

schools and many aided schools. Chief Commissioner Richard Temple supported education declaring that "Commissioners, the Deputy Commissioners and their Assistants are as much responsible for the various Government schools, great and small in their charge, as they are for the Courts, the Jails, the Dispensaries and the District roads."¹ There was an initial period of expansion. During the first decade (from 1862-1872) the number of all schools increased from 1210 to 1778, while the students quadrupled from 21,327 to 82,930.² Many local British officials made extraordinary efforts to promote education in the late 1860's and early 1870's. Under the persuasion of district officers some Indians opened private schools. When, later in the 1870's, education began to decline, these same Indians refused to maintain their schools "except under compulsion." In that decade (1870's) educational institutions declined by 213 to 1565, while the number of students rose very slowly, from 82,930 to 89,506.³ One explanation for this lack of continual growth was said to be compulsive policy of the government.

In the early 1870's a student in the Central Provinces wrote an essay for a competitive scholarship on aspects of these compulsive methods. He complained that British officials severely "oppressed" and punished parents of truant students. Such parents had to meet the British officer at his pleasure, receive admonition, and sometimes sign an agreement to

¹Central Provinces, Report on Education in the Central Provinces from the Annexation of the Saugor and Narbadda Territories to the close of 1881-82 (Nagpur: Chief Commissioner's Press 1882), p. 3.

²Fuller, Progress, p. 26.

³C. P., Report on Education (1882), p. 12.

TABLE 8

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND LITERACY
IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES AND
HOSHANGABAD DISTRICT

Central Provinces						
Year	Number of Schools Students		Year	Number of Schools Students		Literacy (for males ten years and over, per mille)
1862	1,210	21,327	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .
1872	1,778	82,930	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .
1882	1,565	89,506	1880-81	1,437	79,533	51
1892	1,909	114,157	1890-91	1,845	111,489	64
. . .	. . .	. . .	1901-02	2,563	142,720	83
. . .	. . .	. . .	1911	. . .	. . .	86
. . .	. . .	. . .	1921	. . .	. . .	103
. . .	. . .	. . .	1931	. . .	. . .	122

Hoshangabad District

Year	Literacy (Percent of population)	Year	Number of Schools Students		Total education funds, thousands of rupees
. . .	. . .	1870-71	122	1,883	. . .
1880-81	2.8	1880-81	85	2,576	. . .
1890-01	3.8	1890-91	104	4,061	
		1890-1900	135	5,132	40.6
1901-02	4.6	1901-02	147	5,020	
		1901-10	162	7,105	98.7
. . .	. . .	1911-20	185	8,886	160.2
1921	6.9	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .

SOURCES: Fuller, Progress, p. 26; Central Provinces Gazetteer (1908), p. 126; Census of 1931, pp. 291-92; Hoshangabad District Gazetteer, Vol. A (1907),; and Hoshangabad District Gazetteer, Vol. B (1927), pp. 130-33.

send their children to school. The student wrote that parents would "at last send their children to school regularly . . . when they suffered all such hardships, viz, that of being detained without purpose for several days together at the house or in the Court of the District Commissioner, and of paying the . . . fees of the peons, the value of the stamp paper, and the fees of the writer."¹ The student suggested that some district officers,

with a view to gain name, spare no means to collect as many boys as they can, without the least consideration of the harm arising therefrom. They rather seem to think that, unless the ignorant people were punished to a certain extent, they would always object to attend to education.²

In a reply required by the Government of India to these and other charges of "oppression used in the Central Provinces to fill Zillah schools," the Chief Commissioner did not directly deny any of the charges, nor make a "useless inquiry of the British officers" to ask if they had "been guilty of putting improper pressure on the people . . . and of misusing their authority."³ Rather he relied on his own personal knowledge and stated that in 1869 the Chief Commissioner had explained to district officers "that though they should use all their endeavours and all their official influence to get parents to send their children to school, no harsh measures would be tolerated." The Chief Commissioner suggested that touring District Commissioners probably did admonish parents of truant children and expressed his opinion that "if Government shows no interest in education and does not push the people, they cannot be expected of

¹IHP, October 1872, p. 492.

²Ibid.

³CPHP, December 1872. #1, pp. 1-3.

themselves to appreciate a boon" (education), and he felt that in India as among similar people in Europe, education was "held but in light estimation by the lower classes" when they were "not being subjected to compulsory instruction."

Although the Chief Commissioner did not openly denounce these compulsive methods, criticism leveled against it did seem to influence policy. In 1875 the Chief Commissioner ordered that local British officers should encourage education less through their executive assistants (tahsildars) and more through the education department's Indian inspectors.¹ This carried some negative results for by transferring the matter from executive to departmental officers, it left it to officers who had less status and authority. It was at this time that the rapid development during the 1860's slowed down and this decline continued until it reached stagnation in the late 1870's. Stagnation in education continued during this middle period until about 1905. It was during this period that there were a number of short-term Chief Commissioners, many of whom had had no previous knowledge of the province.

The slow progress of education during the last part of the nineteenth century led to disillusionment among British officials. In Fuller's review of the first three decades of provincial administration, he admitted that "Public education in its true sense has indeed hardly begun."² Five years earlier the head of the Central Provinces Education Department, in a review of the discipline and moral training in the

¹CPHP, February 1875, Education, #6.

²Fuller, Progress, p. 26.

schools and colleges of the Central Provinces, commented that as only twelve out of 100 school-going age boys were in the school system, "so far as morality is concerned, our schools affect but little the mass of the population." He also felt that though schools and colleges of the Central Provinces had been modelled after the English system, the results could not be compared. "British colleges are a growth, not a creation. Indian colleges and high schools are not a growth but an alien graft." Sons of gentlemen in England went to college "from fashion, or from the desire of learning." In India they hoped "merely to obtain employment under government." The 110 college students in the Central Provinces were not the equivalent of "gentlemen" in the colleges of England. Only five of the parents had an annual income of over Rs. 5000, while at least a third had annual incomes of less than Rs. 200.¹ The Chief Commissioner in 1890 (MacKenzie) did not seem to encourage education in his annual review. He complained that the Nagpur Municipal Committee lavished funds on higher education, "while the town wants drainage."²

The stagnation in education and disillusionment about it continued during the last of the 1800's when famines partially disrupted education efforts. Then by 1905 there were evidences of change. A "great and spontaneous increase had set in" so that the number of students increased from 1902 to 1912 "from 153 thousand to 300 thousand."³ This progress was

¹C. Browning, Inspector-General of Education, Central Provinces, to Chief Commissioner, 12 April 1888, IOR, RGOI, #264-268, pp. 185-86.

²CPHP, August 1890, #20, Report on Education for 1889-90, p. 67. He also felt the Morris College arts program was "a superfluity in Nagpur," and wanted more funds "devoted to Technical education."

³Low, Memorandum on 1902-1912, p. 7.

attributed partly to the "new spirit" of social and political movements, partly as people gained "a greater appreciation of the benefits of education,"¹ partly from an attempt to revise educational methods, and partly from increased funds. One book which both reflected and encouraged a revision in the educational system was by Henry Sharp, Rural Schools in the Central Provinces.² Sharp wished to make education accessible to rural children. He suggested half-day attendance, and instruction in useful agricultural knowledge such as the forms and methods of village tax accountants (patwaris) and maney-lenders. He also stressed the need to provide traditional Indian gymnastic exercises (Deshi Kasrat).³ A large increase in funds was reported, as seen in the accompanying chart for Hosangabad. There in the 1890's the total annual funds averaged Rs. 40,553 and rose to Rs. 98,734 between 1901-1910. Primary education increased even more sharply in the same period, from Rs. 23,000 to Rs. 64,500. But while funds more than doubled, average annual student attendance increased by only 38 percent and schools by 20 percent.

During the six decades after the establishment of an education department in the Central Provinces, British methods and institutions of education became firmly established. Within this period education grew by fits and starts as British administrators varied widely in their formation of policy and in their support of its implementation. The first

¹Ibid., p. 1.

²Henry Sharp, Rural Schools in the Central Provinces (Calcutta: Government Printing, 1904).

³Ibid. Especially see his last chapter 14 and conclusion. For Deshi Kasrat exercises see pp. 87-88, 169-172.

fifteen years had been ones of extraordinary growth because British executive officers had used their influence and power to push forward education. Also, during the last fifteen years of the period, 1905-1920, more Indians sought education and educational funds showed increases annually. The near stagnation of the middle years, from the mid 1870's to 1905, may be attributed to British disillusionment, to rapid changes in administrators who had little knowledge of the province, and to adverse economic conditions, particularly the wide-spread famines. By 1921 only 10 percent of the population over ten years old and 5 percent of those over five years of age were literate. Such an advance from almost zero percent in 1860 appears extraordinary, but in fact it was discouraging, for more than 90 percent of the population still could not read or write. Only two out of the eight provinces in British India had lower literacy rates than the Central Provinces and Berar. Education of the masses or mass education, which in the 1890's had "hardly begun," had by the 1920's just barely begun.

The vacillating expansion of British-style education in the Central Provinces over six decades provided a small Indian elite with education, though British administrators had intended, in the early 1860's, for education to produce far greater direct and indirect changes among the population. As noted earlier, education was intended to achieve three objectives: first, to instruct an "agricultural middle class;" second, these in turn would serve as a "lever" to raise the lower classes; and third, to train some Indians (especially those classified as Maratha Brahmins) for subordinate administrative posts. The uneven effect of the slowly rising literacy can be shown by examining each of these three

"classes." The most immediate need was to train some Indians for subordinate administrative posts.

The intention to educate Maratha Brahmins as lower officials solved one difficulty but created others. In order to substitute Maratha Brahmins for the predominance of "north Indian" Kayasths, mainly in the Marathi speaking Nagpur Division, some Maratha Brahmins had to be imported from outside that area and they were referred to as "foreigners." The Judicial Commissioner objected to this replacement of north India "foreigners" with imported Marathi Brahmins as an unsatisfactory solution. But on a request from the Government of India, the Provincial administration examined the situation in the Nagpur Division closely, and defended its position by saying that it was politically expedient to have a predominantly Maratha lower bureaucracy to rule over a Maratha population, and to have Marathi as the court language. They also pointed out that only 13 percent of the Marathi officials in the Nagpur Division were imported "Deccani Brahmins," while 59 percent were "natives of Nagpur" and the remaining 24 percent were from "Hindustan." Only in the Education Department did "Deccani Brahmins" predominate (61 percent) and that was because there were not enough qualified local teachers so some had to be imported. The continued presence of so many "Hindustani Kayasths" for some time made it difficult to promote the Marathi language as the official language of the area. The change-over from Hindi or Urdu to Marathi took time and during this period of transition a strange mixed language emerged which consisted of Urdu grammar and vocabulary,

with some Marathi words, but written in Marathi (Modi) script.¹ By the early 1870's Maratha officials, both local and "foreigners" predominated, largely to the exclusion of Hindustani Kayasths, in the Nagpur Division and a purer Marathi had become the official language.

The education of local Maratha subordinate Indian officials continued to be a concern at least into the 1870's. Three times in that decade the Chief Commissioner issued circulars complaining that local officials were still hiring foreigners "of the Deccan and North-West Provinces," instead of educated Central Provinces Indians. The Chief Commissioner acknowledged that it had no doubt been necessary in the formative years of the administration to hire foreigners, since "few natives . . . were found fitted for government service." But as education had spread and the number of locally qualified Indians had increased, the Chief Commissioner pointed out it was of "great importance" to employ "as much as possible the natives of the country in its administration." (Central Provinces Proceedings, Home, January 1873, General, #3, p. 6. The circulars are dated January 10, 1873; March 4, 1874, #7; and March 26, 1877, #7). The Chief Commissioner observed that the imported "foreign" officials were "naturally anxious to surround themselves with men of their own race whom they . . . believe more capable," and could trust, but he hoped his instructions "would be observed in the future." He directly criticized the Education Department, since it was from that department that most of the "foreigners" had been transferred to other departments.²

¹IFP, Judicial, December 1863, #67; and Ibid., September 1863, #21-22.

²CPHP, March 1877, General #22, pp. 44-45.

Following the employment of "foreigners" as officials did not remain a major concern of the Provincial administration, and it appears that the instructions of the Chief Commissioner were finally implemented; local Marathis were educated for various posts so that it was no longer necessary to import "foreigners" for subordinate posts in the government.

British policy originally intended to concentrate on educating the agricultural middle-class. Policy differed toward them as British administrators did not attempt to train most of them for government service but rather "to enlighten and civilize them." In 1877 the Chief Commissioner (like the Inspector of Education already quoted in the late 1880's) did not wish most of the Indian students to view "an appointment in the public service" to be "looked upon as a reward for study." Yet many students in the Central Provinces continued to regard education as the road into government jobs.

Administrators discovered the agricultural middle class, whom the British wanted most to educate, were not generally interested in this educational opportunity. In the context of the 1860's policy statement "agricultural middle class" consisted of the large and small landlords. The majority of these and their children remained indifferent to the Western-style education offered them. Another type of "agricultural middle class," however, who took advantage of these educational opportunities included rural government officials; such as the patwaris (village tax accountants), landlord agents and their assistants, and banias or the money lenders, together with their assistants, the munims. The character of the Agricultural School in Nagpur gives evidence of this trend. The School was established in the early 1900's with three sections, one for the training of land Revenue subordinates, another for

the instruction of Primary Schoolmasters, and a third for providing the "sons of agriculturalists with a practical training in farming."¹ The weakest part of the school (which became a three-year college in 1905-1906) was the section intended to provide practical training for sons of landlords. By 1907-1908 the Administration Report admitted that the results of this section were not as good as originally hoped; students were especially reluctant to participate in the manual work that was a part of its practical training. The next year the Administration Report declared that the results of the mulguzari class were "most disappointing" as "it had been from the beginning." Further Administration Reports for 1911-1912 and 1912-1913 observed that the Agricultural School was still not attracting many students from the agricultural castes. On the other hand, the section to train revenue subordinates appears to have functioned well, though few, if any, of the recruits for that section came from the mulguzars.

These observations are further substantiated at the Primary education level. The Administration Report of 1902-1903 commented that

Instruction has been pushed on in new subjects of a practical nature which are intended chiefly for the benefit of the cultivating class, such as village records, the use of village maps, the nature of the soils in the village area, the tenancy rights, manuscript reading, and Bania accounts.²

¹C. P., Ad. Rept. 1902-03, par. 222, p. 51, and similarly in Central Provinces Gazetteer (1908), p. 44.

²C. P., Ad. Rept. 1902-03, par. 220, p. 50.

Schoolmasters called in local patwaris and banias to assist in these subjects, and it appears that it was mostly children of patwaris, banias, agents of the landlords, and others closely related, who benefited from this instruction, rather than the sons of landlords, tenants, and agricultural laborers. This first goal had not been achieved in the way it was intended.

Having failed to reach their goals with regard to education for the mulguzars, their second goal, that of using them to serve as a "lever" to raise the educational standard of the lower classes was in jeopardy. There is no indication that those agriculturalists who did take advantage of the educational opportunities that were offered, the rural officials and agents, became that "lever" to uplift the masses. Rather, the lower classes remained the most uneducated section of the population. As in other instances, British intentions and ideas to educate the lower classes were not matched by successful implementation. The low caste Chamars of Chattisgarh Division provide one example. They comprised more than one-sixth of the population of that Division, living mostly in the central agricultural area of the Chattisgarh plain where they were predominately tenants and agricultural laborers. More than half of the Chamars associated themselves with the Satnami (True Religion) reform sect, thus rejecting their usual "untouchable" status.¹

In 1868 the Chattisgarh Chamars were first brought to the attention of the provincial administration when the Divisional Commissioner requested special permission to obtain some land for the establishment of a

¹Gazetteer of the Central Provinces, 2d ed., with Introduction by Charles Grant (Bombay: Education Society's Press, 1870).

Christian mission among them. He said an American missionary, Mr. Lohr, would supervise the effort among the Satnamis who were "desirous of religious instruction."¹ The Chief Commissioner, however, objected to approve any special concession for a missionary effort; he felt his sanction would be "unpopular" among the bulk of the Hindu population who looked with "much disfavor" on the Chamars. He speculated that his approval might provide an opportunity for Hindus to accuse "the administration of leaning unduly to the religion of the ruling race," or Christianity.² Soon afterward the same Divisional Commissioner requested support for a teacher-training school among the Chamars with Mr. Lohr as the headmaster. He felt such a school would be beneficial as the large Chamar population was backward and desired education, and it was known they received bad treatment in the schools managed by Brahmins, Kayasths, Muslims and others. Again his request was denied for the same reasons.³

The Chattisgarh area remained one of the most backward areas of the Central Province particularly in education. In 1875 the Inspector-General of Education complained that the Chattisgarhi malguzars were particularly problematic as they could not be trusted to pay the schoolmasters regularly. The Inspector-General viewed the Chattisgarhi people as "backward," living "cheaply," and caring "little for knowledge of any kind not connected with their daily work."⁴

¹India, Foreign Proceedings, General, August 1868, letter dated 30 June 1868).

²Ibid., August 1868, General, #44-46, pp. 58-60.)

³Central Provinces Archives, Case Files-Bundle Correspondence, Education #77 of 1868 and #6 of 1869.

⁴C. P., Home Proceedings, August 1875, Education #21-22, letter dated 2 August 1875.

The problem was worst in Simga tahsil, where almost one-fifth of the population was Chamar. In 1884 the problem of collecting the education subscription became so acute that the administration decided to close one-third of the 110 primary schools. Almost all the schools closed were in predominately Chamar villages, where the administration felt the people were of a bad character and hostile to education.¹ Chattisgarh made a proposal for promoting education among the Chamars but the Chief Commissioner replied that provision was already being made for them in the general scheme of primary education expansion.²

Other attempts by local British administrators to promote lower caste education generally met with failure. In Chanda District, the local high school was closed when some low caste Dher boys, who had passed the entrance examination, tried to enter the school. Though the District Commissioner supported the attempt, all the other high caste boys resigned from the school. Eventually the school was revived as a Zillah school with full attendance.³ As late as 1917, however, the Central Province administration refused to remove specific restrictions on the admission of low caste girls into schools. While it favored admitting them, in principal, it left their admission and thereby the implementation of

¹Central Provinces, Home Proceedings, February 1884, Education #14, pp. 35-42.

²C. P., Education, Medicine and Sanitation Department Proceedings, July 1914, Education #1, Section B.

³C. P. Home Proceedings, December 1872, Education #1.

their policy to local officials to deal with as the applications were received.¹

These cases under review reflect some of the more general and persistent attitudes of the provincial government toward lower class, and especially low caste education. Though in principle it seemed often to hold to the ideal of educational opportunities for most of the population, it did not strongly commit itself to promote education among the lower classes. At the divisional and district levels, British administrators sometimes attempted to implement educational opportunities for specific lower castes in their areas. These efforts often met with opposition or indifference from British administrators at the provincial level and strong opposition and rejection by local higher castes.

Another large category of the Central Province population received almost the same treatment from British rulers as was given the low castes. They were the tribal groups who totaled almost one-fourth of the population in the province. They lived in the more inaccessible areas and were comparatively backward in education. Though a few British officials and foreign missionaries from time to time labored to promote education among them, such efforts were minute in comparison to the general educational efforts in the province. Some British attitudes toward tribal groups also may have limited British concern for education among them, The Central Provinces Gazetteer (1908) in its summary of the educational position of various segments of the population admitted that only three percent of the tribal boys of school age were in school. The Gazetteer

¹C.P. Education Proceedings, August 1917, #12, p. 16. Letter dated 28 May 1917.

contended that it was difficult to persuade "the forest tribes to send their children to school, and even when the children do go it is probable that only a few of them have sufficient powers of concentration to learn successfully."¹ Such attitudes among British officials would not reflect a serious effort to promote education among tribal groups.

Literacy and caste statistics of the early twentieth century provide further evidence that the educational growth of the first six decades in the Central Provinces benefited mainly the higher-caste private and government professionals at the expense of the rural malguzars and lower classes, and the forest tribes. Literacy rates in the Central Provinces and Berar were 3.3 percent in 1911 and 4.8 percent in 1921.² The three castes with the highest literacy rates (between 24 to 35 percent) were Brahmins, Kayasths, and Banias. A tribal group such as the Gonds had only a 1.1 percent literacy among its males and .1 percent among its females. Brahmins were an exceptionally well-educated though a relatively small caste category, consisting of around 450 thousand or around 3 percent of the provincial population. Yet in 1912 the number of Brahmin students in higher education, 2,280, exceeded the number of all other castes combined, 1,970.³ They monopolized clerical and government appointments,

¹Central Provinces Gazetteer (1908), pp. 107-08.

²C. P. and Berar, Report on the Administration, 1911-12, p. 46, and 1921-22, p. 196.

³C. P., Administration Report, 1912-1913.

TABLE 9

LITERACY AMONG RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL CATEGORIES

	Religious categories--					Social categories--				Total
	Hindus	Animists	Muslims	Jains	Christians	Brahmins	Banias	Kayasths	Gonds	
Central Provinces and Berar										
1911 Literacy	3.2	0.2	9.1	26.1	13.8	24.2	24.5	32.5	. . .	3.3
1921 Literacy	4.7	0.6	13.3	31.3	31.3	26.7	27.9	35.9	1.1 males 0.1 females	4.8
Hoshangabad										
1921 Literacy	6.7	0.4	12.0	39.0	68.0	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	6.9
Percent of the population	85.3	9.1	4.6	0.4	0.5	7.0	. . .	. . .	10.0	100.0
Balaghat										
1921 Literacy	3.5	0.5	18.0	33.0	41.0	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	3.4
Percent of the population	84.1	13.8	1.9	0.2	0.1	0.8	. . .	. . .	16.0	100.0
Bilaspur										
1921 Literacy	2.4	0.6	18.0	31.0	37.0	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	2.6
Percent of the population	92.6	5.9	1.2	0.1	0.3	3.0	. . .	. . .	12.0	100.0

SOURCES: Central Provinces, Administration Reports 1911-12, Part II, p. 46; and 1921-22, Part III, p. 196; C. P., District Gazetteers: Hoshangabad, Balaghat, and Bilaspur, Vols. B (1927).

and were said to fill 74 percent of government posts above menial positions.¹ The correlation of high caste with high literacy is revealed also at the district level. The Narbudda Valley district of Hoshangabad had a high literacy rate of 6.9 percent in 1921; its percentage of twice-born caste population was also high, (20 percent). The forest district of Balaghat had a low literacy rate of 3.4 percent; for it had a large forest tribal population, (25 percent). Bilaspur district in Chattisgarh with a high percentage of "impure castes", (30 percent) had the lowest literacy rate, (2.6 percent).

Four conclusions emerge from the history of education during the first six decades of the Central Provinces administration. First, educational institutions, the number of students, and funds all showed an increase during this period, but the increase was sporadic and was related to British administrative support. Increase and expansion was greatest in the first and last decades when British support was strongest both in idealized policy and in implementation. During the middle decades the British became disillusioned. They were adversely criticized for compulsive methods of promoting education. They withdrew support through executive British officers and transferred the implementation to departmental officials, most of whom were Indians. The British became dissatisfied with the slow educational development and with the type of education which seemed to produce an abundance of Indians seeking government jobs. The divergence between British policy and implementation was greatest during the middle period. The educational resurgence of the last decade

¹C. P., Administration Report, 1921-22, Part III, p. 208, paragraph 283, and a similar statement in the Administration Report 1911-12, Part II, p. 51, paragraph 129.

resulted in a literacy rate of 5 percent in 1921.

Second, educational development unevenly affected different segments of the C. P. population. Originally the British considered the educational advancement of three segments: the agricultural middle class, the lower classes, and subordinate Indian officials. Whereas the British stressed the first two segments, it was the last segment and their counterparts in the economy which achieved the greatest literacy. At the village level and above they held positions as patwaris, banias, and agents of landlords. British attempts to attract and educate the agrarian middle-class of landlords, the mulguzars, generally met with very limited success. Lower castes and forest tribes were even more illiterate. Local British officers who tried to promote education among lower castes often found their efforts were opposed by higher castes and by the provincial administration for one reason or another. An examination of these reasons indicates that the provincial administration in implementing policies allied themselves with higher castes and did little to remove prejudices against lower castes, by word or action. At the end of these decades, in 1921, literacy was most concentrated among Indians in intermediate administrative and economic positions midway between the colonial structure above and the agrarian society below.

The third conclusion arises from the second. Education gained a greater significance in a colonial society based on a literate bureaucracy. British rule depended on documentation and statistics to form policy, make laws, and decide court cases. British administrators came to rely heavily on a literate, subordinate Indian bureaucracy to supply these. Villagers, on the other hand, had to rely on literate persons to

supply and read various documents for them; documents concerning land rights, contracts for debts, or other legal information. In the context of British rule literacy implied power: power better to understand and control relationships with the British colonial structure above and Indians below.

Lastly, this review of education in the Central Provinces between 1861 and 1921 reaffirms the analytical framework of the beginning of this chapter. The promotion of education under British rule was limited by several factors: by a minimal financial commitment, by the divergence between ideals and results, between policy and implementation, and between provincial and district level British officials. Education directly affected only a small number of Indians, though it indirectly affected a much larger number. In such an agricultural society, British officials often expressed a hope that education would stimulate agricultural production. But, as the practical schemes for agricultural education in the primary schools and the Agricultural College reveal, education did not increase agricultural production, rather it strengthened the position of Indians at the intermediate level in the government and economy, which in turn reinforced the colonial structure rather than change it. Education thus helped consolidate British rule rather than promote development.

CHAPTER V

POLITICS: BRITISH LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

INSTITUTIONS AND INDIAN ASSOCIATIONS

British administrators introduced Western forms of local self-government into the Central Provinces between 1860 and 1920. They established the first Municipal Committees in the 1860s and in the 1880s formed District Councils with Local Boards. In the following decade the Central Provinces was given its first Indian representative on the Viceroy's Legislative Council, and in 1914 the Provincial Legislative Council held its first session.¹ As with education and health, local self-government was not a priority concern of the Provincial administration and no provincial commissioner was separately charged with its affairs, rather the Chief Commissioner or often one of his secretaries handled innovations and changes in local self-government institutions as they occurred. While local self-government was of relatively little importance before 1920, it began to play a more significant role in political development thereafter. The colonial government and Indians discussed and argued over forms of

1. I consider all institutions, which had elected members and were established by the British administration, as "local self-government institution," though in the most restricted definition the term applied only to District Councils and their Local Boards as constituted first by the Local Self-Government Act of 1883.

democratic institutions during the 1920s and 1930s, and because of this interchange, India was prepared for and achieved its independence as a democratic nation in 1947.

Two other Western institutions, the press and voluntary associations, accompanied the process of self-government development. Administrators in the Provinces helped introduce both institutions soon after the Province was formed in the 1860s. It was not until the 1880s that both expanded more rapidly under Indian guidance. Thereafter both the press and a variety of local associations became a permanent part of the political terrain. One other form of interaction between the rulers and the ruled, namely petitions, played a significant political role both before and after the establishment of British rule. This section examines British policy and practice as it affected local self-government institutions and the Indian press, voluntary associations, and the use of petitions as a form political expression

British Self-Government Institutions

Ideology and Goals

British administrators, both in the central government and in the Province, emphasized three goals in their policy toward the formation of local self-government institutions. In the central government, Lord Mayo felt his proposals on municipal committees would promote "the association of Natives and Europeans to a greater extent than heretofore in the administration of affairs."¹ On the other hand, Lord Ripon

1. Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers (Commons), 1883, vol. 51 (Accounts and Papers, vol. 14), "Extracts from Correspondence on Proposed Measures for the Extension of Local Self-Government in India," Resolution of the Government of India, 14 December 1870, quoted in Resolution of the Government of India, Department of Finance and Commerce, 30 September 1881, p. 10. Hereafter PP; for Government of India, GOI.

emphasized "political education" rather than administration. He advocated "the extension of local self-government, and . . . the management of the many branches of local affairs," but "not, primarily, with a view to the improvement in administration," rather "chiefly . . . as a instrument of political and popular education."¹ Robert J.

Crosthwaite agreed with the educational goal but stressed the additional advantage of bringing the government and Indians into closer communication. In his speech supporting the passage of the Central Provinces' Local Self-Government Bill of 1883, he argued that British administrators would

not fail to perceive the advantage of utilizing the local boards and the individual members of them, in many ways . . . quite outside the scope of this Bill. They will seek from them information regarding the state of the people and the agricultural conditions of the country. They will use them as mediums for explaining and making known to the people the wishes and intentions of the Government, and they will go to them for aid in all matters of local administration, including revenue and the police.²

Within the Central Provinces, British officials also agreed that local self-government institutions would serve the three purposes of (1) Indian participation in local administration, (2) political education, and (3) communication between the colonial administration and the Indian people. Chief Commissioner John Morris, in the 1876-77 Municipal Committee Report, praised the "zeal and public spirit exhibited by the elected members" of some committees. He reminded British officers in charge of Municipal Committees "of the advantages derived from local knowledge, experience and cooperation of the native members." One

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1. Ibid., Resolution of the GOI, 18 May 1882, par. 5, p. 27.
 2. R. J. Crosthwaite, quoted in Nyaya Sudha, 24 January 1883, p. 84 of the SVN.

District Commissioner was particularly complemented for having "induced" the members

to speak their minds and to give valuable advice on questions of octroi tariff, or of local improvements . . . and to bring up all questions of road improvement, conservancy or water supply connected with their respective wards.¹

In an Administration Report ten years later, Chief Commissioner Alexander Mackenzie felt all three purposes of local self-government had been promoted. He recalled that the first Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, Richard Temple, had hoped local self-government schemes would "not only . . . secure assistance for Government, but educate the people themselves and . . . stimulate self-reliance and public spirit." Temple's policy of "associating the people in the work of public administration" had succeeded because it had been fostered by Temple's successors. In Mackenzie's opinion, the Central Provinces were "now in the very fore-front of the provinces in India in this matter of Local Self-Government."²

Structure and Attitudes

Legislation to establish the structure of local self-government institutions in the Central Provinces developed in two main stages. Each stage was characterized by its own level of institutions, a changed political and administrative climate, and two different attitudes of Central Provinces administrators. The 1890s formed a watershed between the two stages. Before then, local self-government institutions developed mainly at the district level and below. Municipal

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1. Central Provinces. Report on the Municipal Committees for 1876-77, p. 1
 2. Central Provinces, Ad. Rept. 1886-87, p. xiv.

Committees started earliest as they were established in the 1860s. The Nagpur and Jabalpur Municipal Committees were formed in 1864 by the application of laws from outside the Province (the Punjab and Lucknow Municipal Acts respectively), and in 1867 forty-three more Committees were established. A separate Act for municipalities was passed in 1873 and revised in 1889 and 1903. The Local Self-Government Act of 1883 initiated the establishment of District Councils with Local Boards in each tahsil. Before then District Commissioners and their assistants met informally with local Indians in District Fund Committees. The 1883 Act provided that each Local Board would consist of elected and nominated members generally under the supervision of the tahsildar and his assistant. The Boards in turn elected members to a District Council and met with nominated members, one of whom usually included an Assistant (British) or Extra-Assistant (Indian) Commissioner. By 1903-04 these institutions had a total membership of 1,795 of which one-fourth were nominated. (See table.) Their separate budgets totalled more than one million rupees. None of these district and municipal institutions were substantially changed until further legislation in the early 1920s.

Institutions above the district level did not develop until the second stage, after 1890. In 1893 the Central Provinces was allowed one Indian representative on the Viceroy's Legislative Council for the first time. However, it was not until 1914 that a Provincial Legislative Council began to operate. Its membership included a slight minority of elected Indian representatives who could discuss, suggest, and vote on legislation concerning the provincial administration. Local self-government institutions at the district level and below were established

TABLE 10
MEMBERSHIP ON LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS
CENTRAL PROVINCES, 1903-1904

Institutions and Number	Municipal Committees 46	District Councils 17	Local Boards 55	Totals
Nominated	178	84	214	476
Elected by wards	398	. . .	. . . .	398
Elected by merchants	. . .	58	148	206
Elected by Local Boards	. . .	186	. . .	186
Elected by village headmen	. . .	. . .	529	529
Total elected	398	244	677	1,319
All Members	576	328	891	1,795

SOURCE: Central Provinces Gazetteer (1908), pp. 95-98.

in the first stage, as we have seen, and supra-district representation and institutions were developed thereafter in the second stage.

British administrators in the Province exhibited mixed attitudes toward these two levels of self-government during these two stages of development. While they strongly supported and fostered institutions at the district level and below, they hesitated and reluctantly approved Indian representation and the formation of institutions above the district. One reason for this was the different political environment during each stage. In the first stage, Central Province administrators were allowed a freer hand to determine the constitutions of lower level institutions, and they often expressed a pride in the progress of those institutions. Their legislative proposals for municipal and district institutions were passed with minor revisions by the central government and with little discussion by the Indian public. The Municipal Committee and District Council reports of this period consisted mainly of financial reviews. British administrators also praised local British officials who had promoted self-government and listed Indian members who had served those institutions particularly well.¹ The annual review of institutions often included criticism and suggestions for improvements. In the Municipal Committee report of 1889-1890, it was suggested that some Committees needed constant supervision, especially in sanitation matters in the Narbadda Division; it requested that the Raipur District Commissioner

1. For example, the report of 1885-86, p. 3 listed the services of Indian members of different towns: B. K. Bose, Gopal Hari, C. Narainswami, and Babu Rao Dada for Nagpur town; Munshi Beni Prasad as Vice President, Manu Lal, Babu Khan and Behari Lal as Secretary for Hoshangabad; Pandit Narayan Rao as President and Nathu Ram as Secretary for Harda; Seth Tikaram as President and Babu Ambikacharan as Secretary for Narsinghpur; and Bhutnath De as Secretary, Seth Askaram, and Lalji Pujari for Raipur.

give closer attention to the Committee's progress; and it criticized some nominated government officials for failing to attend meetings in the Jabalpur and Chhattisgarh Division.¹

During the first stage British administrators in the Central Province fostered lower level self-government with little hindrance, annually giving attention to the details of district and municipal affairs, and generally determining the appropriate legislation and structure of those institutions. They did not face strong criticism or pressure either from the central government nor the Indian public when self-government legislation was proposed and passed.

However, during the second stage which began around 1890, conditions began to change and provincial administrators also began to express a different attitude toward the introduction of supra-district self-government representation and institutions. The central government took more initiative in proposing and establishing these; at the same time the Indian public supported those initiatives and even called for more radical changes. Provincial administrators constantly undervalued the political maturity of Indian organizations and the level of political education among Indians in the province. They often resisted efforts to approve central government proposals.

Two examples of this changed environment may be noted; first, the proposal to add an Indian representative from the Central Provinces to the Viceroy's Legislative Council in the 1890s, and second, to establish a Provincial Legislative Council in the 1900s.

1. Central Provinces, Municipal Rept. 1889-90, p. 6.

In July of 1893 the central government informed the Central Provinces administration that a vacancy on the Viceroy's Legislative Council would be filled by a representative from the province. It said that it was "desirous" that Local Bodies or Associations should be consulted before the administration recommended a representative.¹ Two months earlier, in April, 1893, Indians had held a public meeting in Nagpur under the presidency of C. N. Swami Naidu. The meeting resolved to send a memorial asking that the Central Provinces be allowed, like other provinces, to nominate one non-official for the Viceroy's Council.² The Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, Anthony MacDonnell, in his reply to the central government, however, pointed out that in the Central Provinces there was no "Association of sufficient respectability and importance to entitle it to the privilege of being consulted as to the selection of a member for the Governor-General's Council,"³ He then drew up a plan to permit delegates from Municipal Committees and District Councils to meet in each of the four divisions of the province and select their nominees. Each divisional meeting selected a different nominee and forwarded the name to the new Chief Commissioner, John Woodburn. He, in turn, selected the name of Gangadhar Rao Madhav Chitnavis, who was the nominee from the Nagpur division and forwarded his selection to the central government.⁴

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1. GOI, Legislative Department, to Central Provinces, 27 July 1893, #1388, in CPHP, November 1893, #8, p. 66.
 2. Nyaya Sudha, 24 April 1893, p. 169. See also M. P., Freedom Movement, p. 189.
 3. Central Provinces to GOI, Legislative Department, 4 November 1893, #18, p. 71.
 4. *Ibid.*, pp. 71-74.

Some Indians protested that the proceedings of the Nagpur division meeting had not been conducted properly. At that meeting, Swami Naidu, a lawyer, had received five votes to Chitnavis' four, but then the chairman, B. K. Bose, decided to vote. This created a tie, which Bose broke by casting the deciding vote which selected Chitnavis. Swami Naidu and other members of the meeting objected, but the provincial administrators disallowed their objections.¹ This incident and John Woodburn's selection of Chitnavis reflected important undercurrents of British and Indian opinions. British administrators, in general, tended to favor large landholding families who had resided in the province for some time. Administrators showed less favor to business and lawyer families, especially those who had a shorter residence and were, because of this, considered unrepresentative of the people. Chitnavis belonged to the landholding community.

Those who had been nominated from the four districts for this office were from different sections of society. Raja Gokuldas, the nominee from the Jabalpur division, was a rich banker. The Narbudda division nominee, Bulwant Rao Bhuskatte, was a landowner, but was considered too young for the post. Bhutnath De, the Chhattisgarh division's nominee was a lawyer, while Chitnavis was a large landholder. B. K. Bose who served as chairman was also a lawyer who had resided in the province only two decades, but was intimately involved with the administration as a government advocate. In 1899 the provincial administration named Bose to serve on the Council and he continued in that office for the following six years.²

1. Ibid., pp. 72-73.

2. Bose, Incidents, pp. 74-93.

In the nomination and selection of Chitnavis to the Viceroy's Legislative Council there are a number of interesting observations. Unlike previous developments of local self-government, the provincial administrators, in this matter, did not take the initiative to place an Indian representative on the Council; rather both the Indian public and the central government took the initiative and supported the proposal. The reason the provincial administrator gave for his lack of enthusiasm in the matter was that the province had not matured enough to have associations "of sufficient respectability and importance." In this the provincial administrators opposed changes which the central government and the Indian public proposed and wanted.

Central Provinces administrators again came under pressure from the Indian public and the central government during the discussions of the Legislative Council reforms from 1907 to 1911. The central government asked each provincial administration to devise methods for the election of members to a Provincial Legislative Council and additional members to a larger Governor-General's Legislative Council. Since the Central Provinces and Berar did not yet have a Legislative Council, it was proposed to create one for the province. Several persons and associations favored this. Among them were R. N. Mudholkar, representing the Provincial Congress Committee, the Jabalpur Anjuman Islamia, the Nagpur Anjuman-i Hami-i Islam, and various Moderate Indians.¹ Indian opinion (1907-1910)

1. See Central Provinces to Government of India, 7 December 1910, par. 4, referred to in CPAP, December 1911, p. 59.

was divided between Moderates and Extermists. While Moderates wished for some form of a Provincial Legislative Council, Extremists demanded total autonomy, and refused to participate in any limited Legislative Council. Chief Commissioner Reginold Craddock, in spite of the Moderates pronouncements, felt there was no strong demand from the people of the Province for a Legislative Council, and that the Province was "not yet ripe for a Legislative Council."¹ He recommended, in place of a Legislative Council, an Advisory Council which would allow the small minority of educated and politically active Indians to discuss and present opinions on proposed legislation.²

The central government's reply to the Central Provinces initiated a second round of discussions. They stated an Advisory Council was too novel an institution for just one province in India while all others had Legislative Councils. So the matter was deferred, awaiting an expression of opinion from the people of the province on the matter.³ In February, when meetings to hear public opinion were held in six locations: in Raipur, Balaghat, Nagpur, Damoh, Khandwa, and Bhandara, the people expressed their desire to have an Advisory Council if they were not permitted to have a Provincial Legislative Council and the Central Provinces Committee presented a memorial to the same effect.⁴ When Craddock learned

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1. Note from Chief Commissioner to GOI, 8 June 1908, referred to in *Ibid.* p. 53.
 2. *Ibid.*, par. 30; and further expressed in a letter from the Central Provinces to GOI, 7 December 1910, in CPAP, December 1911, #36, pp. 61-63.
 3. GOI letter of 18 June 1909, in CPAP, December 1911, #29, p. 53.
 4. *Ibid.*, #25-35, pp. 52-58.

that almost all these public meetings had been held in response to a letter from a Congress lawyer who was also a representative on the Governor-General's Council, Manickji Byramji Dadabhoy, he disregarded their opinions saying, "The trivial character of the response which was made to this letter raises the presumption that little interest was taken in the subject."¹ He further said that "in a matter of this sort too much weight should not be allowed to the presence or absence of memorials" and that the only people who wished for a Council of either type were the educated class "constituting a very small section of the total community," and thus not representative of the general population.²

In spite of Craddock's opinion, the central government eventually approved a Provincial Legislative Council which began to function in 1914. Other Provincial Councils had been established in 1911. By 1914 Richard Craddock had been replaced by Benjamin Robertson as Chief Commissioner. Craddock was promoted to the Viceroy's Executive Council in 1912, and Robertson presented the inaugural address for the Central Provinces and Berar Legislative Council.

Almost the same dialogue, however, was repeated near the end of the decade when the central government proposed constitutional reforms including the enlargement of provincial legislative bodies. This time it was Robertson who was reluctant to allow the reforms in the Central Provinces. He considered the brief existence of the Council had not given the Indians sufficient experience to enable them to participate effectively in an enlarged provincial assembly.³ But a Central Provinces administrator, Frank Sly,

1. Ibid., #36, p. 58.

2. Ibid., pars. 5-6, p. 60.

3. PP, 1919, vol. 37, Cond., 123, Robertson's Note, 30 October 1918, pars. 3-5, "Questions Raised in the Report on the Indian Constitutional Reforms," pp. 867-69.

Benjamin Robertson's successor, supported the new reforms.¹ In the twentieth century two Chief Commissions were replaced partly because they opposed more representative bodies in the province.

Central Provinces administrators had shown very different attitudes in these two stages of introducing local self-government institutions. In the first stage when district level institutions were inaugurated, British administrators had supported them often with optimism and enthusiasm. After 1890, however, Central Provinces administrators exhibited reluctance to support or approve supra-district institutions and representation. In these last three decades (1890-1920) the political climate had changed with increased demands from Indians and orders from the central government for new reforms.

Function and Performance

Several reasons may account for the different attitudes of British administrators. In part it was the ways in which local self-government structures were established and how they functioned. British administrators tended to emphasize the administrative purpose of district and sub-district level institutions at the expense of political education or the full participation of non-official Indians in the institutions. This failure to implement the "self-government" functions may be one reason British administrators consistently claimed that the Central Provinces public was politically inexperienced or immature.

Non-official descriptions and reports on the function of early self-government institutions indicate that they were sometimes less than robust

1. PP, 1919, vol. 4, App. E, Frank Sly's "Evidence," pp. 693-94.

Western democratic institutions. Lewis K. Laurie, a Central Provinces civil servant, wrote descriptions of a fictitious town, Kalampur. In one article he describes how the election process of a Municipal Committee functioned.¹ Though elections had been duly publicized two weeks in advance, the town's voters did not appear, so a local British official ordered the police to round them up. Meanwhile the incumbents sat around in silence, eyeing each other with suspicion. A school teacher wanted re-election, as he hoped the committee would award a lucrative town-survey contract to one of his subordinates. An anti-survey incumbent hoped re-election would allow him to avenge a neighbor in a boundary dispute. Soon the police arrived with a group of electors, but they stood in silence until one man, an oil vender, pointed a finger and accused the anti-survey candidate of daily brushing his teeth on the vendor's property. This sparked other complaints and stimulated the group to vote. Soon all the incumbents were re-elected, even the anti-survey candidate. Having done their duty, the voters dispersed; the newly constituted members of the municipal committee then passed a resolution that the vender should be prosecuted for keeping his premises unclean.

Another of Laurie's stories, titled "Municipal Sorrows," describes the functioning of the Municipal Committee over several months. The main members were an Honorary Magistrate (probably a landlord), a Marwari businessman, and a school teacher. The teacher was elected secretary as only he knew English and thus could communicate with district headquarters. After the first meeting the secretary complained to the British District Collector that the members only sat around and

1. Laurie, In the C. P., pp. 68-71.

gossiped at meetings. The British official came and explained the seriousness of their duties. At the next meeting a tax on imported goods (octroi) was passed and soon the treasury had ample funds for roads and sanitation improvements. But both the businessman and the landlord collected rival factions of contractors around them, vying for funds. Eventually also the District Officer, while reading the committee's report, realized far more goods were supposedly being imported than the town's people could possibly consume. Again, the Municipal Committee was visited and the situation corrected. After some time a house assessment tax was instituted. The secretary, however, wrote to the District Officer that while some large houses were being exempted, many small houses were being assessed far beyond the capacity of their poor owners; an exodus of poor residents had begun. The house tax was revoked, and at long last the municipality settled its finances by imposing a tax on profits and the committee began to run smoothly with an adequate income and expenditure. Laurie concludes his description that the committee had "reached its true level of usefulness -- being merely the interpreter of the Collector's wishes to the townsfolk -- the channel of communication of the latter's grievances to him."¹

It is clear from these two descriptions that the introduction of Western local self-government institutions involved considerable difficulties and some distortions of democratic procedures. Though Laurie intended these fictional descriptions partly as entertainment for the British public in India, he based them on his own experiences.

1. Ibid., p. 95.

Indian newspaper accounts confirm some of the incidents Laurie described. The 1873 elections to the Hoshangabad Municipal Committee appear similar to the fictional election in Kalampur. At Hoshangabad

chuprassies were sent around by the civil surgeon to chase the people out of their houses and make them attend and vote at the election nolens volens. The persons thus summoned were required to put tamarind seed in any of the twenty-three earthen pots, labeled with the names of those who were set up for election. Thirteen men in whose pots the greater number of seeds fell were elected as members of the Municipal Committee.

The editor considered this mode of election a regular farce.¹

Indian newspapers also criticized the different types of taxation and the way they were collected. One newspaper said that while the income tax, which affected the rich, was abolished in 1873, the pandhari tax, which affected "the poorer classes of the people," was retained. Thus the abolition "not in the least lightened the burden of the bulk of the people in the Central Provinces who are still oppressed by the weight of the pandhari tax."² Another paper complained "of the unjust levy of the Pandhari tax." A local government official had "seized . . . the meager possessions" of a poor woman and sold them in order "to realize the tax from here." A resident of Ramtek reported that "the names of many people who had died long ago had been entered in the list of tax-payers." The article concluded, "This shows how carelessly the assessments have been made."³ A third newspaper objected to the proposed imposition of a house tax which would

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1. Jabalpur News, 1 August 1873, p. 541. The Nyaya Sudha (harda), December 1883, also states that the "last elections were not properly made." p. 1036.
 2. Jabalpur News, 1 May 1873, p. 314.
 3. Nyaya Sudha, 23 September 1885, p. 663.

effectively tax "the same income . . . twice."¹ Finally, a change in the system of collecting the octroi tax was reported to cause inconvenience. Previously the tax was collected at the city entrance gates, but now the gate keepers gave merchants a slip listing their duty which they had to take to the government building. They were sometimes "detained the whole day" at the building in order to pay the tax and receive a receipt. The only usefulness the newspaper could see in the new system was that it had "put a check to the extortion and unfair play on the part of the" gatekeepers,²

Newspapers were dissatisfied with the way some Municipal Committees functioned. In Jabalpur, when a subordinate Indian government official was elected president, he ensured that his relative was elected secretary. The two could "have everything their own way," The contractor they hired used inferior materials in the repair of roads and the construction of municipal buildings which soon deteriorated. On the other hand, the president and secretary, showing "undue indulgence to the contractor . . . had lately been able to build nice private homes for themselves."³ One newspaper complained about the new municipal committee by-laws which prohibited people from using the streets for the disposal of any rubbish or drainage; at the same time the committee did not adequately provide for its collection, "Hence the people are compelled to keep their rubbish, sinks, urinals, and cess-pools within their houses." Though, "the exterior of the city presents a beautiful and imposing aspect, the interior is in a very

1. Subodh Sindhu (Khandwa), 21 August 1889, p. 538.

2. Jabalpur Samachar, 1 July 1873, p. 463.

3. Mauj-i-Narbadda (Hoshangabad), 1 October 1888, pp. 663-64.

bad state as regards sanitation."¹ Earlier the same newspaper suggested that though "the object with which municipal tax is levied is a good one . . . only a small portion of it is spent for the benefit of the people . . . chiefly affected by it." Most of the money was spent on "objects for the comfort and convenience of the European officers." The roads used by the officers were kept repaired and clean while "the lanes and bye-streets of the city [were] very much neglected." People thus blamed government for the "injustice in levying a tax from them without spending it for their benefit."² So by keeping the areas where officials lived clean they gave the impression that there had been a real advance in sanitation,

Whether the topic was elections, taxation, or the functioning of local self-government institutions, Indian newspapers were concerned about the relationship of those institutions with British officials. Most newspapers shared the hope of the Nyaya Sudha that officials would not "hamper the work" of the local self-government institutions proposed in 1882, and asserted, "The independence of the local boards and District Councils can hardly be maintained if they are not left free from direct official meddling."³ It recognized that in colonial India there was always a "danger of undue official interference."⁴ On the other hand, a Muslim newspaper expressed the opposite opinion. After religious riots had taken place in the province in 1893, the Mauj-i-Narbudha condemned the introduction of local self-government institutions as "premature." It claimed the institutions allowed members "a very good

1. Jabalpur Samachar, May and June 1874, p. 313.

2. *Ibid.*, 1 July 1873, pp. 462-63.

3. 22 November 1882, p. 785. 3. *Ibid.*, 24 January 1883, p. 83.

opportunity for gratifying their grudges against their enemies, and [gave] an unrestricted play to their religious prejudices."¹

The issue of the degree of British official involvement in local self-government affairs directed attention to the primary purpose of the institutions. Were they to be administrative units, as Lord Mayo suggested, or forums for political education, as Lord Ripon intended? The formal structure and the history of the functioning of the institutions favored the former over the latter purpose. In the colonial setting British administrators exercised considerable control over district level self-government institutions. They used them to limit their effectiveness for political education. The constitutions of these institutions empowered the administrators to nominate one-third or more of the members; to sanction elections of members and the presiding officers; to review the minutes, correspondence, finances, and laws; and to implement changes.

The example of Kalampur and newspaper reports by Indians indicate how extensively these formal powers and the informal wishes of British administrators were used to influence or force local self-government institutions to become primarily administrative units, with little scope for political education or training. A further example occurred in 1890 with the elections of the Wardha District Council. An Indian newspaper reported that there was evidence the "European officers" in Wardha were not treating Indian "gentlemen . . . with courtesy and respect." This characterized the relationship and the quarrels between

1. 8 November 1893, p. 500.

the District Commissioner, Colonel S. Brooke, and the chairman of the District Council, Mr. Narayan Rao.¹ The British administration considered the matter differently. "In Wardha for years past the work has been badly done, because the District Council has held the Deputy Commissioner at arm's length, and has only too often set at nought his advice and suggestions."²

Matters became much worse when the chairman and the secretary of the District Council ignored the invitation of a newly appointed deputy commissioner to discuss council business at his house. The Chief Commissioner blamed much of this "discourtesy" on the "pernicious influence of Mr. R. Narayan Rao," whom the Chief Commissioner considered "a foreigner" and "a mischievous adviser" of the "gentlemen of Wardha." As a result Mr. Narayan Rao "led the district to the brink of bankruptcy and brought the Council into chronic collision with the Government authorities." The Chief Commissioner felt it was "quite possible to be independent without being discourteous," and that the Council would show "real independence by ridding itself of its slavish subservience to" Mr. Narayan Rao.³ When election procedures to the Council were not strictly followed in 1890, the deputy commissioner did not organize new elections; he merely nominated all seventeen members.⁴

Whether outside or inside local self-government institutions, officials continued to determine the functioning of these institutions throughout the period. The Wardha District Council's attempt at

1. Nyaya Sudha, 29 June 1887, p. 403.

2. Chief Commissioner to the Nagpur Division Commissioner, 15 July 1890, CPHP, July 1890, #22, par. 5, p. 118.

3. Ibid.

4. C. P., Municipal Rept., 1890-91

independence eventually resulted in the replacement of elected members with government nominees. Not only in Wardha, but in many other bodies, nominated non-officials and subordinate officials dominated local self-government activities, in spite of constitutional requirements for a majority of elected members. British administrators did occasionally pay lip service by discouraging the election of subordinate officials to Municipal Committees and District Councils,¹ In general, administrators continued to nominate subordinate officials to these bodies and after being elected they were sanctioned as presiding officers. In practice the presiding officer and the secretary of local boards were the Tahsildar and his assistant. Even though some District Councils and Municipal Committees elected non-officials as presiding officers, the secretary or vice president was usually a subordinate British or Indian official.

An example of this is occurred in Jabalpur district in 1899. The three local boards were ruled by the Tahsildar and his assistant, while the council's president was a government nominee (a non-administrator, Pandit Raghunath Rao Abasahib) and the secretary was a subordinate Indian official (Extra-Assistant Commissioner, Pandit L. T. Sheorey). This was in spite of the fact that of the total 20 members on the Council 14 were elected. None of the elected members became presiding officers,² The influence of officials in local self-government bodies could reach far

1. CPHP, October 1884, #9, p. 44; and January 1893, #1, p. 30. These orders imply that some officials were still trying to stand for election and be elected members of local self-government institutions.

2. C. P., Gazette, Supplement, 20 May 1899, p. 407.

beyond the local body. Chief Commissioner Craddock, for instance, reported in 1910 that there was not a "greater response" to Dadabhoj's letter asking for public support for an Advisory Council because "it was addressed to Secretaries of Municipal Committees, many of whom are officials and felt themselves precluded from taking action on it." Presumably the secretaries also did not inform other members of the committees about the matter.¹ Thirty years after the passage of the 1883 Local Self-Government Act for the Central Provinces, officials were presidents or chairmen of seventy-seven percent of the Municipal Committees, thirty-five per cent of the District Councils, and ninety-eight percent of the Local Boards.²

Officials dominated local self-government institutions at the supra-district level also. In the Provincial Legislative Council, the Chief Commissioner presided and an official was secretary. Out of the twenty-four members of the Council, the administration nominated ten officials and four non-officials, while only ten were elected.³ The majority of the elected Indian members were unable to pass any legislation which the administration opposed during the Council's existence (1914-1920). Throughout the six decades, representative institutions remained ineffective forums, failing to provide political education and experience for Indians because of the structure of local self-government institutions, because of the powers granted to and used by British administrators, and because of the role of officials in those institutions.

1. CPAP, December 1911, p. 59.

2. Central Provinces and Berar, Legislative Council, Proceedings, 1914-15, App. B, p. 29.

3. C. P., Gazette, July to December 1913, "Regulations for the Nomination and Election of Members of the Legislative Council," pp. 923-976; and for those actually selected, August 1914, pp. 954, 991, 1032-33.

There were two exceptions to this observation, Nagpur and Jabalpur, the two largest metropolitan areas of the Central Provinces, were allowed a considerable degree of independences, free from official interference. The Committees thus provided a forum for some Indians to manage local affairs. The two became the Central Provinces' show cases of how effectively Indians could run local self-government institutions: Nagpur from the 1880s on, and Jabalpur from about 1900. B. K. Bose recalled in his autobiography how the Nagpur Municipal Committee became self-governing. In February 1883, Chief Commissioner John Morris

invited some of the leading citizens to meet him at the Public Rooms He explained . . . his object in calling them together was to enquire of them if they were ready to co-operate with his government in giving practical shape to Lord Ripon's resolution. For his own part, he said, he was prepared to withdraw the official element from the local Municipal Committee and hand over its management to a non-official body, subject to official control from without. This was a surprise, though an agreeable surprise, to most of us A few friends and myself formed ourselves into a informal Committee to choose qualified candidates for election. We had to adopt this course as there was then very little local public opinion in municipal matters . . . and the people could not be left to make wise selections, without some extraneous help I think our management was, taken all in all, better than the old regime. In view of their other multifarious duties, the Deputy Commissioner and the Assistant Commissioner in special charge were seldom in a position to give that close and constant attention to municipal work which was essential for its success.¹

Even with a history of independence, however, both Nagpur and Jabalpur showed signs that their Municipal Committees did not provide a large number of Indians with political education. As in most other local self-government institutions, the same members were elected year after year. In the Jabalpur Municipal Committee elections of 1886, nine of fifteen Indian members were re-elected, while fifteen of sixteen were

1. Bose, Incidents, pp. 40-42.

re-elected in 1889; the sole "new" elected member had been a nominee on the previous Committee and an elected member from 1883-1886.¹ Between 1890 and 1910, the Nagpur and Jabalpur Municipal Committees re-elected their presidents (Chitnavis and Ballab Das respectively) in almost every election. Simultaneously each served terms as Chairmen on their District Councils.² The Vice-President of the Nagpur Municipal Committee, Babu Rao Dada, was re-elected to that position from 1890 until his death in 1914.³

The lack of widespread interest and participation of qualified Indian voters in elections was further indicated in 1908 when Municipal Committees, District Councils, and "Landholder Associations" chose delegates to an electoral college to select two representatives for the Governor-General's Legislative Council. The election was characterized by the "apathetic attitude of some of the voters and noticable absence of any party feeling."⁴ A Deputy Commissioner opposed a proposal to change the indirect electoral system saying, "Direct voting is not suitable and workable in this province in the present stage of its civilization."⁵

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1. C. P. Gazette, Supplement, 28 April 1883, p. 41; 31 July 1886, 25 May 1889, p. 41. Seth Ballabh Das was the "new" member. p. 23.
 2. Directory of the Central Provinces and Berar, ed. Shridas N. Huddar (1938), p. 960. Chitnavis continued to be elected. He was the Nagpur Municipal Committee's president continuously from 1896 to 1917 or twenty-one years, while he was elected chairman of the District Council from 1889 until his death in 1929, or forty years.
 3. Bose, Incidents, pp. 168-171.
 4. Chief Commissioner Craddock, letter, 29 October 1910, CPAP, May 1912, #43, p. 69.
 5. Deputy Commissioner of Drug District, 3 March 1910, in Ibid., p. 55.

The Chief Commissioner agreed that "direct elections is at present out of the question."¹ Craddock also discouraged the proposal to lower the landholders' qualification from 5000 rupees annual land taxation to 3000 rupees, stating that it "might add many undesirable persons . . . to the electorate."² British administrators, as shown here and previously, generally opposed the extension of the vote to a larger number of Indians in the Province.

One further point concerning British attitudes and the functioning of local self-government needs mention. While British administrators tried to promote the representation and participation of landholders over other categories of persons, landholders generally continued to be the least responsive and most apathetic category in self-government institutions when compared to businessmen, lawyers, teachers and other professionals. British administrators established District Councils and Local Boards with a predominance of landholders among the elected membership: they constituted more than seventy-five percent of the seats held by the other category of elected members, the "mercantile class."³ As already indicated Chief Commissioner Woodburn showed his preference for landholders when he ensured that a landholder would be the first Central Province representative on the Governor-General's Legislative Council in 1893. In establishing an electoral system for the two representatives to the Governor-General's Council in 1908, separate "electoral colleges" were set up, one from a mixed constituency of delegates from District Councils and Municipal Committees and the

1. Craddock, in *Ibid.*, p. 68. 2. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

3. C. P., District Council Manual for the Central Provinces, 2d ed. (n. p., 1911), Section C.

other from "Landholder Associations," An elector could have more than one vote if he was a landholder, a businessman, and lived in a municipality. In the 1908 election in Narsinghpur district, Seth Ghasiram and Tikaram voted for both Landholder and District Council delegates, while Visheswar Singh and Anansingh voted as landholders but did not attend the voting on the District Council where they were also members.¹ The Chief Commissioner felt it was "perfectly defensible both in theory and in practice," that a man "may have a vote in all three electoral bodies and some actually voted three times."² Craddock felt this "merely indicates that he is a representative of each of the three classes."³

The report of the 1908 elections confirms that landholders generally participated less in elections than did people in other categories. In Jabalpur district, only twenty-nine percent of the landholder electors voted, while fifty-nine percent of the District Council and sixty percent of the Municipal Committee members voted. Similar discrepancies in voting between landholders and others occurred in other districts. In Raipur district the voting was forty-two percent landholders, fifty-eight percent District Council and one-hundred percent Municipal Committee members; and in Hoshangabad district it was thirty-eight percent landholders, sixty-nine percent District Council and eighty-six percent Municipal Committee members.⁴ The Hoshangabad Deputy Commissioner felt most landholders

1. CPAP, May 1912, pp. 48-49.

2. Ibid., p. 67.

3. Ibid., pp. 41, 53, 56.

4. Ibid., p. 56.

did not "possess such educational attainments as to understand the purposes for which they were convened."¹ Another Deputy Commissioner reported that "the largest landholders" of his district "are apt to be wrapped up in their own feudal ideas and to remain in dignified isolation."² Even in face of these statistics and characterizations, Chief Commissioner Benjamin Robertson joined with the previous Chief Commissioners Woodburn and Craddock in promoting landholder representation and participation. In 1917 when there were discussions on a resolution in the Provincial Legislative Council to add one more elected member, the Indian members suggested several possibilities: a representative from the Graduates Association, or from the Municipalities of Nagpur or Jabalpur, or from Chhattisgarh Division. The administration, however, pointed out that no one had suggested further representation of the agricultural classes, so the resolution was defeated,³ In addition, because of the limited concept of local self-government in a colonial setting, neither British administrators nor Indians ever seemed to seriously consider representation from other large categories of the population such as tenants, agricultural laborers, factory workers, tribals, etc. It appears that both assumed landholders represented all the rural population and professionals the urban population.

1. Ibid, p. 46.

2. Ibid., p. 54, Bilaspur District.

3. C. P. and B., Leg. Council, Progs., 8 March 1917, pp. 120-134. The vote was thirteen against twelve in favor of the resolution. The thirteen voters were all administrative officials plus one non-official nominee, while all twelve in favor were non-officials.

In summary, the history of British attitudes toward local self-government, the structure of those institutions and how they functioned, passed through two distinct stages of development characterized by different levels of institutions and a changing political climate. Two trends, however prevailed throughout the period and were present in both stages. First, officials dominated the workings of the institutions either inside or outside the institutions. This resulted in an emphasis on the administrative purpose at the sacrifice of one of the goals-to provide political education. Second, British preference for landholder representation and participation persisted in spite of evidence that most landholders were apathetic and thus failed to fulfill British expectations.

Indian Participation and Communication

Robert Crosthwaite and others had emphasized a third purpose of local self-government institutions, besides those of local management and political education. He felt the institutions would serve as mediums of communication between the government and the public on all topics of administration. Even Crosthwaite, however, noted that this was "quite outside the scope" of district institutions. The 1883 Act limited institutions to the discussion and management of local affairs such as sanitation, roads, education, and public buildings. As the Central Provinces was a "non-Regulatory Province," only the central government could pass acts which would change the basic structure of local self-government institutions and broaden their scope of authority. With these restrictions, the institutions failed to become mediums of communication as much as they failed to become forums for political education.

Denied a government-sponsored outlet for full participation and public responsibility, Indians consequently sought and found other avenues for public expression and organization. These include the press, voluntary associations and petitions.

The Press

The press grew slowly from virtually nothing in the early 1870s to a substantial activity by the 1900s. Before the 1870s one interesting example of public expression is recorded: that of wall posters in 1853. In that year the Bhonsla ruler of Nagpur died; the public expressed sadness for his death and for what followed when the British annexed the Bhonsla kingdom. One of the two surviving posters criticized the annexation and condemned Dadaba Shirke, who cooperated with the British and thus "dishonored the Maratha race . . . by helping in destroying the State."¹

The first decade after the Province was formed there was little activity in the use of the press. Only the Chief Commissioner's Printing Press published government documents. The press made a small beginning in the next decade. British administrators tried to establish a Western-style newspaper in 1872. To stimulate public interest, they expanded the administration's Central Provinces News, as it was called, to include articles on local events, in addition to its regular publication of administrative announcements. The administration hoped this would "supply a want now much felt," as no Indian "publication now exists in this Province." The newspaper was to have Hindi, Urdu, and Marthi language editions in addition to the previous English one,

1. Madhya Pradesh, Freedom Movement, p. 47.

so that it might start to "reach the masses of the people."¹ But the officially sponsored newspaper apparently soon reverted to a government Gazette. The first privately owned newspaper was probably the Jabalpur Samachar, published first from Hoshangabad and then from Jabalpur. It had an active but short life of two years (1873-74).² Another newspaper, the Marathi-Language Phanindrapur Mani Prakash (Nagpur), lasted only six months in 1878.³

The first substantial and enduring newspapers made their appearance in the 1880s and 1890s. By 1884-85 six weekly newspapers were being published in four languages. Sixteen private printing presses existed.⁴ The most enduring of these was the Subodh Sindhu of Khandwa, Nimar District, founded as early as 1884 and published by Lakshman Anant Prayagi. It continued as a family enterprise until 1935.⁵ Most other newspapers, however did not last that long. The English-language Central Indian Observer (Jabalpur), begun in 1886, ceased publication in 1890.⁶ The first avowedly political newspaper, the Desh Sevak was founded in the 1890s by activist followers of Bal Gangadhar Tilak.⁷

1. Education Department #2, Circular 2, April 1872, CPHP, April 1872, p. 3.

2. SVN, 1873-74.

3. Ibid., 19 October 1878, pp. 334-35. The Directory, p. 193, incorrectly gives the year as 1876.

4. C. P., Ad. Rept. 1884-85, app. 2. 5. Ibid., and Directory, pp. 193, 198.

6. Jabalpur DG (1968), p. 649. 7. Directory, p. 193.

One of them, Achyut Balwant Kolhatkar, was prosecuted and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment in 1908 for publishing a "seditious" speech of Arabindo Ghose.¹ The prosecutions of Achyut Balwant Kolhatkar and other editors proved to be the death knell of the Desh Sevak and other political papers for the time being. Madharao Sapre, the editor of the Hindi Kesari (Nagpur) was also prosecuted for publishing a "seditious" article. Because of bad health, he made a formal apology and was not imprisoned.² Sapre never resumed publishing his Hindi paper which had served those Hindi speakers who could not read Tilak's newspapers, the English Maratha and the Marathi Kesari.³ Non-political newspapers survived these years and less radical newspapers came into existence after 1910. The number of newspapers in the Central Provinces and Berar increased from thirty-two in 1910 to forty-six in 1920 with a rise in circulation from 16,102 to 36,975 during the decade.⁴ During this decade the Hitavada (Nagpur) became the most prominent newspaper. Like the Desh Sevak it had political organizational support but from the more moderate Servants of India Society of Gopal Krishna Gokhale, and this proved more acceptable.⁵

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1. PP, 1909, vol. 50 (Reports, vol. 64), "Return of Prosecutions Instituted for Seditious Writings and Speeches since January 1, 1907," p. 8. See also, Freedom Movement, pp. 222-23, and Directory, pp. 124 and 193. Two other editors of the Desh Sevak, Sambhu Ganesh Gadgil and Gopal Anant Ogle were also prosecuted and sentenced to imprisonment.
 2. PP, 1909, vol. 50 (Reports, vol. 64), p. 7 lists his case.
 3. Directory, p. 198.
 4. Great Britain, Indian Statutory Commission, Reports, vol. 13, "Memorandum submitted by the Government of the Central Provinces to the Indian Statutory Commission," (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1930), vol. 1 of the "Memorandum," p. 98. Hereafter the Simon Commission, Central Provinces.
 5. Directory, p. 201.

It is easier to trace the expansion of such publications than to determine their influence on the public and government. Up to 1905 few newspapers had circulations of more than five hundred and most ranged around three hundred. They reported on local activities as well as national and international developments.¹ The short life of many local newspapers indicates the lack of a sustained public interest and support. This does not, however, indicate a decline in public readers, or that people were apathetic. Many in the Province subscribed and read newspapers from outside such as the Marathi-language Kesari (Poona). British administrators generally relied on newspapers from Calcutta, Bombay or Allahabad. The Pioneer (Allahabad) in the 1890s ran a regular gossip and information column on the activities of the British community in the Central Provinces. These outside newspapers influenced the reading public as much or more than provincial ones.

In the Central Provinces newspapers had little apparent influence on administrators. Few officers kept informed of what was published. From 1870 on the government surveyed, extracted and translated articles from leading local papers for its own information. These were reprinted in the Selections from the Vernacular Newspapers and marked "confidential" for government officers only. Such reprints often touched on articles dealing with current legislation. Administrators tended to characterize Indian newspapers indifferently with comments, "critical, but loyal in tone," or "moderate and circumspect."²

1. Above on local government; national developments such as the Ilbert Bill in the early 1880s; and international ones such as the Irish struggle, for example in the Subodh Sindhu (Khandwa), 19 May 1886, p. 373.

2. C. P., Ad. Report 1884-85, p. 62; Central Provinces Gazetteer (1908), p. 109.

There were brief interludes when administrators considered the influence of the press as serious, such as in 1906-1909 during which it took steps to prosecute and jail some of the activist editors. But this was a temporary and specific interest of British administrators in the Indian press. After 1910 newspapers reverted very largely to their moderate tone and administrators returned to their general indifference toward the Indian press. In spite of its lack of direct influence on the administration, the Indian press grew rapidly and substantially in the two decades after 1880. It became an important medium for Indian expressions of criticism and for information in the Central Provinces among the small politically minded Indian public.

The number of books published during the period confirms the expansion of the public press. Though the number of books published annually fell from thirteen (1871/72) to ten (1885/86), the number increased again to thirteen (1890/91). By 1906/07 the number published was fifty-two and there were sixty-five the following year. This increased to 144 in 1910/11.¹ In the 1870s and 1880s most of the books consisted of school and other textbooks on subjects such as geography and grammar. By 1890 and thereafter, authors wrote on a wide range of topics including politics, cow-protection, caste reforms, religion, marriage and social customs, and agricultural improvements. (See selected listing, following page.)

1. C. P., Ad. Reports, app. for each year mentioned.

TABLE 11

TOPICS OF BOOKS PUBLISHED IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES

 Politics

Achyut Balwant Kolhatkar, Lectures given by Arvinda Ghosh at Nagpur on the Twenty-Third Congress Session, in Marathi (1908).

Cow-Protection

Hukum Haji Ali Khan, Gau Ashtak (Lamentation of a Cow), in Hindi (1895).

Bhagwan Din Durga, Goduka Padyar Ratiawali (Lamentation of a Cow), in Marathi (1898).

Secretary, Gorakshani Sabha, Nagpur, Seventh Annual Report, in Marathi (1897).

Caste reforms

Vasudeo Ganesh Singhnagpurkar, Charter or Sanad Granted to the Vaishyas by Jagatguru Srimat Shankarcharya (Claiming Vaishyas have rights to observe Vedic religion), in Marathi (1901).

Chandra Bau Deomanji, Sanatan Varna Vyavastha (Prose on the old cast system), in Marathi (1904).

Religious reforms

Deva Data, Gyan Chalisa (Proofs in favor of idolatry), in Hindi (1894).

Muhamad Mohiyudin, Noor amah (Advice to Muslims who do not observe namaj), in Hindi (1901).

Reforms of customs

Babu Gopal Ram of Guhamar, Naye Babu (A novel of a reformed gentleman, wishing for a fashionable wife and favoring widow remarriage), in Hindi (1895).

Rajadhar Lal Kayastha, Nari Prashansa (Praise of women), in Hindi (1904).

Agriculture

Central Provinces, Commissioner of Settlements and Agriculture, Field Crops Grown in the Central Provinces, in Hindi and English (1895).

Aulad Husain, Madhya Pradeshika Bandobast Ain (Settlement Code), in Hindi (1895).

SOURCE: Catalogue of Books Published in the Central Provinces.

Voluntary Associations

Voluntary associations were a second sphere of public activity the Indians used to promote political education and participate in public affairs. These associations showed a growth parallel and similar to the press: a slow expansion from government-sponsored local libraries and debating clubs to Indian-controlled improvement organizations with social and political goals.

According to lists of "Scientific and Literary Societies" in the Central Provinces, six were founded in the 1860s while the number of new societies increased to seventeen in the 1870s, and to twenty-eight in the 1880s.¹ All had rudimentary governing bodies which followed some form of Western procedure to manage funds and organize activities. The first Society was founded in Nagpur in 1863 in order "to read newspapers and books." By 1870 the "Native General Library" had 186 members and an annual income of 259 rupees. The government contributed one-third to its funds, and the balance was raised by subscriptions. Like other societies in the Central Provinces, the Library became a meeting place for public discussion and debate. At one meeting in 1877, B. K. Bose presented a paper on Mill's theory of Utilitarianism, which Andrew Fraser (then Under-Secretary to the Chief Commissioner) challenged in debate.² At another meeting in 1882 it was decided to establish the first college in Nagpur to commemorate the retirement of Chief Commissioner John Morris. A

1. C. P., Ad. Repts., 1871-72, 1884-85, 1885-86, and 1890-91, apps. C-1.

2. Fraser, Rajahs, pp. 69-70; Bose, Incidents, pp. 25-26.

large public subscription laid the foundation for a new society which became the governing body of the college. The College opened in 1885.¹

From the 1870s on, several societies expanded from literary discussions, debating, and educational activities to a consideration of social and political issues. One of the earliest (1876) was the Jabalpur Anjuman Islamia whose many goals included the education of Muslim boys, the care of orphans and the poor, the maintenance of Muslim buildings, the review of the activities of the Central Provinces administration, and the improvement of the Muslim community "with especial appeals to Government if necessary."² In one memorial to the Central Provinces administration in 1886, the Anjuman Islamia asked for more Muslim representation on the Jabalpur Municipal Committee through the establishment of separate Muslim electorates.³ Although denied, the idea of separate Muslim electorates gained Muslim support in India generally and twenty-five years later became a part of the electoral machinery for some parts of India under the Morley-minto reforms.

The societies established from 1860 to 1890 gradually expanded in numbers, in variety of interests and activities, and also spread beyond the larger towns. By 1880 the Saugor Hit Subha (welfare society) had branches in the out-lying towns of Rehli, Khurai and Banda. By the end of the 1880s various associations in Jabalpur district existed in Sihora, Murwara, and Bijeragogarh as well as Jabalpur; societies in Hoshangabad spread to Harda and Seoni-Malwa. In the Marathi districts

1. Bose, Incidents, pp. 35-37.

2. C. P., Ad. Rept. 1884-85, app. C-1.

3. Chief Commissioner to the Anjuman Islamia, Jabalpur, 11 February 1886 CPHP, Municipal, February, pp. 10-12.

there were societies in Arvi, Ashti, and Hinganghat adjacent to Wardha; Powni, Saholi and Palandur adjacent to Bhandara; and Warora, Mul, and Brahmapuri adjacent to Chanda. The 1880s also spawned the first societies in the plateau districts of Chhindwara, Betul and Seoni, but the Chhattisgarh area had none until the 1890s,¹

"Literary and Scientific Societies" expanded in numbers, interests, and locations during the 1870s and 1880s and remained largely district or sub-district associations. While societies at this level continued their expansion in the twentieth century, associations at the provincial and national levels began to develop in the late 1880s. Almost all of these had either direct or informal ties with regional or national organizations. Two characteristics of these organizations were (i) the influence from outside the province of politicians, ideas, and movements; and (ii) the dominance of the Marathi districts, especially Nagpur, over the rest of the province during this period. Maharashtra and Berar particularly influenced Nagpur activities perhaps because social and cultural ties (which had been formed during the pre-British era of the Bhonsla kingdom as part of the "Maratha Confederacy") remained strong. Nagpur, in turn, became the center of political activity in the Central Provinces. There in 1886 the Lok Sabha or "People's Association" was formed by the delegates returning from the Second Session of the Indian National Congress. It was modeled after a Poona organization, the Sarvajanic Sabha, in an effort "to agitate [for] the wants and greivences of the natives of the Central Provinces in a moderate and

1. No Chhattishgarh societies are on the lists I consulted in the Ad. Repts., apps. C-1. However, the Raipur District Gazetteer (1973), p. 530, lists a Raipur debating society existing in 1867, a Scientific and Literary society in 1870, and a Raipur Reading Club in 1889.

constitutional way." Gangdhar Rao Chitnavis served as president with Babpu Rao Kinkhede as secretary.¹

With the amalgamation of Berar and the Central Provinces in 1903, Central Provinces politics, which centered around Nagpur, became even more influenced by the Maharashtra politicians of Poona and Berar. The Maharashtra leaders, Tilak and Gokhale, regularly toured and gave speeches at Nagpur and in the province after 1903. When political ideology and methods in India polarized in 1906-1909, Ganesh Srikrishna Khaparde led the Tilak activist faction in Berar and the Central Provinces, while Raganath Narasingh Mudholkar, also from Berar, headed the Moderates. Nagpur politicians such as Balkrishna Sheoram Munjee, Nilkantrao Udhoji, and Achyutrao Kolhatkar promoted extremist activities through their Rashtriya Mandal founded in 1907. The Mandal encouraged the movements of swadeshi, temperance, and national education as well as Indian cultural propaganda at the Shivaji and Ganesh festivals.²

Nagpur overshadowed other areas of the Central Provinces with its participation in the National Congress. Of thirty-seven Central Provinces delegates who spoke at National Congress sessions between 1885 and 1917 over half (twenty-one) came from Nagpur. Other non-Marathi areas such as Hoshangabad, Jabalpur, Bilaspur, and Raipur contributed only one or two spokesmen each.³ Because of Nagpur's active participation

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1. Quotes are from Nyaya Sudha, 13 October 1886, p. 729. See also its 31 October 1888, p. 729 issue for its second anniversary meeting.
 2. Freedom Movement, pp. 312 and 256, and Directory, p. 989.
 3. Bimanbehari Majumdar and Bhakat Prasad Mazumdar, Congress and Congressmen in the Pre-Gandhian Era, 1885-1917 (Calcutta; Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1967), pp. 259-392.

in the Congress, it was the only Central Provinces city to host the National Congress twice (1881 and 1920) and a third session was planned but because of public friction between the Moderates and Extremists on the Nagpur Reception Committee, the location was changed to Surat. Another national organization, the Muslim League, held its second annual session at Nagpur in 1910. Khan Bahadur H. M. Malak, the leader of Nagpur's Borha Muslim community, had invited the League at its previous session. Because of the efforts of Malak and other Muslim leaders, several branches of the League were established in the Central Provinces.¹

Provincial Conferences of the National Congress were also held in Nagpur as early as 1905. G. R. Chitnavis presided over the second annual Conference at Jabalpur, and Mudholkar was elected president of the third at Raipur. The Extremist, Khaparde refused to attend the 1907 Conference sessions, though he appeared and gave a public speech in Raipur while the Conference was in session.² The next (fourth) Provincial Conference convened after some years in 1915, also at Nagpur.³ When the Home Rule movement began, Nagpur established the first headquarters in 1916 with a "Provincial Association" under the presidency of H. S. Gour.⁴ In 1917 and 1918 political activities increased and the first District Political Conferences, protest meetings, and Home Rule branches spread from Nagpur to other parts of the province. In 1918 political meetings were held in Wardha, Chanda, Balaghat, Chhindwara,

1. Freedom Movement, p. 241, and Directory, p. 124.

2. Freedom Movement, pp. 253-54, and Directory, p. 123.

3. Freedom Movement, pp. 267-68.

4. Ibid., p. 271.

Dhantari, Damoh, and Saugor.¹ 1919 saw meetings held at Hoshangabad, Chanda, Wardha, Chhindwara, Saoner, and Nagpur, and in the first half of 1920 meetings were held at Raipur, Hoshangabad, Jabalpur, and Narsinghpur to discuss and explain the Swaraj and Khilafat movements.² By 1920 politicians from outside the Marathi area, such as Vishnu Dutt Skukul of Jabalpur and Ravi Shankar Shukla of Raipur, began to play prominent roles. The Nagpur National Congress session in late 1920 approved of Gandhi's non-cooperation movement. This movement launched a new era both for national and provincial politics.³

In their participation in the National Congress movement and under the influence of Maharashtra leaders, Nagpur dominated politics in the province after the 1880s. The three most active periods were the early 1890s, from 1906 to 1909 and the second half of the 1910s. It was not until the years just preceding 1920 that national movements expanded into other areas outside Nagpur.

1. Ibid., pp. 280-81.

2. Ibid., pp. 284-85, 292-93

3. For political development in the Central Provinces from 1919 to 1939, see David E. U. Baker's thesis, "Politics in a Bilingual Province, the Central Provinces and Berar, India, 1919-1939," (Ph. D. dissertation, Australian National University, 1969). Baker traces the transition of provincial politics from Marathi dominance in 1920 to Hindi dominance by 1939. He emphasizes the competition between the two groups and suggests that the Hindi leaders successfully struggled to push Marathi politicians out of provincial and national politics in the area. My own interpretation of this post-1920 period would argue, the increasing involvement of Marathi leaders in Maharashtra regional movements such as the Hindu Mahasabha left the provincial and national arenas open to Hindi politicians of the Central Provinces.

During this same period another type of voluntary organization was founded in the Central Provinces. These new associations had little or no connection with the Indian National Congress or with the Western education societies. Their goals and methods were often less Western and less concerned with changing the British-Indian representative structure. On the one hand they articulated grievances and sought British administrative relief, while on the other they sought their own group's social, economic, or religious improvement within the existing British colonial environment. Examples of these are the Central Provinces Kayastha Sabha in the early 1890s, the Landlords Association of Nagpur in the early 1880s, of Bilaspur in the early 1890s, and of Jabalpur in the early 1900s, and the Gorakshan Sabhas after 1888. The Gorakshan Sabha perhaps best illustrates this type of organization.

The Gorakshan Sabha first began in Nagpur in 1888 and within a year thirty-eight other Sabhas had been founded in the Province.¹ Their main goal was to improve the protection and shelter of cattle and prevent cow-slaughter. An editorial in a Central Provinces newspaper expressed certain other overtones of the Gorakshan Sabha.

Though no immediate good accrues from the Gorakshini Sabhas, they are highly beneficial on political, religious and economic grounds and deserve to be supported by all right-thinking people. It is to be regretted that since the establishment of British rule and the spread of Western ideas in this country, the belief of the Indians in their religions has been considerably weakened. The interests of all classes of people are identical, but they foolishly overlook this fact.²

The movement was a strong protest against Western use of the cow for food which was contrary to Hindu belief. The Sabha formed an ultra-conservative group in the spectrum of voluntary organizations. In raising the issue of the protection of the cow they stirred public feeling and caused a serious problem for the administration.

1. Nyaya Sudha, 29 January 1894, p. 62.

By 1893 the Central Provinces administration, like other provincial administrations in India, was wondering how best to deal with the cow-protection movement. One reason the British had recommended G. M. Chitnavis as the C. P. representative on the Governor-General's Council in November of 1893 was that Mr. Chitnavis had been one of the "earliest members" of the Nagpur Gorakshan Sabha though he had "never been very enthusiastic." The Chief Commissioner hoped that Mr. Chitnavis' influence could be "profitably employed to keep the society from dangerous developments."¹

From the time of the second anniversary meeting of the Nagpur Gorakshan Sabha in October 1889 to the mid-1890s, each annual meeting became a local celebration which attracted wide, and even national, attention. Cow-protection leaders with national reputations such as Sriram Swami, Munshi Mohan Lal of the Allahabad Central Cow-Protection Society, and Seth Lakshmi Das Khimji of Bombay attended. In 1889, some leaders were greeted at the railway station by crowds and joined in a "grand procession" through Nagpur's

public streets and thoroughfares At the head of the procession were elephants, camels and horses which were well adorned. They were followed by an immense crowd of some 20,000 men who sang religious songs, and behind that crowd were the kine: the procession came to a close at a fixed place, where the kine were worshipped and food and clothing were distributed to the poor.²

In the 1889 procession the cattle consisted of "four hundred and fifty-two kine which the Nagpur society had bought from butchers,"³ The

1. Chief Commissioner to the GOI, Legislative Department, 4 November 1893, CPHP, Judicial, November 1893, p. 73.

2. Nyaya Sudha, 6 November 1889, p. 705.

3. Ibid.

procession was usually followed by an evening display of fireworks, after which meetings were held where leaders spoke, the Gorakshan Sabha's annual report was read, and resolutions were passed.¹

While the Sabhas in the Central Provinces did not succeed in prohibiting cow slaughter, it met with some success. One paper claimed that the annual number of cattle slaughtered at Nagpur dropped from 16,000 to 487, and that 50,000 Mahars, Mangs and Gonds gave up eating meat.² Two villages in Nimar district decided that anyone selling cattle to butchers would be excommunicated and forced to pay a fine of fifty-one rupees for expiation and re-admission into his caste.³ In the late 1890s several Municipal Committees framed by-laws to regulate cow-slaughter and the sale of meat. At the large cattle fair at Garhakota (Saugor district), Gorkshan Sabha chaprasis went around with badges and collection boxes. Their presence may have influenced a decrease in the number of cattle slaughtered at the fair in 1893.⁴ Mr. Chapman, the Assistant Commissioner, commented that the presence of Gorakshan chaprasis was "enough to deter many a wavering Hindoo from the sale of his old and broken-down bullock. It is a great pity that the Hindoos do not realize that it is much kinder to put such animals out of the world than to prolong for them what must be a miserable existence."⁵ About 82,000 cattle were brought to the fair, of

1. For descriptions of one of the most publicized meetings, the Sixth Anniversary meeting in 1894, see Nyaya Sudha, 29 January 1894; Nagari Nirad (Mirzapur), 25 January, p. 92, and March, p. 161.

2. Subodh Sindhu, 24 May 1893, p. 210. 3. *Ibid*, 17 February 1892, p. 62.

4. Mr. Chapman, Assistant Commissioner, and Dr. Martin, Civil Surgeon, report on the Gorakota Fair of 1893, CPHP, Medical, July 1893, pp. 145-154, especially pars, 9, 28, 40, and 41, on pp. 145, 151, and 153.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 145.

which 26,000 were sold and almost 4,000 slaughtered during the fair in February 1893.

The sale of a buffalo from a Damoh village to a fakir who in turn sold it to a butcher almost caused a riot. When the villagers learned that the buffalo would be taken to Jabalpur and slaughtered for the Commisariat, they asked that the buffalo be returned to them. When their request was refused, they seized the entire herd and impounded it in their village on a trespassing charge. The Bania landholder of the village "was one of the prime movers in the anti-kine-killing agitation just then in the zenith of its vigor in the district."¹

The Gorakshan Sabha movement contributed to some friction between the Hindu and Muslim communities. Communal or religious riots and tensions between Hindus and Muslims were a common feature in the Central Provinces during these years (the late 1880s and early 1890s). Friction resulting in arrests occurred in Burhanpur (once in 1890 and twice in 1891), in Jabalpur (in 1892), and in Hoshangabad and Wardha (in 1893),² None of the arrests or riots except the Damoh case were traced directly to the Gorakshan movement but they stimulated opposite opinions. A Muslim newspaper, Mauj-i-Narbadda, remarked "The Hindus ought to see that" it would be "good sense . . . to prevent men being slaughtered in religious disputes, rather than prevent the slaughter of cows and thereby lead to human bloodshed."³ The Hindu-owned Subodh Sindhu regretted "the revival of religious animosity between

1. CPHP, General, May 1894, p. 15.

2. Ibid., pp. 14-17. Also list of communal riots in the Simon Commission, Central Provinces, pp. 90-92, which adds a riot in Burhanpur in 1889.

3. 8 November 1893, p. 498.

Hindus and Muslims," and observed Muslims were "not justified in claiming greater privileges than " Hindus.¹

Whether they wished it or not the Gorakshan Sabha of Nagpur was caught up in the controversy. The sessions of 1893 and 1894 tried to clear themselves by passing resolutions denying they were responsible for religious riots while declaring their fervent loyalty to British rule. In a speech at the Second Anniversary meeting of the Gorakshan Sabha, Sriram Swami "endeavored to show that the cow-protection movement was a perfectly loyal one and said that the police were not justified in harrassing the supporters of the movement."² The Sixth Anniversary meeting "resolved to forward a memorial to Parliament with the view to show that the Gorakshini Sabhas are in no way responsible for the Hindu-Muhammadan riots which had occurred in several places,"³ It also stated, "Loyalty to Her Majesty being highly beneficial to the people, the Sabha will make a point of encouraging the spread of loyalty among them by means of cow-protection."⁴ The Nagpur Corakshan Sabha, perhaps exceptional to other Sabhas, claimed support of Muslims such as Khan Bahadur Malak of Nagpur and Mohammad Muritza Khan of Seoni,⁵ In 1894 the Gorakshan Sabha showed concern over Muslim-Hindu disputes by petitioning the government to establish clear rules for each religious community in order to prevent disputes. The government replied that

1. 10 October 1894, p. 50.

2. Nyaya Sudha, 6 November 1889, p. 705.

3. Ibid, 29 January 1894, p. 62.

4. Godharm Prakash (Farukabad), March 1894, p. 161.

5. Freedom Movement, p. 240. The Nyaya Sudha, 29 January 1894, p. 62 claims Muslims sympathized with the movement,

it would deal with religious disputes impartially, deciding through "patient enquiry" and "according to established custom and usage."¹

At the next meeting the Nagpur Gorakshan Sabha thanked the government for "following the good principles" for settling religious disputes.

It also passed resolutions that (i) the "Government should take steps to restrict the wholesale slaughter of kine and oxen," (ii) "establish dairies and improve the breed of cattle," (iii) that "those Municipal Boards in the Central Provinces which have not yet framed by-laws to regulate the slaughter of cattle and the sale of meat" should do so, and (iv) the Central Provinces administration should publish in translation the report on the enumeration of cattle recently taken in the Central Provinces.²

Few religious disputes are recorded in the Central Provinces after the 1890s. The Nagpur Divisional Commissioner, Reginold Craddock, helped prevent one from occurring in 1903, but even by then it appears that informal religious conciliation boards, with Hindus, Muslims, and British officers as members, had been established to settle disputes before they led to violence. In 1915 the Central Provinces administration felt that since these advisory boards had functioned so well in the past there was no need for a law formalizing them.³

After the 1890s the Gorakshan Sabhas diminished in their importance and activities. A 1912 Administration report said the thirty-five Sabhas

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1. CPHP, September 1894, General #8-9, pp. 21-22, and CPHP, June 1894, General #49-53, Part IIB.
 2. Nyaya Sudha, 18 February 1895, pp. 108-09
 3. CPGAP, May 1915, pp. 9-25, especially p. 25.

existing in the Province, were "not connected with any central body but are purely local institutions." The cow-protection movement had been

useful in the old days, when disloyalty showed itself insidiously but as soon as agitation came out into the open it was found to be too tame, and was discarded for more rabid methods.¹

By 1912 the Administration itself was concerned with the regulation of cattle slaughter, not because of the reasons advanced by the Gorakshan movement, which by 1912 was less active as an organization, but as a step to prevent cruel practices in the slaughtering of cattle. At first it wished to amend the Cruelty to Animals Act of 1890 (Act XI of 1890), but the Government of India suggested a completely new Bill should be formed. The Central Provinces Slaughter of Animals Act was passed in 1915.²

Two reasons for this Act appear to be the increased slaughter of cattle and a report on slaughter methods. By 1910 cattle slaughter had

an extensive industry . . . all over the Province. Worn out animals are now eagerly bought up and killed; their hides are dried and exported, and the meat is cured and sent to Madras and Burma The blood, horns and hoofs are other products which yield a return. The religious scruples of the Hindus have given way to the temptation of obtaining what is to them a substantial sum for a valueless animal. . . . At first this was done by stealth, and efforts were made to impose severe penalties on anybody guilty of the crime of being accessory to the death of sacred kine. . . . But such attempts at restriction have generally proved fruitless, and the trade is now openly practiced and acquiesced in by public opinion Kasais (the butcher caste) themselves are generally prosperous.³

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1. Freedom Movement, pp. 259-260. The report above is un-named in the Freedom Movement. It was written in 1912 as an answer to a GOI questionnaire about the situation in the provinces of India in anticipation of a war breaking out in Europe.
 2. Three sets of proceedings on this Act: CPPP, January 1912, pp. 1-3; CPGAP, May 1914, pp. 1-8; and CPGAP, January 1916, pp. 2-10.
 3. Russell, Tribes and Castes, 3:347-48.

It was a 1910 report on the slaughter practices in Saugor district by the Deputy Commissioner of the district, R. M. King, which perhaps initiated the administration's desire for a new law. King showed what he felt were extremely cruel practices in the slaughter of cattle. He emphasized first, since the hide was the most valuable product, cattle brought to slaughter were often in emaciated conditions, some even being carried in by cart; second, the cattle awaiting slaughter were not fed or cared for well in the yards; and third, they were slaughtered in the open presence of other dying cattle. About 52,000 cattle were slaughtered in six months in this manner at one of the three slaughtering yards of the district.¹ King remarked that cultivators received "thousands and thousands of rupees over animals which were absolutely useless otherwise. This is why the various crusades and pamphlets against kine-killing engineered from head-quarters have not met with any practical responses,"² In his "confidential" report, King predicted the way cattle were cruelly slaughtered "cannot continue to escape public attention much longer and I imagine that even this note of an obscure District Officer would not be altogether unproductive of excitement if it became public property or found its way into the newspapers."³ Six years after he wrote it, King's "Note" was circulated to district officers when the Slaughter of Animals Act of 1915 was passed; expecting that it might "be useful in showing what are the evils which the rules should be designed to prevent."⁴

1. R. M. King, Note, in CPGAP, January 1916, pp. 4-10. King estimated that each cattle slaughtered brought about eleven and one-half rupees profit, with two-thirds of it coming from the hide and bones and one-third from the meat; other products covered the slaughtering fee per cattle of two and one-fourth annas.

2. Ibid., pp. 8-9.

3. Ibid., p. 9.

4. CPGAP, January 1916, p. 3.

During the heyday of its activities in the 1890s, the Nagpur Gorakshan Sabha provided an ideological focal point for incipient Indian nationalism through a non-British cultural revival. The Sabha's annual gatherings exhibited, on the one hand, the celebration of Indian values somewhat similar to the later popularizations of the Ganesh and Shivaji festivals, and, on the other hand, Western procedures of passing resolutions and petitioning Government similar to the more structured National Congress. This dual nature of the cow-protection movement provided a link between Indian popular culture and Western types of associations, and between the nineteenth century milder proposals of Indians for representation and reform, and the twentieth century demands for the end of British rule. Thus the importance of the Gorakshan Sabha declined as other movements and activities eventually better served the larger purposes and concerns of the early Gorakshan Sabhas. In the growth of voluntary organizations between 1860 and 1920, the Gorakshan Sabha provides an example of a transitional organization from the Western "Scientific and Literary Societies," to other Indian national and provincial political movements.

Petitions

The new voluntary organizations and the modern press could trace their origins to the West when India was under British rule. An earlier means of influencing government policy--the petition--originated long before British rule in India and became a major vehicle for Indians to express their grievances and demands during British rule. Any person, group or organization could address the Government in a petition, whether it took the form of a request, a memorial, a resolution, a letter, a newspaper editorial, or a verbal presentation from a deputation meeting with

government officials. The subject of a petition could be as minor as an Indian government clerk requestion reinstatement or promotion, or as major as a proposal to radically restructure represnetative institutions,

As British institutions of self-government and the courts often proved too narrow and inadequate forums for consideration of a wide-range of Indian grievences and demands, Indians directly petitioned the administration. The administration could deny or accept petitions either in part or in whole by providing answers or reasons, but they seldom ignored them. We have already noted several examples of these petitions: for granting an Indian representative on the Governor-General's Legislative Council; for establishing a Central Provinces and Berar Legislative Council; as revealed in the opinions of newspapers transmitted to the Administration for action; and from such organizations as the Anjuman Islamia, the National and Provincial Congress, and the Gorakshan Sabha. Petitions were the primary means for Indian interaction with Government during the period from 1860 to 1920 in the Central Provinces. It is perhaps for this reason that a book on the Central Provinces' Freedom Movement has included a chapter entitled, "The Years of Petitioning," covering the years 1892-1899. But that characterization for those years might easily apply to the entire six decades, except the years of direct action between 1906 to 1909.¹

1. Freedom Movement, Part II, Chapter 2, heading p. 187. During the years of direct action Indians actively participated in the Swadeshi, national education, and temperance movements. They were arrested for making seditious speches, publishing seditious articles, and for disfiguring a statute of Queen Victoria in Nagpur. Students boycotted classes, attended political meetings, greeted their teachers with the forbidden slogan of "Bande Mataram," and one time attacked a British Professor. By 1910 the calm of the years of petitioning returned, not to be disturbed until the 1920s with the activities of Gandhi's Swaraj program. See Freedom Movement, pp. 213-226, 247-49, 255-56 for these years, as well as Bose, Incidents, pp. 114-123, and Directory, pp.123-24.

While Indians petitioned the administration on topics such as self-government and cow-protection, they also petitioned about land taxation. This topic was of paramount importance to Indians as well as to the administration. Most of the population of the Central Provinces worked in agriculture and the land tax was the largest source of revenue for the Administration. Indians as individuals or as groups frequently petitioned for changes in the land taxation system. Madho Rao Gangadhar Chitnavis petitioned in the 1870s that his family's rent-free (mokassa) villages be made a permanent possession.¹ A landholder and businessman of Jabalpur, Raja Gokuldas, was denied some of his petitions on land issues from the 1880s to the early years of the twentieth century. (See Chapter VIII.) The Bhuskatte family of Hoshangabad and Nimar districts was denied the continuation of income from some revenue-free villages in 1881, while the Gond Raja family of the Bhandra estate in Jabalpur district was awarded its revenue-free village (maufi) following a petition in 1916.²

A much earlier example of a collective petition occurred in the mid-1820s, before the British period in Central Provinces. From 1806 to 1844 the western part of Hoshangabad district, the Handia-Harda tract, was ruled by the Raja of Gwalior through his appointed governors. Mohan Singh, the governor from 1818 to 1824, imposed harsh and excessive

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1. All of these proceedings are in IFP, Revenue: March 1870, #14-16; September 1870, #9-12; February 1876, #1-10; March 1876, #1-3; and June 1876, #15-16.
 2. For Bhuskatte, see CPRAP, December 1881, pp, 3-16. The petition was originally made in 1878. For Bhandra, see CPRSP, September 1916, #4-15, and CPPMP, October 1919, #4-5.

land and other taxes on the people. When he decided to impose a tax on domestic brass pots (lotas), the people

could stand it no longer, and went off in a body, cultivators and Malgoozars together, to Gwalior to complain. The Goojurs, as the chief agricultural clan, took the lead. They were well received, and the head of the clan (Man Sing, of Runhai) was made Kumasdars (governor) in Mohan Singh's place.¹

Three examples of land tax petitions during British rule in the Central Provinces come from the Landholders Associations of Nagpur, Bilaspur, and Jabalpur.

The landholders of Nagpur district petitioned the government twice in the early 1880s.² Both petitions followed changes introduced in the new Central Provinces Land Revenue Act of 1881 (Act XVIII of 1881). They felt that the new land act infringed upon or interfered with their possessions, powers or position in three ways. First, the Act asserted the Government's rights to various properties including the sap of the palmyra tree, though the government had not reserved this right in the 1860s land revenue settlement. The landholders felt the new Act (Section 151) involved "a total and immediate confiscation of one of the most valuable parts of their properties."³ Second, the Act allowed subordinate land revenue officers to decide some questions by themselves, without a public court hearing as had been required before the Act. Third, the landholders strongly objected to the "novel" and "mischievous" provision for the government to appoint mukaddams or village headmen for the collection and payment of land revenue in villages where the landholder

1. Hoshangabad Settlement Report (1867), p. 39,

2. The first set of petitions is in IRAP, November 1881, #35, pp. 397-98, while the second is "The humble petition of the undersigned landholders in the Nagpur Division," 22 May 1882, in India, Letters, Revenue #1929/82, Hereafter Nagpur "Petition" (1882).

3. Nagpur "Petition" (1882), par. 6.

did not reside. The government appointment of mukaddams would undermine the position of landholders: their position would be "shaken" and the mukaddams would "in the eyes of the villagers carry all the dignity belonging to" the landholders.¹ The petitioners suggested they be allowed to select mukaddams in villages where they did not reside.

The landholders wanted specific action on two issues which the new Act left to the executive orders of the administrators. First they asked for a clear policy on land revenue assessment. Landholders feared that without legislation there would be no "safeguards against the excessive zeal of settlement officers," who would over-assess the land value. A second request was for the fixing of the dates and the number of installments of payment of the land tax. A year earlier the installment dates had been changed by the administration, causing the landholders extreme "inconvenience." They feared that "all officers from the Chief Commissioner downwards are apt to make mistakes" in fixing the installment dates.² The petitioners, therefore, asked that the 1881 Act be rescinded and a new Act formed. The petition carried the individual signatures of 717 landholders with their thumbprints.

The Central Provinces administration countered each objection with its own reasons; as a result, the 1881 Land Revenue Act continued in force without change or amendment at the time.³ The administration made only one concession-- that it would not enforce its right to the palmyra tree's sap until the next settlement,

1. Ibid., par. 7.

2. Ibid., par. 4

3. Central Provinces to GOI, 28 June 1882, in India, Letters, Revenue #1929/82.

Landlords in Bilaspur also petitioned the administration, "A vast concourse of people," at least 10,000 cultivators and landholders, greeted Chief Commissioner MacDonnell when he arrived at the railway station on August 24, 1891.¹ They were there to protest a recently completed Land Revenue Settlement of the district. As it was reported in the Nyaya Sudha (Harda) 15th July, they had already disapproved "the large increase in the revenue assessment in the Bilaspur District," predicting that it "would ruin the landholders before too long!"² The new Settlement raised the rents that had been set in the last settlement (1868) from Rs. 331,148 to Rs. 680,640, or about 105 percent, so the land revenue increased from Rs. 251,587 to Rs. 474,648 or about 89 percent.³

A deputation of landholders met Chief Commissioner Anthony P. MacDonnell the next day and presented their petition. It asked for a public enquiry into the Settlement so as to "grant" the people of Bilaspur district "relief from an oppressive and ruinous Settlement."⁴

The lengthy petition specifically named incidents, persons, and villages which showed the incorrectness and illegality of the Settlement

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1. A. P. MacDonnell, Minute of 4 September 1891, in CPRAP, September 1891, p. 36
 2. 15 July 1891, p. 514.
 3. Revenue was based partly on rents. Central Provinces to Government of India, 4 September 1891, with Statements A and B, in CPRAP, September 1891, pp. 28-29. The Settlement Officer claimed he found the landholders had already raised rents by 84 percent before re-settlement began, and he merely raised them a further 11.6 percent.
 4. "The humble petition of the undersigned malguzars and cultivators of the Bilaspur and Seorinarain Tahsils and part of the Mungeli Tahsil" to the Chief Commissioner, 24 August 1891, in CPRAP, September, p. 46, par. 17.

Officer's procedures. They claimed the government had not given attention to a number of considerations. Agricultural soils, on which the assessment was based, were classified as richer than in reality; tenants were forced to admit they paid higher rents and those were further enhanced; landholders' fields were listed as cultivated though they were fallow; the non-agricultural income of landholders from forests, wastelands, etc. was included in their assets though the income was never actually realized; the Settlement Officer had made extravagant demands for supplies and accommodations and then grossly underpaid the landholders for them; and the Settlement Officer had prevented the people from complaining to other district officers and had rejected all their appeals during the Settlement proceedings. They were especially distressed because the new Settlement was to last only twelve years while the petitioners wished for a thirty-year settlement.¹

MacDonnell essentially rejected the claims of the petition. On the economic aspects, he pointed out that since 1868 cultivated land had expanded by forty percent, and prices of agricultural products had risen by ninety percent.² MacDonnell felt that the

Settlement if properly understood is not unfair,... Many malguzars find their liabilities to Government doubled; but they do not always seem to realize that the share of the value of the produce per acre taken by the Government is absolutely small (being indeed only 4 percent), while their means of meeting the liabilities imposed on them by the Settlement have been greatly increased.³

1. Ibid., pp. 41-46

2. This meant that though land revenue jumped by about 89 percent, it rose by only 30 percent per acre. With produce per acre estimated at eight rupees and land revenue at five and one-half annas per acre, the land revenue amounted to 4.3 percent of the produce.

3. MacDonnell, Minute, par. 3, p. 36.

Although this was the first time that tenants had joined with landholders to protest a Settlement in the Central Provinces, MacDonnell considered the ryots' or tenants' participation as more "to making an impression on me and coercing me into conceding malguzars' demands, than with the object of improving the ryots' own position,"¹ In addition, outsiders or "strangers" from Wardha district, had "come here on a special mission" to discredit the Bilaspur Settlement Officer who was not making a new settlement in Wardha district. In MacDonnell's opinion, "the fault-finders in Wardha who have sent emissaries to agitate here, are actuated by no spirit of opposition to the Settlement operations generally; but that they are honestly afraid that" the Settlement Officer "will over-assess their estates." He added, the "complaints and objections" to the Settlement proceedings were made too late; and that the Settlement Officer had not "attempted to hoodwink the Settlement Commissioner," or taken the "risk and danger of interposing between him and the people." So MacDonnell dismissed the petitioner' "excuses" for not complaining earlier, regarding them as "frivolous."

While MacDonnell could find no economic or political reason for reopening the Settlement, the petition did leave an impression on him, and he set in motion some changes in Settlement proceedings generally. He wanted, in all future announcements of Settlements, for the Settlement Officer to "explain to the mulguzars and ryots the character, results

1. MacDonnell, Memorandum on the Bilaspur Settlement, 4 September 1891, par. 1, in CPRAP, September 1891, p. 37.

and justification of the Settlement as it affects them personally,"¹ He wanted District officers to associate themselves in this process "to resolve misapprehensions." From the 1890s on, Settlement proceedings started to require the Settlement Officers to explain their decisions to the tenants and landholders. Settlement Boards were established in the first years of the 1900s composed of Settlement Officer, other officials, and two or three Indian landlords meeting to discuss Settlement procedures and decisions.² The new Land Revenue law of 1917 required all Settlement Officers to meet with prominent landholders and discuss their "forecast" report before actual Settlement operations began.³

While the new Land Revenue Act of 1881 and a new land revenue Settlement in 1891 prompted petitions at those times, famines in the late 1890s induced the Jabalpur Landholders and Tenants Association to petition the administration in 1899, and again in 1903 and 1904. The first petition asked for three changes: (i) that the government assist landlords in collecting rents, (ii) that village accountants (patwaris) be made to provide information which landlords needed, and (iii) that the land revenue be revised to a moderate level.⁴ Concerning rent

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1. MacDonnell, Minute, par. 3, p. 36.
 2. See CPRAP, October 1901, pp. 253-269; and CPSSP, April 1906, #1-8, pp. 1-4.
 3. See C. P., Administration Reports 1921-22, Part 3, pp. 136-148, especially pars. 189, 191, 142, 145-47 for description of the settlement procedures. Meetings to consider "forecast reports" in the 1920s revealed strong Indian opposition to the initiation of a fourth round of Settlements in the Central Provinces. This opposition was one of the reasons the administration decided there was not enough justification for these fourth Settlements in most of the districts.
 4. Memorial from the Landholders and Tenants Association, Central Provinces, Jabalpur, to J. B. Fuller, Commissioner, Jabalpur Division, 26 March 1899, in CPRAP, May 1900, pp. 19-20,

collecting, the Association felt that since the government strictly required landlords to pay land revenue, and since tenants' rents formed the largest proportion of the landlord's income, the government should assist landlords in collecting rents. They reported that patwaris (village accountants) had adopted attitudes of "nonchalant inertness," "obstructiveness," and "wrong-headed reticence" toward both the landlords and cultivators, so they could no longer obtain vital information. They reiterated their hope for moderation of the land revenue in light of the changed agricultural conditions caused by the famines.

The administration replied that facilities already existed for landlords to eject tenants for non-payment of rent or to institute proceedings to collect rents through the courts. It recognized there might be a problem with patwaris who could "often be arrogant and extremely provoking to malguzars and ryots," and they would consider making some changes.¹ As for moderating the land revenue itself, the administration felt it too "wide and general" a topic to deal with at the time.²

From 1900 to 1903, the administration acted on each of the issues raised by the petitioners. The administration decided the main problem with rent collections related to the dates when revenue installments were due. In some cases "the money-lender attaches the crops" from the tenants before the date that landlords were allowed to collect rents,

1. R. H. Craddock, Officiating Commissioner of Settlements and Agriculture to the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, 30 September 1899, in *Ibid.*, p. 25,

2. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

so that "the tenant has nothing left from which the rent can be recovered."¹ Accordingly the installment dates in districts and tahsils were revised to allow landlords an earlier date to collect rents.² Second, under a new rule, patwaris were ordered to show and obtain the signature of the village executive headman (lambardar) each year when the land revenue was paid.³ Third, because an Indian economist, R. C. Dutt, had severely criticized British land revenue policy and specifically objected to the settlements in Central Provinces, the Government of India along with Central Provinces revenue administrators reviewed and refuted the criticisms of Mr. Dutt in a Resolution in 1902.⁴

Information about the administration's decisions apparently was not widely circulated or reported. The Jabalpur Landholders and Tenants Association seemed unaware or uninformed of these orders and changes so they asked the administration in 1903 for a reply to their 1899 memorial. The administration replied that it had asked the Jabalpur Division Commissioner to reply to their memorial in 1900. The Association had not received the reply so the administration sent a copy of it to them. At the same time they reviewed changes that had taken place since then and also made reference to the Government of India's Resolution on Land Revenue Policy of 1902.⁵

1. Ibid., p. 22.

2. CPRAP, August 1901, Revenue #9-17, pp. 97-127.

3. Chief Commissioner to the Commissioner, Jabalpur Division, 10 November 1903, par. 4, in CPRAP, November 1903, Revenue #10, p. 36.

4. Romesh C. Dutt, letter, 12 February 1900, in CPRAP, April 1901, pp. 119-122, and replies, pp. 123-156. See also Land Revenue Policy of the Indian Government (Calcutta: Government Printing, 1920), Chapter VI,

5. CPRAP, November 1903, Revenue #7-9, pp. 33-37.

This still did not satisfy the Association which in 1904 said it had not yet received an Indian language copy of the Government of India's Resolution. In a lengthy and carefully documented memorial it traced the agricultural decline since 1893 and asked that land revenue be moderated.¹

The administration's reply this time showed some irritation. It said the Association's documentation was "misleading," with statistics of "absolutely no accuracy," and "obviously erroneous calculations."² The Chief Commissioner noted that nowhere had the Association mentioned the large remissions (about one-fourth) of land revenue which the administration had allowed during the famine years. The Administration saw no need, now that there was a recovery in agriculture, for further remissions. He added that unless further memorials were "signed by members of the Association," or "accompanied by a copy of the proceedings of the Association," the administration would not regard the memorials "as necessarily deserving attention."³

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1. Memorial from the Landholders and Tenants Association, Jabalpur to the Chief Commissioner, 5 November 1904, in CPRAP, October, pp. 39-44.
 2. Chief Commissioner to Jabalpur Commissioner, 9 October 1904, in Ibid., pp. 45-47.
 3. Ibid., p. 47. In the years following the 1904 petition I have not discovered any petitions from the Association on land issues. The Association appears closely tied Gokuldas family. In 1927 the Association did make a lengthy petition to the administration that Jabalpur district was not ready for another land revenue settlement in the "Proceedings of a public meeting held in the Town Hall, Jabalpur, on 14 April 1927 . . . to examine the tentative forecast proposals of the officer on Special Duty regarding the re-settlement of the Jabalpur district," par. 3. The president of the Association at the time was Jamnadas, Gokuldas' grandnephew.

Petitioning was an important means by which Indians could express their grievances and opinions on such major topics as British land policy and the Indian economy during a period of colonial domination. In none of the petitions, in Nagpur, Bilaspur or Jabalpur, were all of their requests granted. Yet a few changes and a few concessions were made as a direct result of the memorials and petitions of these associations. Petitioning was not limited to a single group or individual, nor to a single medium of expression, nor to a limited range of topics. First, the petitioning process was available to anyone and any group. Second, petitions took various forms--the formal petitions and memorials examined here as well as simple requests and letters. Even the press and other forms of "petitioning," such as the Question and Answer periods during Provincial Legislative Council sessions, served as modified forms of petitioning as adapted by Indians.¹ Third, the topics of petitions had a scope far beyond the limited concerns of the British self-government bodies, such as Municipal Committees which considered "questions of road improvement, conservancy or water supply."

In short, petitions were a traditional and familiar means for Indians to express their concerns, criticisms, and demands to the British colonial administration on a wide range of topics; and in many cases they pointed the way for changes and improvements. Whether through direct or indirect means, Indians actively engaged the administration's attention in a series of discussions and debates during the "years of petitioning,"

1. One example from the Legislative Council's sessions is Shiva Prasad Shrivastava's question whether the President of the Khandwa Municipal Committee had been the same person as recommended by the District Commissioner for the past twenty-four years. The answer confirmed Shrivastava's suspicion--since 1907, nine of ten elected Presidents were officials. CPB, Pro. Leg. Council, Progs., 1914-20, 3 vols., Session 9 March 1916, 1:28.

Summary

From 1860-1920 British administrators promoted limited forms of self-government institutions in the Central Provinces. In the first three decades these consisted of district or sub-district institutions such as the Municipal Committees, District Councils and Local Boards. Beginning in the 1890s they consisted of Indian representation above the district level--in the Governor-General's Legislative Council and eventually in the Central Provinces and Berar Legislative Council. British administrators expressed much greater enthusiasm in the earlier period for sub-district institutions than in the later period for supra-district institutions. In fact, Central Provinces administrators resisted the formation of supra-district representation and institutions when faced with requests and demands from Indians, and proposals and orders from the central government.

Early in the process to establish representative institutions, British administrators both in the central government and in the provincial administration recognized three goals which representative institutions might achieve: (i) participation of Indians in local administration, (ii) political education, and (iii) communication between the government and Indians. Because of the colonial legal system and its laws, local self-government institutions, at their best, provided limited participation for a small number of Indians in local administration. Except in the two towns of Nagpur and Jabalpur, representative institutions were dominated more by officers who concerned themselves with local administration to the neglect of the other two goals. Qualified electors were few and even fewer of them participated voluntarily and enthusiastically in

elections. Committees and Councils were dominated in one way or another by officials. Even when there was a majority of Indian elected members, they functioned largely under lower-level officials who were usually the executive presidents or charimen of the organizations. As a minority in the Legislative Council the elected Indian members could rarely propose or secure the passage of significant resolutions or legislation over the majority of nominated officials and non-official members.

Reginold Craddock in 1908 was of the opinion that "the small municipalities and Local Boards and the District Councils have not really caught on." He asked,

Is it that we have expected too much from them, or that we have given them too little to do? or is it that the whole spirit of local self-government and corporate action is foreign to their inclinations and sympathies, and that the whole fabric of local self-government as designed by our lawgivers was and is doomed to failure?¹

He concluded that the twenty-five years of the existence of "exotic" and "artificial" representative institutions was too short a period to judge their success or failure. He wanted to "hold fast to our present institutions for local self-government and devote attention towards . . . the creation of an intelligent and interested electorate." He anticipated that in time the electorate would include "the agricultural class with its three sections, the landowners, the raiyat, and the labourer."²

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1. Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers (Commons), 1908, vol. 45, p. 659, "Decentralization Commission, Evidence," vol. 6, p. 137.
 2. Ibid., p. 138.

While Craddock recognized some of the reasons for the "small response" to representative institutions, he and other British administrators seemed intent on ignoring the educated class ("the only one which as yet takes an active interest in politics") as well as the "corporate" activity of a variety of Indians outside the formal structure of representative institutions. It was among them as they used the press, participated in voluntary associations and used petitions that Indians found the forums for political education in its broadest sense which enabled them to engage in a viable interaction with other Indians and with the government. Through these forums there developed an increasingly important communication between government and the people. Voluntary associations such as the Scientific and Literary Societies, the national and provincial Congresses, and the Sabhas functioned mostly on Western models of parliamentary organizations, electing members and officers, discussing and voting on resolutions, and collecting and managing funds. Not all the members of these associations were of the "educated class" as shown by such associations as the Gorakshan Sabha and the Landholders Associations. Between 1860 and 1920 as public expression increased by participation in voluntary associations and through the use of petitions, a significant and growing number of Indians found alternatives to the British created "self-government" institutions. The goals of political education and communication were slowly being realized.

CHAPTER VI

HEALTH: PESTILENCE, FAMINE, AND DEATH

The Central Provinces was often considered one of the most unhealthy areas of India. Part of Balaghat district was "long dreaded as a penal settlement" by officials posted there because of its "extremely feverish" uplands.¹ The inhabitants of the Central Provinces recognized and distinguished between different diseases and they had well-established local folk remedies. British administrators brought in a whole new set of Western institutions, procedures, and drugs to deal with diseases and famines. One way to judge the success or failure of their efforts to improve the health of the population is to examine the rate of population growth between 1861 and 1921.

Western mythology symbolizes the threats to human life in the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.² Only War did not show his face in the Central Provinces between 1861 and 1921. Pestilence and Famine accompanied by Death, however, rode across the Central Provinces countryside several times during these years. Pestilence, in the forms of epidemics and attacks by wild animals, and Famine occurred in the first decade of British administration in the province.

1. Balaghat District Gazetteer (1907), p. 76.

2. Frederick F. Cartwright, Disease and History (Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York, 1972, "Introduction").

Conditions of the 1860's

British administrators considered the unhealthy conditions of the Central Provinces in the 1860's as one of the most formidable obstacles to the establishment of British administration. Local officials had to function in a "land of jungle, witches, and fever."¹

The first census of the province revealed a population of nine million in 1865. In the three years from 1868 to 1870 almost 300,000 people died from the three major diseases: smallpox, cholera, and "fevers."²

The most prevalent cause of death from disease between 1868 and 1870 was "fevers." Malaria probably contributed most to the broad category of "fevers," which constituted over half of all disease deaths.³ British administrators wrote of the "terrible effects of . . . the malarious influences upon human life," and they considered malaria as well as the "suddenness of epidemics" as among the reasons for people's continued belief in witchcraft.⁴

Second to fevers as a cause of death was cholera which accounted for about one-sixth of disease deaths. The rumor of a cholera epidemic was "enough to set the whole country in wild commotion;" Charles Grant wrote, it

creates a perfect stampede---villages, roads, and all works in progress are deserted; even the sick are abandoned by their nearest re-

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1. Central Provinces Gazetteer (1870), p. cxxxvii.
 2. Joseph Bampfylde Fuller, Review of the Progress of the Central Provinces During the Past Thirty Years and of the Present and Past Condition of the People (Nagpur: Secretariat Press, 1892), p. 5. The exact total is 278,889.
 3. See Appendix for list of numbers and percentages.
 4. Central Provinces Gazetteer (1870), pp. cxxx-cxxxii.

lation to die, and crowds fly to the jungles, there to starve on fruits and berries till the panic has passed, (or until the local medicine man has performed rituals to drive out the epidemic.)¹

One officer in May of 1865 came across a village in Betul district which was

no longer the home of the living, every one in the houses being dead of cholera! The only living object in the place was a white kid, wandering about with a garland around its neck. It was the scapegoat which these simple people . . . send out into the wilderness on such occasions to carry with it the spirit of the plague.²

Though smallpox accounted for less than one-tenth of all disease deaths, it was considered as one of the most prevalent diseases. The Civil Surgeon at Nagpur reported that over nine-tenths of all new prisoners in 1863 showed signs of having had smallpox, and another officer estimated that two-thirds of all the families he met on a tour had experienced one smallpox death.³

In addition to these Pestilences, Famin occurred in 1868-69, especially in the eastern part of the province.⁴

1. Ibid., pp. xxv, cxxxi, and cxvii.

2. Forsyth, Highlands, pp. 177-78.

3. Civil Surgeon Doctor W. W. Hende's statement; and Captain Pearson's estimate from a tour in Damoh and Hoshangabad districts between May and July 1863, in the "Report of a Committee . . . to consider the measures . . . for establishing an efficient system of vaccination in the Central Provinces," (no date, but before December 1863). "Report" contained in IFP, General, February 1864, p. 65, #61 of #60-63 titled "Proposed creation of a Vaccination Establishment, Central Provinces."

4. See Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, 1881, vol. 71, C. 3086, India, Famine Commission, Report and Replies, Section IV, "Replies to the Famine Commission of 1868-69 from the Central Provinces" compiled by J. G. Nicholls, pp. 99-102, and App., vol. III, "Evidence in reply to inquiries of the Commission from the Central Provinces," pp. 291-296.

Besides causing a considerable number of deaths, British administrators suggested that the famine produced important social and economic consequences. In Chhattisgarh some landlords were able to reassert their dominant position over inferior landlords and tenants as a result of famine dislocations.¹

The people and administrators faced another pestilence: wild animals in the forests. Three-fourths of the province was uncropped land in the 1860's and much of this was forest. In three years (1865-67), almost two thousand people were killed by "wild beasts," and almost an equal number died from snake-bite.² Of the wild animals, man-eating tigers were the most feared; one tigress is said to have killed 135 persons in Chanda district in 1867-68.³ Partly to encourage the destruction of wild animals, the government established a system of rewards for each wild animal killed.⁴ In 1880 the administration wanted a more liberal policy of licensing guns so that people could protect themselves from wild animals, but it appears not to have been very effective. Thirty years after the recorded deaths from wild

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1. Raipur District Gazetteer (1909), p. 208; the famine in effect cancelled out the rights which inferior landlords and tenants had just been awarded by the land revenue settlement of the mid-1860's.
 2. Table on "Human Deaths from Wild Animals."
 3. Central Provinces Gazetteer (1870), p. xxii.
 4. In 1876 the rewards in the province were fifty rupees for a tiger, twenty rupees for a tiger cub, and one-hundred rupees for a man-eater. CPHP, General, April 1876, #18.

animals of the 1860's, almost as many people were killed by wild animals as previously.¹

Besides killing humans, wild animals caused other problems. To a predominately agricultural population cattle were an important possession, and between 1895 and 1897 over twenty-two thousand cattle were killed by wild animals. A complaint from a Raipur lawyer, Tara Das Banerjee, in the 1890's indicates another problem. Since deer and wild pigs often ate and damaged some of the crops, Banerjee asked the administration to aid in the destruction of wild animals. After some hesitation, the administration decided against such a campaign; it considered human and cattle life more valuable than crops. The Chief Commissioner wanted the supply of deer maintained so as to provide prey for tigers and thus perhaps lessen the chance of tiger attacks on humans and cattle.²

While statistically deaths from wild animals probably accounted for less than half a percent of total deaths annually, in the nineteenth century, the potential danger to human life perhaps appeared considerable to the people and the administrators. Though forests posed a threat in the form of a breeding-ground and refuge for wild animals, in other aspects forests proved beneficial. Forests were a source for timber and other commercial products, which the administration taxed, as well as a source of food for the tribal people. One

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1. The two periods compared are 1865-67 and 1895-97 and the total deaths from wild animals are over 5,500 and 4,500 respectively. On the other hand, the wild animal population seemed to have declined rapidly between the 1860's and the 1890's as tigers killed dropped from 5,347 to 2,567 per decade and wild animals killed dropped from 20,376 to 11,556 per decade.
 2. CPRAP, Forest, September 1894, #3-16, pp. 33-36; and September 1895, #1-6, pp. 37-39.

British writer estimated that tribal people obtained almost half their food from the forest, especially from the succulent petals of the mahua, a flowering forest tree.¹ During times of distress or crop failure, the mahua provided that margin of food which kept forest people from starvation.² Considering both the benefits and the obstacles of the forests, Charles Grant prophesied in the late 1860's "the day is not very far distant when advancing cultivation shall be strong enough to neutralize the evil influence of the jungle," so that "the life of a settler in these forests shall be no longer a constant battle against tigers and malaria."³

1. Central Provinces Gazetteer (1870), p. cxlv.

2. Reginold Craddock, Report on the Famine in the Central Provinces in 1899-1900 (Nagpur: Secretariat Press, 1901), pp. 4-5.

3. Central Provinces Gazetteer (1870), p. xxi.

TABLE 12A

HUMAN DEATHS FROM WILD ANIMALS
IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES

Based on the figures for the years	Human loss, estimated ten year total				
	From tigers	From wild animals	Sub- total	From snakes	Total
1865-67	. . .	5,837	5,837	6,247	12,084
1895-97	2,213	2,293	4,507	11,407	15,933

TABLE 12B

DESTRUCTION OF WILD ANIMALS
IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES

Based on the figures for the years	Wild animals destroyed, estimated ten year totals				
	Tigers	Other wild animals	Total animals	Snakes	Total
1865-67	5,347	20,376	25,723	98,270	123,990
1895-97	2,567	11,556	14,123	. . .	. . .

SOURCES: TABLE 25.

Indian Remedies and Rituals

Indians in the Central Provinces were well acquainted with pestilence and had developed their own folk cures, treatments and protective measures. Western observers reported on these practices in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While Aryurvedic and Muslim medical knowledge and practice certainly existed in the province, there are few descriptions of them. The village purohit or priest of Aryan traditions dealt with Brahmanic rituals, but the local non-Aryan village priest or wizard predominated in the field of medicine.¹ Called the parihar or baiga, depending on the region, his cures and rituals usually involved some form of magic (jadu), faith healing, or psycho-medical treatment to propitiate or drive out a disease spirit, god, or goddess.²

Almost every village maintained a worship center for Sitala Devi or Mata, the goddess of smallpox.³ One writer observed that smallpox was "the most dreaded calamity from which the community suffers."⁴ People generally considered an attack of smallpox as a case of possession by the goddess, and therefore any wish which the victim uttered was granted as an act of worship to the goddess. Unlike treatments for other diseases, most foods were not restricted to the victims of smallpox; also nim leaves were spread on the floor, and offerings of food

1. Central Provinces, District Gazetteer, Drug District, ed. A. E. Nelson (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1910), p. 55.

2. Hoshangabad SR (1867), p. 119 on the parihar; and Raipur District Gazetteer (1909), p. 86 on the baiga.

3. Hoshangabad DG (1908), p. 73. 4. Drug DG (1910), p. 55.

and clothing were made.¹ When cholera struck, however, no food was allowed and water was severely restricted. A mixture of onion juice with pepper and thyme (podina) was prescribed, and the body rubbed with ginger and mustard. At some places a he-goat, with a mark of vermilion (sendur) on its forehead, was "led to the village boundary, and set free in the jungle."²

The people and local priests also performed rituals to cure snake bite and protect themselves from wild animals. In Hoshangabad district when a man was bitten by a snake he would tie a string or cloth in five knots and fasten it around his neck, calling out to the local god, Rajwa, and then make a vow. When he arrived home, he was given a test to see if it was poisonous, and if so, the villagers again would chant the name of Rajwa for help. After he was cured, the victim would fulfill his vow.³ Local priests made offerings to Bagh Deo, the tiger god, to protect villages.⁴ When a person was killed by a tiger, the baiga would go to the place and "lay the ghost of the man who (was) killed by a man-eater, and prevent it from following its slayer and

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1. Jabalpur DG (1909), p. 81 and a fuller description on pp. 87-88. For other descriptions see E. M. Gordon, Indian Folk Tales, Being Side-lights on Village Life in Bilaspore, Central Provinces (London: Elliot Stock, 1909), pp. 33-34, and Laurence Alan Babb, "Systemic Aspects of Chhattisgarhi Religion: An Analysis of a Regional Variant of Popular Hinduism" (Ph. D dissertation, University of Rochester, 1969), pp. 128-131, 244).
 2. Jabalpur DG (1909), pp. 81 and 85-86. Hoshangabad SR (1867), p. 119 which refers to the worship of a local cholera god, Hardal, as described by W. H. Sleeman in 1837; C. P. Gazetteer (1870), p. cxvii relates cholera rituals performed by the baiga; and Gordon, Folk Tales, pp. 31-32 describes the baiga rituals protecting villages from cholera.
 3. Hoshangabad SR (1861), pp. 120-121; another cure procedure is described in Balaghat DG (1909), pp. 113-14.
 4. Hoshangabad DG (1908), p. 74.

pointing out to him fresh victims."¹ Grant described the ritual in the 1860's:

The process is very simple. The Baiga goes through a series of antics, supposed to represent the tiger in his fatal springs; and ends up by taking up with his teeth a mouthful of blood-stained earth. When this is done the jungle is free again, and there really may be thus much genuineness in the remedy.²

British administrators were fascinated by the existence of witchcraft in the province. The people of eastern Central Provinces often considered epidemics, especially cholera, a result of witchcraft. The belief in witches and sorcerers was widespread and an integral part of local culture, existing even up to the present day.³ In the 1820's Patrick Vans Agnew wrote one of the first British accounts of Chhattisgarhi witchcraft; in 1868 Alfred Lyall compared witchcraft in the province with earlier European witchcraft in an article; and the police in Chhattisgarh dealt with murders committed in witch trials in the 1860's; even fifty years later witches were persecuted by villagers during the influenza epidemic of 1918-1919.⁴

1. Balaghat DG (1907), p. 96.

2. CP Gazetteer (1870), p. cxvii. Stephen Fuchs observed and described a very similar ritual 100 years after Grant, in The Gond and Bhumia of Eastern Mandla (Bombay: New Literature Publishing Company, 1969), pp. 364-371, especially p. 369.

3. See Babb, "Chhattisgarhi Religion" (1969), on present-day beliefs in witches as part of local religion, especially pp. 211-219 as well as pp. 146, 148, 244-251; Alfred C. Lyall, "Witchcraft in the Central Provinces", in Once in a Way (n. p., n. d., probably 1868). Lyall perhaps overstates the prevalence: "throughout the Central Provinces the belief in witchcraft is universal among all classes. It meets you at every turn," p. 50.

4. Patrick Vans Agnew, A Report on the Subah or Province of Chhattisgarh Written in 1820 A.D. (Nagpur: Government Press, 1915), p. 7; Lyall, "Witchcraft", pp. 47-64; and Central Provinces, Report on the Police Administration, annual.

Witches were said to have the power to suck the blood from victims and raise the dead, but, as Lyall reported,

The ordinary practice of sorcerers consists in the causing of death or illness, not only to an obnoxious person, but to whole families, or even villages, —to their crops and cattle also The magic powers of witches extend over natural phenomena as well Drought, blight, bad harvests, hail, etc. are all caused by the malice of enchanter¹s.

The only remedy was "the detection and destruction of the evil workers." For this, baigas conducted trials by ordeal, and witches were punished and tortured to drive out the witch's spirit, or counter-charms were performed. Lyall recounted one case in 1865 as reported by the Raipur district Superintendent of Police, Captain Steuart.

A woman named Boodnee was seized by the villagers on suspicion of having brought cholera into the village. She was deliberately and slowly beaten to death with caster oil rods, the whole population of the village assisting. Three men were hanged for this murder on the scene of their crime; and Captain Steuart² believes that this counter-charm will work usefully.

In 1878 the Central Provinces administration asked for opinions from its officers on the best way to deal with witchcraft. In the same year a severe cholera epidemic occurred in Raipur district killing twenty-five thousand people, but the police reported that witchcraft was not revived.³ However more than two decades later the Inspector of Police remarked, "As usual, in 1904 the murder histories included many cases in which witchcraft and love potions played an important part."⁴

1. Lyall, "Witchcraft," p. 51. 2. Ibid., p. 53.

3. CPHP, General, November 1878, #42-49, pp. 49-52; and Madhya Pradesh, Police Department, History of the Madhya Pradesh Police (Bhopal: Government Central Press, 1965), p. 112; and Central Provinces, Report on the Police Administration for 1878-79, p. 17.

4. Madhya Pradesh, History of Police, p. 137.

In 1913 four witches were severely beaten in Drug district, one of them dying.¹ During the influenza epidemic of 1918-19 the police reported four separate cases in which villagers attacked witches or sorcerers for having brought illness to their villages.²

It is impossible from the data to even comment about the effectiveness of Indian folk remedies to cure diseases, or other matters such as the prevalence of witchcraft. No systematic records were or have been kept indicating whether Indian folk treatments were useful or not. Some British administrators reported individual cases they had observed, such as snakebite cures, which seemed effective. Otherwise opinions of British administrators on the effectiveness of Indian remedies and the prevalence of witchcraft varied widely. In the 1860's, Elliott felt people were losing faith in the cholera god, Hardal, because of the "repeated recurrences of cholera."³ In the same decade Charles Grant felt the crime of torturing and killing witches was "not yet quite extinct, but it has been much checked of late years by the expedient of executing the murderers on the scene of their misdeeds."⁴ But cases of witchcraft and belief in it persisted. The author of the Raipur District Gazetteer in 1909 thought the belief in witchcraft was "showing some signs of decay."⁵ As already indicated, police reported cases after 1908, and L. Babb investigated cases of witchcraft in Raipur district in the 1960's.

1. CP, Police Report for 1913-14, p. 9.

2. Ibid., 1919-20, p. 4 concerning cases of a Drug woman and a Raipur Brahmin, and for 1920-21, p. 10, cases of a Hoshangabad Teli and a Bilaspur sorcerer.

3. Hoshangabad SR (1867), p. 119. 4. CP Gazetteer (1870), p. cxxxii.

5. p. 85.

For British administrators the existence and detection of witchcraft was perhaps one of the most interesting and dramatic Indian forms of treatment for diseases. But Lyall indicated that Chhattisgarhi witchcraft was "much less intense and painful" than the earlier form of European witchcraft, and Indians seem to have considered it as one type of treatment among other types available to them through the baiga or through folk remedies.¹ With the introduction of Western medical institutions and procedures the people had an additional type of treatment. As Elliott remarked in the 1860's, "A villager will seldom bring his child to a dispensary til he has first tried all the deo dhami in his neighborhood."² Forty years later another British officer similarly observed,

The local medicine man is a good deal in evidence in the District, and many persons of some education and position prefer his ministrations to those of the accredited hospital assistants. A severe wound, a broken limb, or a carbuncle, however, usually induces a visit to the Government dispensary, and cases of snake bite are also sometimes brought.³

1. Lyall, "Witchcraft," p. 60.

2. Hoshangabad SR (1867), p. 120. Deo dhamis were the local gods and spirits.

3. Balaghat DG (1907), p. 113.

British Health Administration

Knowing the unhealthy conditions of the people's preference for folk medicine and local medicine-men, British administrators formed a health policy with moderate goals. The administration of health care was divided between two officers at the provincial level. Medical institutions such as dispensaries were at first under the Inspector of Jails and later under an Inspector General of Civil Hospitals.¹ Sanitation and vaccination were supervised by the Sanitary Commissioner, established in 1868.² At the district level these duties were combined under the Civil Surgeon. The limited goals for both departments consisted of the investigation of health conditions, the collection of medical information, and the promotion of Western medical treatment by a few examples. In 1870 Charles Grant recognized that "in proportion to the numbers of the population the amount of medical treatment as yet available is but small," and, he emphasized, "in so vast an undertaking the Government cannot attempt to do more than show by example the advantages of scientific treatment of disease."³ Similarly, in creating the office of Sanitary Commissioner, Chief Commissioner George Campbell felt the officer "should not be burdened with duties of an executive character; but should be free to devote his mind entirely to hygienic inquiry."⁴

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1. CP Gazetteer (1870), p. cxlvii; and Central Provinces Gazetteer (1908), p. 74.
 2. C. P., Administration Report for 1867-68, p. v.
 3. CP Gazetteer (1870), p. cxlviii.
 4. C. P., Ad. Rept. 1867-68, p. v.

In the first decade, smallpox vaccination was to be "of service in familiarising the process to the people and in thus preparing the way for its extension."¹ Outside the towns, "a system of conservancy was laid down in 1865, more as a model for ultimate initiation in selected villages than with any hope of its general acceptance."² Of the six departments of the administration, medical services received the least government support, usually not exceeding more than six percent of the total annual expenditure.³

The British implemented their health-care policy through various medical institutions, sanitary procedures, and providing drugs. As with other activities of the British administration, Western medical institutions and treatment originated in the 1860's. Within the first decade the administration established dispensaries, hospitals, two lunatic asylums, a leprosy asylum, and Lock hospitals.⁴ The first efforts for town sanitation, smallpox vaccination and the control of epidemics also started then. The sixteen dispensaries established in 1862 treating forty-two thousand patients had more than tripled by

1. CP Gazetteer (1870), pp. cxlvii-cxlviii.

2. CP, Ad. Rept. 1867-68, p. ix. "Conservancy" consisted mainly of sewage disposal.

3. See Chapter IV on expenditures.

4. CP Gazetteer(1870), p. cxlviii, The Saugar District Gazetteer (1967), p. 452 and other sources mention the establishment of Lock hospitals which functioned to treat venereal disease among the British troops and registered prostitutes.

1866 to fifty-six dispensaries treating almost one hundred forty thousand patients.¹ Expansion continued in the next decades though not at the same pace--in 1881 there were eighty-one dispensaries, eighty-four in 1891, and 112 in 1904.² It was claimed that over one and a half million patients were treated in 1904.³ Part of the rise in the number of patients may have been the result of a circular order in 1874 which asked district officers to impress on landlords the necessity of sending all sick people to government dispensaries.⁴ More likely this injunction, like some others, was not strictly enforced or followed. Generally treatment at dispensaries had little or no effect on reducing the death rate from diseases. Two probable reasons for this were the types of cases treated and the location of dispensaries. Most cases appear to have been for non-fatal causes: broken limbs, wounds, and minor diseases which enabled people to be brought to dispensaries. Secondly, dispensaries were located in towns or large villages and mainly served the immediate area. The medical services at dispensaries were not available to the majority of the population living in the rural areas. One of the few medical innovations after the 1860's was a "traveling dispensary" in Balaghat district in the 1880's. Though the administration applauded the effort and suggested it be tried in other districts, there are no indications of

1. CP, Ad. Rept. 1866-67, p. iii and 85. See also how the first dispensary was established in the city of Nagpur, in IFP, General, March 1862, #40-51, p.33-36.

2. CP Gazette (1908), p. 127. 3. Ibid., p. 109.

4. CPHP, Medical, August 1874, #14.

this expansion or that the traveling dispensary lasted more than a few years.¹ By 1921, however, traveling dispensaries had been re-introduced and were considered of "great value."² Generally government dispensaries mainly served the minority, urban population and treated minor medical problems during the six decades from 1861-1921.

Government sanitation shared one characteristic with dispensaries: both were mainly confined to towns or large villages. From the 1860's, municipalities began to provide for the removal of garbage and sewage (or "night soil"). Other than these sanitary procedures, plans for supplying clean water to towns began in the 1880's and 1890's and some reservoirs were built. By 1908 ten towns in the Central Provinces had reservoirs supplying water.³ Even by the 1920's, however, no underground sewage or drainage systems had been built.

Sanitation efforts were not pushed vigorously in the thirty thousand villages of the province. Model sanitation villages were planned in the 1860's, but the main village sanitation efforts in the first two decades were confined to the distribution of pamphlets on sanitation to landlords.⁴ The Central Provinces Land Revenue Act (1881) required village headmen to maintain villages in a sanitary condition (Section 141), but it was admitted in 1886 that "comparatively little improvement of a permanent character has been effected in the sanitary conditions of village life."⁵

1. CPHP, Medical, July 1883, #6, pp. 39-42.

2. CP, Administration Report 1921-22, Part I, p. xii.

3. CP Gazetteer (1908), p. 96. 4. Saugar DG(1969), p. 460, and Raipur DG (1973).

5. Quoted on p. 174 of CPHP, Medical, December 1895, #5.

In 1889 the administration attempted to correct this by giving the village headman more powers to punish villagers for disobeying his orders. In the same year a Village Sanitation Act was passed which provided for the collection of funds for sanitation purposes in selected villages.¹ In 1904 only sixty-nine of the thirty thousand villages of the Central Provinces functioned under this Village Sanitation Act.² In a separate move, the administration made extra funds available to villages in the 1890's for improving or digging village wells, since it was known that village tanks or lakes were a major source of infection such as cholera. But the majority of the people continued to prefer the soft-water of tanks and rivers to the hard well water.³ A British administrator's description of the activities of a district Civil Surgeon summarizes some aspects of rural sanitation.

In the cold season, he (the Civil Surgeon) goes on vaccination tour; and thousands of little children are brought unto him He notes the filthy state of the villages; and annually writes admirable suggestions as to sanitary improvements which cannot possibly be carried out it would be a good thing if sweepings were carried outside the villages and the spillings of wells carefully carried away; but the difficulty is to organize the practice of these sanitary plans without the sanction of legal penalties for omission.⁴

Besides establishing dispensaries and sanitary procedures, the administration sought to limit deaths and disease through medicine and measures such as quarantine. British efforts to decrease the virulence of disease depended partly on the current state of medical knowledge.

1. Ibid., pp. 174-75, Section 161. 2. CP Gazetteer (1908), p. 111.

3. Ibid., and Hoshangabad DG(1908), p. 48. 4. Laurie, In the CP, p. 115.

In the 1860's British administrators were well aware of the use of vaccination to protect people from smallpox. On the other hand, they knew less about the specific causes and ways to combat other diseases such as cholera, malaria, and later, plague and influenza. Consequently the vaccination program formed the administration's major effort in combating diseases during these six decades. In the first year of operation (1861) about five thousand people were vaccinated, but by 1881 this had risen to over 300 thousand and continued at that level for the remaining decades. From the 1880's about eighty to ninety percent of all children received vaccination.¹

The programs to combat cholera and malaria received far less support, partly because less was known about their causes and the drugs to combat them. In the 1860's, though administrators did not know the cause of cholera, they recognized its prevalence during the dry season. They suspected pilgrims as being the main carriers for spreading the disease, especially the pilgrims attending the February Mahadeo fair (Hoshangabad district) and those returning from the Jugganath shrine at Puri, Orissa. In 1865 the administration prohibited the Mahadeo fair and discouraged pilgrims from traveling during the dry season.² When cholera broke out in 1867 at Puri, a quarantine was imposed along the eastern border of the province, and for the first time in several

1. CP Gazetteer (1908), p. 127 for the 1881-1900's; Administration Report 1861-62, par. 495, says 5,260 people were vaccinated in 1861. In the early twentieth century the number of infants vaccinated and surviving the first year was 95 percent for Hoshangabad district and 75 percent for Raipur district, while the Jabalpur DG (1909), p. 326, estimated 20 percent of the total population was protected. Hoshangabad DG (1908), p. 284; Raipur DG (1909), p. 253.

2. IFP, General, October, 1865, #6-7.

years, hardly any cholera occurred.¹ However, an epidemic recurred the next year (1868), and in the following decades it annually claimed several thousand lives. Several epidemics like the one in 1875-76, continued to be investigated, but the preventative measures of the mid-1860's were not pursued with as much success. As has been indicated, the Sanitation Commissioner's main function was to report on diseases, not to prevent them.²

Malaria possibly caused the greatest mortality of any single disease. George Campbell considered fever as "the true scourge of the Central Provinces." He felt fever was one of the main reasons for the undeveloped condition of the province.

If our population is scanty; our agriculture slovenly; our rents small out of all proportion to the quality of the soil; if much good land is covered with jungle; if our Civil administration suffers from too frequent changes of Officers; . . . all this, so far as hygienic causes affect the matter, is certainly due to the fevers which prevail in these Provinces.³

But in the 1860's, Campbell was uncertain if the cause was from "jungle and noxious vegetation," or from the "particular states of water or air." By the 1870's administrators knew quinine helped reduce malarial fever. The Chief Commissioner in 1874 made a somewhat curious and novel suggestion that the distribution of quinine could be used as an incentive to induce villagers to contribute to local medical funds.

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1. S. C. Townsend, Report on the Cholera Epidemic of 1868 in the Central Provinces (Nagpur: 1870. pp, 1 - 2).
 2. For Townsend's Report on the Epidemic of Cholera, in 1875-76 (Nagpur: Chief Commissioner's Office Press, 1878), see CPHP, March 1875, #12-13, and CPHP, October 1878, #15-16, pp. 24-25.
 3. C.P., Ad. Rept. 1861-68, p. vii.

He proposed that villages which gave large subscriptions could be supplied with quinine.¹ In the 1880's it was decided to end any gratuitous distribution of quinine and to sell it at cost.² In 1893 about 500 packets of quinine began to be sold through post offices. This sale rose to 4,781 packets ten years later (1904). Each packet contained doses of quinine (seven grains for one pice).³ There is no indication who bought the quinine or how effective it was. W. H. Kenrick made the first survey of malaria in the province in 1911, and a scheme was then developed for the distribution of quinine.⁴ Again, neither Kenrick's report nor the new scheme for distribution indicates whether the administration's efforts helped reduce the occurrence of malaria. Kenrick's information on malaria among the police in the province showed that about 150 policemen each day were incapacitated by malaria fever.⁵

While smallpox, cholera, and malaria epidemics occurred with regularity, administrators had to deal with two relatively new diseases in the twentieth century. Railway expansion may have helped to increase the mobility of the population in the late nineteenth century, and, correspondingly, to have helped the spread of diseases, such as plague, from distant urban centers into the province. Plague outbreaks

1. CPHP, General, January 1874, #1, p. 1, and Ibid, February 1874, #7-8, p. 15.

2. CPHP, Medical, October 1883, #11, pp. 76-77.

3. CP Gazateer (1908) , p. 110.

4. W. H. Kenrick, Report upon Malaria in the Central Provinces (1914), and CPEMP, Medical, June 1911, I, pp. 26-53.

5. M. P., History of the Police, p. 130.

began to occur with cyclical regularity from the last of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, affecting the two largest towns of the province, Nagpur and Jabalpur, as well as smaller railway towns such as Hoshangabad. On the other hand, plague was almost unknown in rural areas with no railways or where railways had been built recently (such as Chhattisgarh and the Plateau districts.) The administration pursued a program of evacuation from affected city wards and rat-killing campaigns. The campaign in Nagpur of August and September 1906 recorded 22, 191 rats killed or found dead.¹ The Jabalpur District Commissioner made several interesting observations and comments in his report on the plague epidemic of 1906-07 in the district. He noted that, contrary to the suggestions of a recent pamphlet on plague prevention, cats were not a good animal to keep around; they also died of plague and perhaps helped spread plague. A. C. F. B. Blennerhassett also observed that people who wore boots and rode bicycles seemed to have greater immunity than others.² By 1910 inoculations against plague had begun with 33,000 in that year and 60,000 in 1911.³ However, plague epidemics continued into the 1910's.

In 1918 a new epidemic, influenza, occurred in the province, and the administration found it had no measures or drugs which effectively isolated the flu, or diminished its virulence.

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1. CPMP, Medical, November 1906, #1-4, pp. 6-8, on the Nagpur plague and a history of plague in the district since 1900; Ibid., July 1907, Medical, pp. 16-17, on the Jabalpur plague of 1906-7; and October 1907, Medical, p. 33, on rat extermination measures.
 2. Ibid., July 1907, pp. 16-17.
 3. C. P., Administration Report 1911-12, Part I, p. xxi.

British administrators generally pursued a moderate health care program, passively and cautiously making Western health care facilities and medicine available to Indians who voluntarily took advantage of them. Smallpox vaccination, quarantine, and evacuation of plague-infected areas were the most active programs. Even with these programs, however, the administration tried to proceed with calculated caution, perhaps fearing a negative Indian reaction would cause a set-back to the slow and steady introduction of Western medicine.

Most of the cases which administrators viewed as negative reactions to Western medicine stemmed from other causes, only indirectly related to the health care programs. One case of the efforts of a Civil Surgeon to vaccinate villagers in 1877 exemplifies this caution and fear of administrators as well as the non-medical reaction. Though the administration's policy on vaccination stipulated that only infants should be vaccinated, Dr. Hall required all the people of Masod village (Betul district), "between 8 days and 40 years of age," should come to his tent for medical inspection. When not enough people showed up, he ordered the police to return women who had run away, and he himself entered a house where he suspected women were hiding. The landlord's agents "assaulted" Dr. Hall, but the Police assisted by some of the villagers saved the doctor from the attack. In reviewing the incident, The Chief Commissioner characterized Dr. Hall's action of "forcing vaccination on the people" as "violent and oppressive;" Dr. Hall had "practically" required "the police to drag women out of their homes, until some of them fled from fear;" he had shown "little sympathy for

the feelings and prejudices of the people.¹ The Chief Commissioner feared Dr. Hall's "inexplicable" action had probably "roused the people against vaccination altogether, and may for long retard its spread." Dr. Hall was reprimanded and transferred to another district. In other cases of negative reactions, people resisted police efforts to evacuate them in the first years of plague epidemics, possibly because they did not understand the purpose of such evacuation. By the 1900's people not only voluntarily evacuated plague-infected areas, but sometimes villagers attacked persons suspected of spreading the plague.²

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1. Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces to the Commissioner of Nerbudda Division, 6 June 1877, CPHP, Medical, June 1877, #38, p. 35.
 2. Several cases of people resisting police evacuation in the last few years of the century during plague epidemics are mentioned. However early in the twentieth century people not only voluntarily evacuated infected areas, but there are several reported cases of "riots" or "assaults" when people tried to keep plague and diseases from their villages. Most of these appear to be caused by a fear that an outsider, whether an inoculator or some other official, would infect the village. See "Resolution on the report on plague and plague operations in the Central Provinces from the appearance of the disease in Bombay in September 1896 to the 31st of March 1899," in CPHP, August 1899, Medical #7-9, pp. 213-19, especially p. 218, par. 15, which recounts the people's attempts at "concealment," "passive obstruction," and finally a "riot," which was "promptly quelled" in connection with plague evacuations. Generally, however, the report emphasized that people accepted evacuation "cheerfully." Also the CP, Police Administration Reports (annual), mentions cases of a plague officer being stoned (1899, p. 2); of attacks on plague officers in 1903 (p. 8); of Saugor villagers attacking a suspected plague spreader in 1904 (p. 7); and the same type of case in 1906 (p. 8) when some villagers "in unreasoning fear of plague inoculation" were riotous when a supposed inoculator arrived. There are no cases mentioned later than this last one in 1906. The 1911 Census writer felt the recorded population for the town of Hoshangabad was much below its norm because people had fled the town on the report that a plague epidemic was occurring.

Indian attitudes toward the introduction of Western medical facilities and programs were generally ones of passive acceptance and minimal use of these facilities as an alternate to Indian folk remedies. The negative reactions to Western medicine occurred in cases of exceptional actions by individual officers such as the case of Dr. Hall by his "forcing vaccination on the people," and in plague-infested areas because of the newness of plague epidemics, on the one hand, and their misunderstanding of the purpose of evacuation, on the other. Occasionally local Indian newspaper editors went beyond passive acceptance and demanded better medical programs. The Nyaya Sudha of Hoshangabad in 1885 asked the administration to pursue a more active policy to combat cholera. An outbreak had occurred in Harda town and the editor asked, "Is it not the duty of the Local Board to provide medicine for the relief of the people?"¹ When another outbreak occurred three years later, the Indian editor suggested that medicine, disinfectants, and proper instructions be supplied to villages to help people receive proper treatment during cholera epidemics.² People in the province generally accepted the introduction of Western medicine, and in some cases even asked for better programs of Western medical treatment.

1. 24 June 1885, in SVN, p. 440.

2. Nyaya Sudha, 23 May 1888, p. 344.

Famines and Recovery

Death rode with Famine as well as with Pestilence. Periodic famines had occurred before the formation of the Central Provinces. Administrators eventually developed policies and programs to deal with famines by the end of the nineteenth century.

Six famines occurred in the province area between 1800 and 1861. They occurred in periodic cycles of about every ten years.¹ Three types of unusual rainfall patterns caused crop failures. The first, insufficient monsoon rain, mostly affected the rice or autumn crop of the southern area of the province. The second, an early end of the monsoon, reduced the autumn harvest as well as dried the ground for planting the spring or wheat crop of the northern part of the province. The third, excessive winter rains, caused rust or blight of the spring harvest.² The most severe famines in this period resulted from a combination of these causes over successive years. In 1818-19 the monsoon ended early but was followed by excessive winter rains--both autumn and spring crops failed. It was reported that children were sold for food.³ Between 1832-35 there was a succession of crop failures, mainly because of the lack of monsoon rains. In Wardha district children were sold for ten pounds of grain. Before the 1860's governments did little except try to prohibit the export or encourage the import of grain, and to feed people in the larger towns. Deaths during these six famines

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1. See table listing famines in the Central Provinces, 1771-1861.
 2. There was a fourth cause which seemed to have occurred only once, namely heavy late monsoon rains. They harmed the autumn harvest as it lay on the threshing floor in 1894-95.
 3. Central Provinces Gazetteer, (1908), pp. 70-71.

TABLE 13A

FAMINES, SCARCITIES, AND WAR IN THE
CENTRAL PROVINCES' AREA, 1771-1861

Year and number	Famine or epidemic	Major area	Cause*	Severity and character	Expenditure	Results
1871	War and famine	Narbudda	War	Wheat at 10 lbs. per Rs.	. . .	. . .
1783	War and famine	Narbudda	War	. . .	. . .	. . .
1. 1803	Famine	Narbudda and Vindhya area	. . .	Grain at 1 lb. per Rs. The Mahakal or Great Famine	. . .	. . .
1809	War	Narbudda	Pind- aris	. . .	. . .	. . .
2. 1818- 1819	Famine	Central Provinces	2 + 3	Nagpur--children sold Jabalpur--8 lbs. per Rs.	. . .	. . .
1823- 1827	Famines	Satpura plateau area	3	Short crops, floods, hail and blight	. . .	Many villages deserted
3, 1825- 1826	Famine	Nagpur	. . .	. . .	Raja fed people	Many died anyway
1828- 1829	Famine	Chhattisgarh		Grain rose from 300 to 4 lbs. per Rs.	. . . .	. . .

TABLE 13A--continued

4. 1832- 1833	Famine	Narbudda and Nagpur	2	High mortality. Children sold for 10 lbs. of grain	. . .	. . .
1833- 1834	Famine	Narbudda	2	16 lbs. per Rs.	Government imported grain	. . .
1834- 1835	Scarcity	Chhattisagrh	2	Grain prices five to twenty times normal	. . .	. . .
5. 1845	Famine	Plateau and Chhattisgarh	1 + 2	Drought, severe distress	. . .	. . .
6. 1854- 1855	Famine	Narbudda	3	Rust of wheat crop Many starvation deaths	. . .	. . .

TABLE 13B

FAMINES, SCARCITIES AND EPIDEMICS
IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES, 1861-1921

1. 1868- 1869	Famine	All C. P. except Nagpur	2	Distress severe, large number starvation deaths	Rs. 1.7 million	Mortality-- 3x normal
2. 1877- 1878	Scarcity & epidemics	Narbudda & Chhattisagrh	1 + 3	Scarcity and epidemics of cholera, smallpox, fevers	. . .	Death rate high -46 per mille
1879	Epidemics	C. P.	. . .	Epidemics of smallpox and cholera	. . .	. . .
3. 1887- 1888	Scarcity	Chhattisgarh	1	Crop failures	. . .	. . .

TABLE 13B--continued

1889	Epidemics	Central Provinces	. . .	Epidemics of cholera and smallpox	. . .	. . .
4. 1893-1894	Scarcity	Narbudda	3	Distress	Rs. .1 mil.	. . .
1894-1895	Distress	Rice areas	4	Harvested crops destroyed by late monsoon rains	. . .	. . .
1895-1896	Distress	C. P.	2	Crops poor	. . .	. . .
1896-1897	Famine, epidemics	C. P.	2	Mortality--69 per mille Yield--56% normal	Rs. 15 million	8.5% pop. on relief
6. 1899-1900	Famine, epidemics	C. P.	1	Mortality--57 per mille Yield--26% normal	Rs. 45 million	21.5% pop. on relief
7. 1902-1903	Scarcity	Chhattisgarh	1	Yield--33% normal	Revenue remissions	. . .
8. 1907-1908	Scarcity	Narbudda	2	Mortality--43 per mille Yield--41% of normal	Rs. 1.2 mil. Rev. remiss.	0.4% on relief
9. 1913-1914	Acarcity	Jabalpur area	2	Spring crop failure	Rs. .8 mil.	. . .
10. 1918-1919	Scarcity, epidemic	C. P.	2	Mortality--102.6 per mille Yield--30 to 45% normal	. . .	Influenza epidemic
11. 1920-1921	Scarcity	C. P.	1	Mortality--44 per mille Yield--42% normal	. . .	. . .

SOURCES: C. P., Report on Famines, 1899-1900; 1907-08. C. P., Ad. Repts., 1911-12; 1921-22.
Memoranda on the Condition of the People, Decennial, F. Sly for 1902, and C. Low for 1911. Gazetteers.
 *Causes--Three rainfall patterns (1) poor or uneven monsoon rain, (2) failure of late monsoon rains, (3) excessive winter rains, (4) heavy autumn rains destroying harvested crop on threshing floor.

were probably high, but even approximate figures are not available.

From 1861 to 1921 ten famines and scarcities occurred in the province; three or four of those were severe. Before the 1890's, famines affected parts of the province in 1868-69, 1877-78, and 1886-87. The first was the most severe.¹

Other parts of India experienced famines in this early period, and the central government along with provincial administrations began to develop Famine Codes. The Codes provided criteria for determining the severity of crop failure, for establishing relief works and for setting up kitchens or food distribution centers. But the Central Provinces did not participate seriously in the development of these Codes or in their implementation. In 1888, when the central government suggested that detailed note books be kept for each village as an aid in dealing with famine conditions, Joseph Fuller, as the Central Provinces Settlement Commissioner, said the value of note books "would be much less in these Provinces than in other parts of India, where the rainfall is more precarious and the prospects of the crops more uncertain."² He asserted that "No very serious failure of rainfall has occurred throughout the Central Provinces for twenty years," and that "Agriculture in these Provinces is exceptionally favored by the comparative certainty of the rainfall and the natural fertility of a large proportion of the land."³

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1. P. P., Accounts and Papers, 1881, (c. 3086), LXXX, Report of the Indian Famine Commission, "Famine in the Central Provinces, 1868-69," pp. 99-103.
 2. Fuller's letter of 25 June 1888, CPRAP, Settlement #17, 1888 June, p. 72.
 3. Fuller's letter of 25 July 1888, IRAP, 1888 December, Famine #15, p. 3.

When Fuller transmitted information on a new Famine Code to provincial officers, he reiterated the assumption "that these Provinces are free from all danger of famine and it may be held that the precautions enjoined by the Famine Code are here unnecessary." With obvious reluctance Fuller continued, "But the provisions of the Code represent the orders of the Government of India and must be carried out." He suggested that detailed information on agricultural conditions could be of "great use" in carrying out other policies, "quite apart from all questions of Famine."¹

The administration's assumption of agricultural security in the province was soon tested. Adverse weather conditions began in 1893, especially causing rust of the wheat crop. Disastrous famines followed in 1896-97 and 1899-1900. In these two years over one million people died, an equivalent of almost thirteen percent of the population. (Deaths were 658,822 in 1897 and 608,691 in 1900 or a total of 1,367,513 deaths.) The famines of the 1890's formed a major turning point in the economic and demographic history of the province between 1861 and 1921. Before then progress and the steady increase of prosperity seemed assured; after then the people and the administration had to deal with problems of recovery and the fluctuations between good and bad seasons.

The famines of 1896-97 and 1899-1900 share one common feature-- they were both a result of the failure of monsoon rains. But in other ways they were quite different. In 1896-97 the crop yield was about

1. Fuller's letter of 27 January 1890, CPRAP, 1891 January, Famine #25, p. 75.

one-half normal yield, while in 1899-1900 it was worse, just one-fourth of the normal yield. On the other hand, the death rate was higher in the first famine (69 per mille) than in the second (58 per mille). There seem to be several reasons for this contrast of which the action of the administration and the availability of food reserves are the most important.¹

Until the famine of 1896-97, the administration remained recalcitrant; it stuck to Fuller's assumption that famines did not or would not occur in the Central Provinces. In the early 1890's Indians petitioned the administration for assistance but with little success. A deputation from Saugor district met with Chief Commissioner Woodburn in March of 1895 presenting a memorial asking for relief. Woodburn said he would remit the two previous land tax payments but would not institute relief programs. Three months later an Indian newspaper again asked Woodburn to obtain sanction for relief of the northern districts, and said that without relief the area would "be entirely ruined."² As late as May 1896, the Commissioner of Settlements and Agriculture said there was little value in drawing up a list of possible railway projects in the province for famine works; there was little need for famine relief in the province.³

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1. A third reason for the lower mortality in 1899-1900 may have been the death of weaker sections of the population in the first famine (children and the older people), leaving the stronger sections to face and survive the second famine conditions.
 2. Nyaya Sudha, 4 March 1895, p. 137, and 11 March 1895, p. 146 on the Saugor deputation; and Subodh Sindhu, 12 June 1895, p. 297 on the plea.
 3. Craddock drew up the list for the central government, nonetheless; CPRAP, 1896 May, Commerce, #1 and #2, pp. 12-20.

In the summer of 1896 agricultural conditions deteriorated with the lack of rain; prices of grain rose by more than 30 percent in Nagpur in September.¹ When food grain riots broke out in Nagpur city and other towns in late September, the administration dealt with them mainly as a criminal problem. Administrators admitted food grain prices were high, merchants continued to export grain, and weavers were out of work and hard-pressed.² But the administration emphasized that the men arrested in the riots of Sunday afternoon, September 27th, were "professional bad characters," (lathiyals and badmashis), who were "able-bodied, well-nourished men;" the "rioters were not starving people at all."³

Four days before the riots of 1896 merchants and other Indian leaders had met with the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Blenkinsop. Blenkinsop made it clear that the Government "could neither interfere with export, nor fix prices."⁴ The merchants voluntarily agreed on a fixed price, but did not adhere to it after a day or two. Some "native gentlemen" then met with the Divisional Commissioner, and "advocated the compulsory reduction of rates and the prohibition of export," but were told "these measures were impossible." On the morning of the riots, the President of the Municipal Committee, Mr. Chitnavis, suggested "the Municipal Committee buy grain and sell it to the people,"⁵ but this was not acted

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1. Maharashtra State Gazetteers: Nagpur District (Bombay: Directorate of Government Printing, 1966), p. 292.
 2. A. H. L. Fraser's letter of 8 October 1896, CPHP, 1896 October, Police, #6, p. 263.
 3. Ibid., par. 18, p. 263. 4. Ibid., p. 260.
 5. Ibid., p. 260-61.

on. The Indian police force was unable to control the crowds on the Sunday afternoon, and English civil and military officers had to rush in to quell the riots. In the next three days, fifty of the two hundred arrested were publicly whipped in front of the Town Hall. Riots spread to other places in Nagpur district and to the Narbudda valley by the end of September. In one case, "Mr. Cleveland was sent to Ramtek, and he made several arrests there, and whipped the rioters on the spot."¹ With these measures, order was restored. Rather than carrying out relief activities, the administration's main recommendation was the "necessity for a small body of cavalry or mounted police," to deal quickly with any disturbances.²

The administration did not feel "distress" was severe enough to start relief works in September and dealt with the grain riots on a criminal basis. They expected rains in September and October but none fell. Finally and belatedly, the administration began to make plans for famine relief, with the first works opening in late November 1896. People able to work, received payments or food for constructing roads, tanks, railways, etc. Those too sick to work were fed at kitchens, and some given shelter. This continued through the summer of 1897. The largest number on relief was 703,000 people (8.5 percent of the popula-

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1. Report of the Nagpur District Superintendent of Police, H. R. Stuart, 6 October 1896, *Ibid.*, p. 268.
 2. Fraser's letter of 15 October 1896, *Ibid.*, #16, p. 279. See also the report of the District Superintendent of Police, Nagpur, 1 October 1896, where he comments on the reasons for the outbreak. Merchants "raised their prices for grain, . . . they would not sell to the public, but stored up their grain for dealers from outside, . . . what grain they sold was largely mixed with rotten grain and dirt, and . . . some watered their grain before selling it in order to make it swell and thus defraud the public." *Ibid.* p. 268.

tion) on the 29th of May, 1897. The government spent Rs. 15 million on direct relief measures.

The administration's action in the famine of 1899-1900 contrasted with the earlier famine. Rather than being reluctant, the administration established relief works quickly, spent three times more money, and relieved a larger number of people. Though the crop failure was greater, the mortality was less in the second famine, partly because of the administration's response and action.

Besides administrative activity, the greater availability of food in the famine of 1899-1900 helped to reduce mortality. In the first famine food reserves had already been reduced by several preceding years of adverse agricultural conditions. In addition, the famine of 1896-97 affected a much larger area of India than in 1899-1900. Consequently grain continued to be exported from the Central Provinces during the first famine, while it was imported in large amounts from Bengal and Burma in 1899-1900. The Famine Report said that for this reason people cursed the railways in the first famine, but considered "them as their salvation" in the second.¹

1. R. H. Craddock, Report on the Famine in the Central Provinces in 1899-1900 (Nagpur: 1901), p. 23. The trade statistics are, in tons:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Imports</u>	<u>Exports</u>	<u>Excess</u>
1896-97	93,206	98,409	5,203 exports
1899-1900	476,278	48,450	427,828 imports

In the 1896-97 famine "Relief measures generally were begun too late, the people being already severely distressed in the closing months of 1896." The administration's action "could not altogether rescue the people whose condition was in many cases sunk too low." On the other hand, in the 1899-1900 famine, "preparations for relief were begun in ample time and extended as the occasion for them arose."¹

The famines of the 1980's destroyed the myth of the Central Provinces' immunity from famine. Even in the 1899-1900 famine the administration exhibited a new attitude based on experience and a willingness to deal quickly and effectively with famine conditions.

The heritage of the famine left deep scars on the social and economic condition of the province. Over the decade of the 1890's the population of the province declined by 8.6 percent; the net cropped area fell by more than 16 percent, declining from a peak of about 16 million acres in 1893/94 to just over 13 million acres in 1899/1900.² In reviewing the decade, Frank Sly concluded that "Famine is the dominant note in the history of the past decade, and its black shadow has been cast over almost every section of the community."³ Some sections of the population dropped by about 12 percent; farm servants declined by

1. Raipur DG (1909), pp. 211-12.

2. Actual acreage was from 15.9 million to 13.2 million.

3. Frank Sly, Memorandum on the Condition of the People of the Central Provinces during the Decennial Period, 1892-1902, (Nagpur: 12 August 1902), par. 34.

22 percent.¹ Districts also showed uneven declines. Saugor district lost more than 20 percent of its population, Balaghat about 15 percent, and Bilaspur 12 percent. Only two districts on the periphery of the province, Nimar and Sambalpur, showed a population increase.²

The first decade of the twentieth century was seen as one of recovery. Perhaps as a compensation for the losses of the 1890's, the birth rate rose by 15 per mille, and the net cropped area increased to about 18 million acres, or a 34 percent increase.³ Two scarcities occurred in this decade, but neither affected the whole province nor involved a succession of bad years so as to dangerously reduce food reserves. In addition the demand for labor remained high due to the reduced labor population, and alternate forms of employment outside agriculture expanded with the building of the Satpura railway and the opening of the manganese mines in the province.

The 1890's famines produced both after-shocks, that led to immediate administrative effort to bring relief, and long-term reverberations, that stimulated the administration to initiate three programs to encourage agricultural recovery. The programs for relief have already been noted. The long-term plans for recovery were three-fold: debt conciliation, cooperative credit societies, and irrigation projects.

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1. Sly, 1892-1902, pars. 27 and 37. This farm servant category is questionable. It varied during each census depending on changing criteria and definitions.
 2. In Nimar, located in the northwest and Sambalpur in the east.
 3. Charles E. Low, Memorandum on the Condition of the People in the Central Provinces During the Decennial Period, 1902-1912 (Nagpur: Government Press, 1912), pars. 6 and 9.

Both the debt conciliation and cooperative credit societies were planned to reduce the large debts of tenants and landlords that had mounted during the famine years, and to provide a strong institution to extend credit in the future. The plans to expand irrigation were aimed both to protect areas from famine and to increase agricultural production.

These recovery programs are more fully examined and evaluated in Chapter VII of this study. It is sufficient here to make some general observations.

The initial enthusiasm of administrators for recovery policies seemed to give them satisfaction when famine was followed by a decade of general prosperity. However, each of the three recovery programs had built-in flaws, which became more evident in time.

Debt reduction was an effective program in only six of the eighteen districts of the province where debts were reduced by approximately one-half. Cooperative societies were expected to provide participating activators with a cheap source of money. By 1911 the cooperative movement had barely begun to provide cultivators with credit and this credit was available in only a few districts. In the next decade the number of cooperative societies expanded rapidly, up to the 1918-1919 famine. At that time members borrowed so much and withdrew so many deposits the societies neared bankruptcy. The administration loaned them Rs. 2 million to keep them solvent. The Banking Enquiry Committee of 1928, however, admitted that the cooperative movement had failed to "revolutionize" rural finances. Agricultural indebtedness had continued to mount and the societies handled less than three percent of agricultural debts.

In Jabalpur district the tenants debts, which had temporarily been reduced through conciliation around 1910, were three times larger in the decades later (1930).

The irrigation program also had its flaws. Plans for irrigation projects had been drawn up in 1907, but it was 1911 before construction was seriously started and was restricted mainly to rice-growing districts. Even by the late 1920's, few farmers in Raipur district, where the large Mahanadi Canal was located, utilized and paid for irrigation water. Though irrigation was available for 800,000 acres, farmers used the water for only about one-eighth of the irrigatable land.

When Charles Low reviewed the first decade of the twentieth century in 1911, he admitted that "the economic results of the Irrigation and Agricultural Departments have yet to show themselves." However, officials and non-officials were "most confident of the great possibilities that they contained for the people of the Province." Low also looked upon the cooperative societies as likely "to revolutionize many other features of rural life besides its finances."¹ But the over-all results were not what had been hoped. The amount of agricultural indebtedness had increased. The Cooperative Societies had failed to provide a large proportion of agriculturalists with credit and had been sustained only with government help. Irrigation projects failed because farmers lacked capital, fertilizer, and other means to take advantage of expanded irrigation projects.

The first two decades of the twentieth century, then, were an

1. Ibid., p. 4.

aftermath of the famines during which economic and social recovery was spotty and slow.

Population Growth

The population in the Central Provinces grew very slowly between 1861 and 1921, mainly as a result of the succession of famines in the 1890's and influenza pestilence of 1918/19. Arthur Lewis has suggested a model which pinpoints some of the main factors influencing population growth.¹ His theory concentrates on a falling death rate, keeping birth rate constant, during three stages. Before population growth occurs both birth and death rates are around 40 per mille, with little or no fluctuation. The death rate then drops ten points during each of the three stages. The increased availability of food, because of better production or better distribution, results in the first ten point drop in the death rate. In the second stage, epidemic diseases are brought under control mainly through public health measures. The third stage occurs when health-care facilities become available to most people--through either private or public hospitals and doctors. The death rate would then be 10 per mille with the population growing at a rate of 30 per mille, or three per cent per annum. Lewis sees the dependence on the potato for food in Ireland, epidemic control in Ceylon, and health care in some South American countries as examples of each of these stages.

Lewis' ideas and others help to explain the slow growth of the population in the Central Provinces during the late nineteenth and early

1. W. Arthur Lewis, The Theory of Economic Growth (Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, 1955), pp. 306-07.

TABLE 14A
 POPULATION GROWTH, THREE DISTRICT AREAS
 1820s-1961

Period	Jabalpur	Hoshangabad	Chhattisgarh -Raipur	Three district average
1820s to 1865	4%	8%	22+%	11%
1881 to 1921	2%	-1%	10+%	4%
1921 to 1961	18%	9%	15%	14%

SOURCES: Tables 31-32.

TABLE 14B
 POPULATION GROWTH, CENTRAL PROVINCES
 1881-1900 and 1901-1920

Period	Death rate	Birth rate	Natural growth	Census growth
1881- 1900	36.42	38.45	2.03	-.57
1901- 1920	39.86	47.44	7.58	8.79

SOURCES: Tables 26 and 27.

twentieth centuries. In the forty years, both before 1861 and after 1921, the population in the province possibly grew more rapidly than in the forty years between 1881 and 1921.¹ The decennial growth rates for these three periods were possibly around 1912 percent before 1861, probably about 4-5 percent between 1881 and 1921, and over 13 percent between 1921 and 1961. (See table on population growth.)

No reliable statistics on the whole of the province are available for the first period, but estimates from reports and land revenue surveys exist for districts or portions of districts. They indicate a growth rate from the 1820's to the 1866 census of about 12 percent per decade. Jabalpur district grew by about 4 percent, Hoshangabad district by 8 percent, and Chhattisgarh by more than 22 percent. Without detailed information on conditions for this early period, it is difficult to explain this growth, or even to accept this fairly high rate of growth. If such growth did occur, it may have been a result of the absence of war, the localization of epidemics, and the lack of easy export transportation, thus keeping food reserves more available for local consumption. Both death and birth rates must have been high and famines very severe when they occurred. As famines were probably less frequent in Chhattisgarh than in the Narbudda valley, growth may have been greater. The only severe famine in the Chhattisgarh area occurred in 1835. (See list of famines between 1800-1861.)

In the second period (1881-1921), the rail network may have worked

1. The forty year period between 1881-1921 has been selected because of greater reliability and consistency in statistics that makes comparisons more accurate. The two census of 1866 and 1872 have often been discounted by administrators for their unreliability and underestimated.

against the availability of a constant food reserve at certain times. Railways may have facilitated the gradual, annual export of food grains needed in a famine crisis. Railways also served only their immediate adjacent areas during famines. One of the reasons the 1896-97 famine was more severe in places like Balaghat district was the absence of a nearby railway; Banjaras with pack animals had to be used to transport food grain, and elephants "to bring the sacks of coin" for seed grain loans. (Henry Sharp, Good-bye India [London: Oxford University Press, 1946] (pp. 47-48 and 51.) On the other hand Raipur district, with its direct railway connection to rice-producing Bengal, suffered less in the famines—at one time in 1899-1900 almost half of the population was being fed at famine kitchens. (Above on the 1899-1900 famine. Raipur District Gazetteer (1909), p. 214. Forty-two percent of the population were fed at 2,718 kitchens in August.) Railways may have provided the mobility of people which could result in a more rapid spread of some diseases. The railways in the Central Provinces passed through the major towns, the same centers of plague epidemics after 1900.

The more rapid growth of the population in third period (1921-1961), especially after 1941, seems a result of three factors: (i) better food distribution as a result of the expansion of roads and the greater use of motor vehicles reaching into the interior of the districts; (ii) a larger fertile population, produced by the generally healthy decades of 1901-1910 and 1921-30; and (iii) the expansion of public health measures finally having a significant effect on reducing high-death epidemics. (On (i) see Wake, "Transportation," especially pp. 23-43; and on (iii) see Jabalpur District Gazetteer (1968), pp. 580-582.)

Within the forty-year period of 1881 to 1921 there were extreme fluctuations in the incidence of diseases and in the birth and death rates. These are especially evident on the basis of annual, five-year, and even ten-year averages. A shift to slightly healthier conditions becomes apparent only by comparing the twenty-year averages. (See accompanying table.) From 1881 to 1900 vital statistics indicate a 2 percent decennial increase, while between 1901 and 1920 this growth rose to 7.6 or by five and a half points. It is clear the successive years of famine in the 1890's had a much greater influence on slowing growth than the influenza epidemic and famines in the late 1910's. In addition better weather conditions, alternative income sources for labor, and improved relief famine procedures may have contributed two or three points toward this five and a half point increase. The remaining one to three points may be assigned to a combination of factors--the smallpox vaccination program, the construction of the Satpura railway through previous non-railway areas, and some immigration. Railways and famine administration thus helped in food distribution, while control of some epidemics added slightly to the growth.¹

British medical administration between 1861 and 1921 concentrated mainly on a smallpox vaccination program, secondly on sporadic attempts at cholera and plague control, and finally on establishing dispensaries and sanitary measures in the towns of the districts. With smallpox the

1. In the second period (1901-1920) death rates rose (by 3.5 points over the first period), but birth rates climbed even faster (by 9 points). The rise of both rates is probably explained by wider coverage of the province--the inclusion or registration for the first time of people on the fringes of the districts. These more isolated people generally had higher birth and death rates than the previously registered population. They consisted of tribal people and areas indirectly ruled by the British, such as the "Feudatory States" of Chhattisgarh.

TABLE 15

DEATHS FROM DISEASES

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Central Provinces, 1868-1920

A. Incidence of Deaths from Diseases							
Period	Smallpox	Cholera	Fevers	Other diseases	(Fevers and Other)	Total disease deaths	Death rate
1868-70	1.73	4.66	15.48	6.51	(21.99)	28.39	--
1877-80	1.67	2.44	20.99	2.70	(23.69)	27.79	33.37
1881-85	.45	1.40	18.62	2.89	(21.51)	23.35	31.74
1906-10	.44	1.42	18.32	7.72	(26.04)	27.90	40.25
1911-15	.26	1.13	16.85	7.32	(24.17)	25.56	35.98

B. Percentage Deaths from Diseases						
Period	Smallpox	Cholera	Fevers	Other diseases	(Fevers and Other)	Total
1868-70	6.1	16.4	54.5	22.9	(77.5)	100
1877-80	6.0	8.8	75.5	9.7	(85.3)	100
1881-85	1.9	6.0	79.9	12.4	(92.1)	100
1906-10	1.6	5.1	65.7	27.7	(93.3)	100
1911-15	1.0	4.4	65.9	28.6	(94.5)	100

C. Deaths from Smallpox						
Period	Jabalpur*		Hoshangabad		Raipur	
	Number of deaths	Per mille	Number of deaths	Per mille	Number of deaths	Per mille
1891-1900	1379	.24	1792	.37	3949	.30
1901-1910	561	.11	891	.21	7206	.59
1911-1920	335	.07	363	.08	3229	.24

SOURCES: A--Tables of disease deaths, 1868-1870 and of Disease Deaths, Death and Birth Rates, 1877-1920; B--Ibid.; C--District Gazetteers, Volume B, Statistical Tables 1891-1928, for Jabalpur, Hoshangabad, and Raipur districts.

*Jabalpur district exclusive of Murwara tahsil.

administration could point to considerable success--a disease which contributed six percent to the total disease deaths in the 1860's was reduced to less than one percent by the twentieth century. (See table on deaths from diseases). In some districts smallpox was virtually eliminated around 1908-1910. Cholera also may have dropped in its average incidence by almost half between the early 1880's and 1911-15. But even in the last decade (1911-1920) virulent epidemics resurfaced five times. Taken together, however, the epidemics of smallpox, cholera and plague never constituted a large proportion of disease deaths (usually around 6 to 8 percent though as high as 14 percent in the first decade). As a consequence moderate or even successful control of these epidemics could not significantly reduce the death rate. Other epidemics and diseases such as malaria or "fevers" dominated disease deaths. The administration generally remained unable or uncommitted to develop programs for control of these high-incidence diseases.

Famines were a result of adverse weather conditions and not the British administration. Yet the Central Provinces administration's procrastination and deprecation of formulating a sound Famine Code in the late nineteenth century contributed significantly to the high number of deaths in successive years of famine. Even after the famine of 1896-97 and with a revision of the Code, the administration usually underestimated the famine's severity and number of deaths, and refused to admit starvation as a significant cause of death. Reports emphasized the higher number of deaths in some areas were a result of emaciated people migrating into the province from outside. Though birth and death numbers and rates in the 1890's indicated a 4.5 percent decrease

in the population; the census of 1891 and 1901 showed more than an 8 percent decline. The 1901 census report admitted, then, there was probably some under-reporting of deaths in the famine years. Concerning starvation, the 1899-1900 Famine Report typically remarked, out of 539,349 deaths, "the only deaths directly due to want of food have been those of a few (scarcely amounting to ten in the whole famine) hapless waifs." (Craddock, Famine (1901), pp. 126 and 129.)

In addition to health care and famine policy, the administration relied too much on the hopes of agricultural fiscal recovery through debt conciliation and the cooperative movement, and an irrigation protection program in the twentieth century. Many of these hopes were dashed by inadequate implementation or by the insufficient scale of the programs, as we have seen.

In all it seems clear that railway networks, administration health care, famine relief, and recovery policies could not battle successfully against the elements of nature and disease. The foundation laid in this period by the introduction of a new set of health-care and agricultural programs was inadequate in the first six decades of British administration, and the programs had to wait two or three more decades of further expansion and revision in order to slow the gallop of the three Horsemen of the Apocalypse--Pestilence, Famine and Death.

CHAPTER VII

LAND: BRITISH POLICY AND INDIAN ADJUSTMENT

One of the main concerns of any British administration in the provinces of British India during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was its land policy. In the Central Provinces, British administrators from 1801 to 1921 viewed land policy as an important, if not the most important concern of their administration. With few exceptions, the people in the Central Provinces relied on the land and its produce for their survival and growth. The British administration was also dependent on the land. Land revenue formed the most important source of income, contributing more than half of the total revenue. It was thus the major financial support of the administration in its effort to consolidate British rule in the area.

Collecting the land revenue was not the sole goal of land policy. There was also the need to ensure a regular and a gradual increase in the land revenue. This involved establishing fairly stable and peaceful agrarian relations and increasing agricultural production.

This chapter traces British land policies and programs which were intended to achieve the three goals of consolidation, development, and stability. It examines four periods: (1) the formation of land policies in the 1860s, (2) new directions in policy concerning agrarian relations and land colonization in the later 1860s and

early 1870s, (3) legislative changes and the revision of land settlements during the period of economic prosperity in the 1880s and early 1890s, and (4) recovery programs in the twentieth century following the famines of the late 1890s. Besides policy changes, the effects of implementation and the actions and attitudes of Indians are studied.

The Formation of Land Policies under

Richard Temple in the 1860s

The British established new land policies and programs in the 1860s with the creation of the Central Provinces. Before then British administrators in the area had already begun to introduce changes in the land revenue system. In contrast to the Maratha land revenue system of the period before 1818, the British had tried to stabilize the amount of land revenue. Instead of the Maratha's annual revisions, the British extended revisions for longer periods-- three years, five years, and in the Saugor and Narbudda Territories for twenty years from 1835. At the same time they began to introduce British legal concepts of property and contracts in order to more clearly define the rights of government, village revenue collectors or malguzars, cultivators paying revenue through him, and bankers. These trends culminated in the decisions of administrators to revise the land revenue system even before 1861.

In the northern part of the Central Provinces, the administrators of the Saugor and Narbudda Territories announced by Proclamation in 1854 that the village revenue collectors would now be given full proprietary rights subject only to the regular payment of the land

revenue.¹ In 1860, the administration of the southern area, the Nagpur Province, similarly decided to revise the land revenue and to confer proprietary rights on the village headmen.²

When Richard Temple became Chief Commissioner in 1862, one of his major tasks was to implement these decisions by making land revenue settlements in each of the eighteen districts of the Central Provinces. The main intention of the settlement was to revise the land revenue, but that entailed an elaborate process of surveying and measuring the entire area down to each cultivated field, then estimating the amount and value of the produce, then investigating and establishing the rights of village headmen, cultivators, and village servants, and finally determining the land revenue amount in each village. The final district land revenue reports were scrutinized and criticized by provincial authorities before they were transmitted to the central government for confirmation.

Temple needed to decide on the detailed procedures for the land revenue settlements, and these eventually became embodied in the Settlement Code of 1863. Five questions arose in determining the rules of the Settlement Code and in implementing the land revenue settlements: (1) what proportion of the landlords' assets should be

¹Government of North-Western Provinces, 30 April 1853, in J. F. Dyer, Introduction to the Land Revenue and Settlement System of the Central Provinces (1921; 3d impression, Nagpur: Government of Madhya Pradesh Press, 1956), p. 29.

²Government of Nagpur Province, 12 May 1860, in *Ibid.*, pp. 35-37.

collected as land revenue, (2) what should be the interval between revisions of the land revenue, (3) how surplus or waste lands should be colonized by cultivators, (4) how to deal with landlords' debts, and (5) what rights should be given to tenants.

The first question concerned the proportion of the landlords' assets to be collected as land revenue. British administrators defined "assets" in a variety of ways, but most basically they considered it the equivalent of a fair rent of the land. One of the tests to determine this fair rent was to calculate the productivity of the soil, crop production, its price, and then subtract expenses for cultivation and maintenance; the remaining profit was often considered the same as a fair rent or the landlords' assets.

Before 1818 the Maratha governments took seven-eighths of the assets. But gradually this decreased under the British so that by the 1850s the administrators of the Saugor and Narbudda Territories announced the proportion of land revenue would be two-thirds of the assets. Later they decided to limit this to one-half, for two reasons: first, through experience in other parts of India, the British reported that "when more than one-half is taken, the settlement breaks down."¹ By lowering the proportion, the British hoped malguzars would be left with sufficient income to tide them over times of agricultural depression, while they would reinvest their increased income in normal and prosperous times for agricultural

¹CP to GOI, 19 April 1863, in IFP, November 1863, #8, "Draft Settlement Code of 1863," Section 2, pp. 11-13.

improvements. Secondly, the new land revenue settlements would be more detailed than ever before, more inclusive of all resources, and based on prospective rather than existing profits. Thus if two-thirds were taken on more inclusive incomes, it would leave the malguzar with a lower real profit.¹

In practice, most of the land revenue settlements in northern Central Provinces took one-half or less of the existing assets, while in the south, settlement officers expected a large increase of profits in the next years, so they took one-half to two-thirds of the assets. In practice, also, settlement officers of the 1860s worked from "aggregate to detail," rather than from "detail to aggregate" as happened in the next periodic settlement of the 1890s. In other words, settlement officers estimated the produce and revenue of a group of villagers, and then divided that sum among the villages according to their comparative economic standing. Later settlement officers calculated the land revenue per acre of each field and then totaled the fields to arrive at the village's land revenue.

Temple became involved in the discussion of a second topic of land revenue--the term or period between revisions of the settlements. While the decision previously was for a thirty-year settlement, administrators in Calcutta and London raised the possibility of making permanent settlements in India in the late 1850s. Charles Wood, as Secretary of State, suggested that permanent settlements would promote attitudes of cooperation and loyalty, and stimulate

¹Dyer, Land Rev., pp. 60-61.

efforts for economic development among the Indian landholders, so long as their revenue remained unchanged while the value or productivity of their land improved over the years.¹ Temple enthusiastically endorsed the idea for the Central Provinces, but by the early 1860s administrators in the central government had reversed their preference. Temple eventually realized this; though he made one further effort, saying, a permanent settlement in highly cultivated areas of the province would not entail the loss of government revenue; he, nonetheless, suggested that a permanent settlement in portions of the province could be delayed for ten years, by which time these areas of the province would have reached their full productive capacity.² But the central government went even further--it asked if the Central Provinces administration was so committed to a thirty-year settlement, that it could not be reduced to twenty years or less. Temple felt this was not possible in most of the province, as public announcements had already stipulated thirty-year settlements; but in some districts, especially in the central plateau and eastern Chhattisgarh districts, the administration was not publicly committed. In those areas twenty-year settlements were made.³ Within five years, administrative policy had changed from an

¹Charles Wood to GOI, 9 July 1862, in Selection of Papers on the Subject of Permanent Settlement in the Central Provinces (Nagpur: Government Press, 1923), pp. 28-40, especially p. 34 or pars. 46-48.

²C.P. to GOI, 22 August 1862, in India, Foreign Department Proceedings, (hereafter IFP), October 1862; C. P. to GOI, 21 November 1863, in IFP, February 1864.

³C. P. to GOI, 11 April 1866, in IFP, May 1866, pp. 17-23.

emphasis on promoting the landlords' interests through a permanent settlement, to ensuring the government's fair share of agricultural expansion through shorter periods of settlements.

The third question concerned surplus or uncultivated waste land. When Temple first arrived in the Central Provinces he had been impressed by the large tracts of forest and uncultivated lands. In his first administrative report he expressed the idea that these could be opened up for occupation and cultivation by attracting either Europeans or Indians.¹ The demarcation of unoccupied tracts of land, and how they could be leased or sold, became part of the land revenue settlements. Temple distinguished between two types of land for extending cultivation: unoccupied village lands, and non-village land called waste lands. Under the Settlement Code, settlement officers were to provide villages with ample adjacent lands for the extension of cultivation. Surplus land beyond that land was generally designated waste lands or forest lands.² Most of these areas were located in or near the central Satpura plateau or bordered the cultivated plains.

Temple decided on two sets of rules to attract cultivators. For cultivators with large amounts of money, he established the Waste Land Rules which determined both the price and the amount of

¹Central Provinces, Annual Report on the Administration of the Central Provinces for the year 1861-62, pp. 51, 57, 116-118.

²C. P. to GOI, 29 April 1863, in IFP, November 63, #8, "Draft Settlement Code of 1863," Section 2, pp. 11-13.

land each cultivator could buy. For others with less money, he established Clearance Land Rules, so that cultivators could "earn" proprietary rights to the land by clearing the land and cultivating it for a number of years free of any tax.¹ Furthermore, Temple created the new district of Balaghat, which consisted of cultivated areas in the south and waste land areas in the north.² The local settlement officer, Captain Thomson, had made an extensive survey of the northern area, and his report was published in the Central Government Gazette.³ In 1868, A. Bloomfield became the new district officer, and he worked enthusiastically and energetically to build roads from the plains up through passes to the plateau. The paths were so rough, the first bullock carts had to be carried up piece by piece. He also worked with tribal groups to encourage them to become resident farmers instead of shifting agriculturalists.⁴ Temple felt his rules and schemes for the "colonization" of unoccupied areas might eventually become one of the key features in the economic development of the Central Provinces.

¹See Dyer, Land Rev., pp. 73-76.

²GOI, Foreign Department, Notification, 27 February 1967, in IFP, February 1867, #35, p. 23.

³Gazette of India, Supplement, 30 March 1864, "Report on Mandla," pp. 127-137.

⁴District Commissioner A. Bloomfield, Progress Report on Balaghat, 30 June 1869, in IFP, December 1869, #84, pp. 87-111.

On the fourth question, the economic condition of landlords, Temple hoped that conferring proprietary rights on the malguzar would place them in a strong position. He learned that in some areas malguzars had large debts, and he wished to make the arrangements to clear these debts. Temple proposed that the settlement officer assist landlords and creditors in arrangements to clear these debts: creditors were allowed six months, after a public notification of a landlord's debts, to present claims and arrange for payments. If no claims were presented, the landlord would not be responsible for previous debts.¹ Some settlement officers began to assist in the arrangements to clear these debts, but the central government disapproved Temple's proposal, saying it was the responsibility of the regular civil courts to settle private debts and the settlement officers should not attempt such proceedings.² Although Temple failed to get this concession, administrators emphasized the "gift" of proprietary rights was of great value. In Hoshangabad, the settlement officer estimated the mulguzars had been awarded property with an equivalent value of Rs. 5 million.³ The Administration Report of 1866-67 said, "land owners are becoming more prosperous.

¹"Draft Settlement Code of 1863," Section 16, pp. 26-29.

²Ibid., p. 44, and Charles Alfred Elliott, Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the District of Hoshangabad, Central Provinces, (Allahabad: Government Press, North-Western Provinces, (1867), pp. 194-95. Hereafter, Hoshangabad SR (1867).

³Hoshangabad SR (1867), p. 233.

Rents are . . . rising. The price of land, too, is higher than ever before." In several places land was now selling at five times the land tax. In one place it sold at thirteen times the land tax.¹ The next year it reported that the sale of land at high prices had "awakened" the landed class "to a knowledge of the true value of the rights which they were allowing to slip away from them."² The condition of farmers had also improved, since "now-a-days the farmer is free from debt and has money and corn in hand." He "secures for himself a large share of the profit which used to go to the money-lender and grain seller."³

Agrarian relations formed the fifth question. While the main object of the Land Revenue Settlements were to determine the land revenue, they also involved the important and complex question of the relationship of members within agrarian society. As with other land issues, this one had been discussed before the creation of the Central Provinces. The Proclamation of 1854 distinguished between three types of villages for determining who should be declared the landlord. In the first type there were four claimants to rights--the malguzar with a strong claim and long possession who would be considered the landlord with two types of sub-proprietors. They consisted of cultivators who were past mulguzars or relatives of the

¹C. P., Administration Report 1866-67, p. xiii.

²C. P., Administration Report 1867-68, p. xiv.

³C. P., Administration Report 1866-67, p. xii.

present malguzar, and cultivators of long standing or hereditary cultivators. The fourth claimant to some recognition were cultivators on annual leases, later designated as tenants-at-will. The second type of village consisted of malguzars with a weak or recent claim, and in this type of village sub-proprietors were to be given greater consideration. In the third type of village, brotherhoods or clans might be established as proprietors with one of them designated to pay the land revenue.¹ During the settlements most officers assumed the villages of the Central Provinces consisted of the first type with landlords of long-possession. In Nagpur, little was ordered about the claim of sub-proprietor or cultivators--except that the settlements should conform to past practice and customs. The Nagpur administrators, however, said the object of the settlement was:

to improve the condition of the head of villages, re-establish old families, encourage them to take an interest in local improvements, and associate them with ourselves in the repression of crime, shew them practically the value of their estates, and give them inducements for improving the capabilities of the lands they hold.²

At first, Temple also did not clearly or precisely define the types of tenants and their rights. Hereditary holders of plots of land were to be made malik makhuzas or plot proprietors, and pay revenue through the malguzars. The rights of hereditary occupancy cultivators and other cultivators were to be recorded, the main

¹North-Western Provinces, 30 April 1853, par. 14-16, in Dyer, Land Rev., p. 30.

²Nagpur Commissioner, 12 May 1860, par. 21, in Dyer, Land Rev., p. 37.

distinction being that hereditary tenants had occupied their land twelve years or more. By the middle of 1864, Temple found that the Bengal Act (X of 1859) also established rights for tenants with twelve years' occupancy, so that this law was applied to the Central Provinces to legally define occupancy tenants.¹ The landlords could enhance their rents only through applying to revenue courts. In a Circular (#4) in 1863, the new Settlement Commissioner for the province, John Harris, informed all settlement officers that this class should be "narrowed" as much as possible.

A year later, John Morris replied to another question of whether occupancy tenancy should be allowed to grow in number based on twelve years' occupancy. He generally disliked such a suggestion, because "the less property is shackled with sub-tenures the better." He thought, already "much dissatisfaction is now felt by landlords at their tenants of twelve years standing being recorded as entitled to hereditary occupancy."² To limit their acquisition of occupancy status in the future, he suggested a period of sixty years' occupancy. Temple, on the other hand, proposed twenty to twenty-five years.³ The central government did not accept either proposal, but suggested that the administration inform occupancy tenants that the term of possession might be altered later.

¹CP to GOI, 18 July 1864, in IFF, August 1864.

²J. H. Harris to Chief Commissioner, 18 April, 18 April 1864, in IFF, August 1864, #40, p. 78, par. 12.

³G. P. to GOI, 18 July 1864, in Ibid., #39, p. 75, par. 16.

The government also began to distinguish between "the ancient or hereditary cultivator" and the "cultivator with the rights of occupancy."¹ In 1865 the administration defined this distinction further in "Circular G." Tenants under Act X of 1859 with occupancy rights became known as "conditional occupancy tenants," as the law might be changed soon, while those with much more than twelve years became "absolute occupancy tenants."²

By the time of Temple's departure from the office of Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces on 4 April 1867, Land Revenue settlements had been completed in ten out of eighteen districts and were nearing completion in the others. During Temple's administration he had fully discussed and decided major issues of land policy including the proportion of assets for land revenue, the term of settlements, the exclusion of waste lands and rules for their sale or lease to attract colonizers, a concern over landlords' debts, and the establishment of separate tenants. The first two issues directly involved the amount of land revenue. Through the new settlements, land revenue had risen 245 percent from Rs. 5,176,152 in 1861-62 to Rs. 6,443,189 in 1866-67, and was considered "as everywhere moderate." It was by far the largest single item of the total revenue of the government (62.5 percent). It thus formed an essential element

¹ GOI, 22 December 1864, in Dyer, Land Rev., pp. 44-45.

² Chief Commissioner, Circular G, 20 April 1865, referred to in Hoshangabad Settlement Report (1867), pp. 174n, and A. M. Russell to J. Morris, 14 March 1867, in Ibid., pp. 248-49.

of support for the consolidation of British colonial rule in the Central Provinces.¹ The third topic involved agricultural development, particularly through the extension of the area under cultivation. Both topics of landlord debts and tenants concerned agrarian relationships, though indirectly British administrators hoped it would involve the other two issues: agricultural investment and development, which in turn would eventually mean an increase in land revenue at the next settlements.

New Directions of Land Policies
in the late 1860s and 1870s

In the decade following Temple's departure there was a dramatic shift in the ideas about land policy. Administrators thought several mistakes had been made under Temple and they proposed corrective measures. In agrarian relations strong tenant claims had been ignored; waste land rules meant the administration could lose management of that land; and landlord indebtedness was increasing at an alarming rate.

George Campbell was Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces for only four and a half months, from 27 November 1867 to 16 April 1868, but his ideas initiated the major shift in land policies from a focus on the landlord to the tenant. Land tenure and agrarian relations interested him greatly.² In the Central Provinces he felt,

¹C. P., Administration Report 1866-67, p. 26.

²See his chapter on Indian Land tenures in the book published by Cobden Club, Systems of Land Tenure in Various Countries, 2d ed. (London: Macmillan, 1870).

when there were conflicting claims between malguzars (landlords) and ryots (tenants), "the question has been in practice quite univ-
ersally decided in favor of the malguzars, to the exclusion of the
ryots."¹ In reviewing earlier policy and the land revenue settle-
ments, he was shocked to find part of the Proclamation of 1854 had
been virtually ignored. Campbell felt cultivators had stronger
claims or rights than malguzars, since the cultivators had often
farmed and occupied the land longer than the lessees of the revenue
or malguzars. In a lengthy Minute, he quoted statements and statistics
from Land Revenue Settlement Reports which supported his views. He
thought the Proclamation stipulated clearly hereditary cultivators
(gadim kashtkars) should be made plot proprietors (malik makbuzas)
when the malguzar claim was weak or recent. However few settlement
officers had felt the hereditary cultivators deserved that higher
status and had made them occupancy tenants instead. Campbell wondered
what could be the best remedy for this omission in the settlements,
especially those already completed and confirmed. He proposed that
the least the government could do was to fix the rents of all absolute
occupancy tenants for the term of the settlement, just as the plot
proprietor's revenue was fixed. He proposed a further concession;
absolute occupancy tenants could be allowed almost equivalent rights
to plot proprietors in the transfer or sale of their holdings. If the

¹Chief Commissioner George Campbell, Minute of 4 April 1868,
in IFP, April 1868, #42, p. 91, par. 14. Hereafter Minute (April
1868).

settlement of a district was already completed then rights could simply be amended in the village papers.¹

Campbell also dealt with a unique custom in Chhattisgarh, the periodic redistribution of land among the farmers in a village to equalize the type of land each cultivated. Called lakhabata, the continuance of the custom meant few cultivators would qualify for occupancy status, even though their families might have lived and farmed in the same area for several generations. Under the provisions of the new British settlements, it was to the malguzar's interest to shift the tenants at short intervals. Temple had sought to discourage future lakhabata by informing occupancy tenants their long residence in the village qualified them for occupancy status, but would not continue if lakhabata were practiced in the future,² Campbell proposed to allow tenants to maintain their occupancy status in spite of any changes or land redistribution. Essentially he wanted the status applied to persons, not to specific fields or holdings.³

Campbell convinced the central government of his proposals, and they were approved. Occupancy status was to apply to persons, not holdings; the rent of absolute occupancy tenants would remain fixed.

¹Ibid., especially p. 100, par. 37.

²R. Temple, Memorandum, 24 April 1868, in IFP, March 1868, #50, p. 137.

³George Campbell, Minute, 13 February 1868, in Ibid., #48, p. 132; also Minute, 30 March 1868, Ibid., pp. 135-36.

during the settlement term and they could freely transfer or sell their holdings, subject only to the landlord's right of pre-emption.¹

In presenting his proposals on tenants in the Central Provinces, Campbell made a grandiose plea for peasant proprietorship. As his proposals and ideas marked a shift in the ideology of land policy in the province, it is quoted at length.

I have discussed this important subject, equally balancing to the best of my ability, the fair claims of either party . . . ; I am convinced that, whatever be the merits of the question in other parts of the world, in India something of the nature of peasant proprietorship is the form of tenure which most conduces to stable improvement, to contented and prosperous people, and to a secure Government: . . . The popularity and success of an Indian administration depends more on the tenure of land and system of land revenue than everything else put together. I do not know that we have anywhere succeeded in creating landlords, who fulfill the function of English or Scotch landlords. . . . I fail to see that very much is gained by fixing the land revenue either in perpetuity or for long terms if the real agriculturalists are still liable to be rack-rented either by middlemen--farmers holding for short terms, . . . or by landholders whose only function is the collection of rent. I have said I do not desire to see too much interference between the landlord properly so called and the tenant properly so called, . . . But I do think that there is an overwhelming mass of testimony to the comfort and contentment of an independent class of cultivators possessed of fixed rights, under whatever name they are known . . . We had in the C. P. so little prior proprietary right, and have so much in the power of Government, I do earnestly hope that the superior class of ryots, whose status has not yet been made clear, and whose fate is now trembling in the balance, may by fixity of rents, be approximated to peasant proprietors rather than degraded into new occupancy tenants

¹GOI to CP, 23 April 1868, in IFP, April 1868, #45, pp. 129-131; and GOI to CP, 24 April, 1868, in Ibid., #46, p. 131.

at uncertain rents under newly-created proprietors.¹

George Campbell's criticism of landlord settlements paved the way for additional criticism by others in the following years.

Campbell implied that Temple and Morris had favored tenants during most of the 1860s, and his obvious preference for "peasant proprietors" initiated a shift of land policy into new directions,

In three districts where settlements had not been completed, Chief Commissioner R. H. Keatinge raised the issue of tenant rights in 1870. All three lay on the periphery of the province and had close historical ties to adjacent areas. Muslim and Mughal rule had strongly influenced institutions in Nimar district, a district in the northwest corner of the province; Chanda district in the extreme south, had ties with both Marathas to the west and the Deccan to the south; and Sambalpur district in the east, had close affiliation with Orissa. Keatinge urged caution in settling the land revenues with malguzars in these three districts. He warned that "the spectacle of an emigration" of labor from the landlord (malguzari) area of southern Central Provinces to the peasant proprietary (ryotwari) area of adjacent Berar, which had recently come to the notice of the administration, should "make Government pause before going further" with landlord settlements.²

In all three areas eventually settlements were made with malguzars

¹Campbell, Minute (1868), p. 105, par. 47.

²R. H. Keatinge, Memorandum, 2 November 1970, in Dyer, Land Rev., p. 47.

and tenants, but the powers of malguzars over tenants were severely restricted. Reviewing the cases of Chanda and Nimar, the government in 1875 admitted "It is clear that a serious mistake was made in applying to these districts a system of settlement foreign to the tenures of the country and unsuitable to the people." It decided "the tenure of all cultivators should be a fixed and permanent one so long as the revenue or rent is paid."¹ A year later the Secretary of State commented even more strongly about the landlord settlements, "it is a matter of regret that it is now too late to correct entirely what has been done."²

Keatinge not only questioned the conferment of proprietary rights on malguzars, he questioned another of Temple's policies-- the sale or lease of waste lands. Keatinge proposed the government at least suspend any further loss of government land to private owners.³ Temple's scheme to induce Europeans or Indians to buy or lease waste lands for the purpose of enlarging the cultivated area had not been an outstanding success. By 1866-67, the administration reported over 13 million acres or 29,648 square miles had been set aside as government Waste Lands, yet only 163 square miles had been purchased. Most of the sales had been by Indians in the populous districts of Magpur and Bhandra. The only European purchaser mentioned

¹GOI, 21 January 1875, in Dyer, Land Rev., p. 49,

²GOI, 6 April 1876, in Ibid., p. 51.

³Keatinge, Memo in Compelation No. 157 of 1872, in Dyer, Land Rev., p. 77.

was a "French settler of capital" who had bought 15,000 acres (23.4 square miles) in the sparsely populated district of Mandla for a large stock-breeding farm. On the other hand, 117 square miles of land in Bhalaghat district had been taken out of clearance leases.¹ The government prohibited the breaking up of Waste Lands, except by ryots (cultivators) in Mandla and Hoshangabad districts (1972). The prohibition was experimental at first, but became final in 1875. In 1879 all waste lands were transformed into reserved government forests. As one official later concluded, "Thus the constitution of Government forests was the outcome, not so much of reservation for the purposes of forestry, but of exception from the alienation of proprietary rights."²

A third question on the landlords' condition was raised about land policy in the decade after Temple's departure. The Administration Reports of 1866-67 and 1867-68 had indicated encouraging signs of the rising value of the land. But in September 1870, Mr. Melville, the Judicial Commissioner, expressed concern over the number of land transfers or sales of landlord property. In the previous two years, though the sales had not been numerous, he saw signs "they would rapidly increase in number." He advocated landed property be "exempt from sale in execution of decrees for debt."³

¹C. P., Administration Report 1867-68, p. 2.

²Dyer, Land Rev., p. 70.

³Mr. Melville, September 1870, quoted in Minute, by J. B. Fuller, "Transfer of Malguzari Land," 15 Janucary 1889, in Central Provinces,

In late 1874, Chief Commissioner John Morris, asked local administrators to examine the position of landholders to determine their indebtedness. The reports showed over one-third of the malguzars in the province were in debt, and in some places they were "heavily involved."² In Narsinghpur and Hoshangabad districts almost half the malguzars were "hopelessly involved." Morris wrote, this

startling result deserves careful consideration. It cannot be urged against all these men that they have earned the penalty of ejection . . . There must rather be something unsuitable in the system within which they have been brought, which tends to occasion these results. . . . Appropriate and effective remedial measures become a matter of necessity.

Morris said the cause was not a heavy land revenue, since in the Central Provinces it was so light and the settlements had left the landlords with "annual incomes amply sufficient for all their wants, but they in their ignorance acted like minors in accepting loans . . . often only to gratify an over-whelming desire for ostentation and display." Morris saw that the large increase in the value of their property because of the settlements and the improvement of economic conditions tempted proprietors into debt. Thus the "owners of land grow poorer while their land is daily rising in value."³ Morris

Revenue and Agriculture Departments, Proceedings, November 1889, #15, p. 51. Hereafter, Fuller, Minute on Land, and CPRAP,

¹ John Morris, Minute, 30 September 1876, and letters of 7 October 1876 and 6 August 1875, in *Ibid.*, p. 52, par. 2.

² *Ibid.*, p. 54.

³ *Ibid.*

recommended several remedies, but the Government of India did not respond to them.

While Morris saw the main cause of landlording indebtedness was their use of their more valuable lands to borrow money for "ostentation and display," others considered the land revenue system in the province as the cause. William B. Jones felt the new land system was not compatible with the previous land systems. The administrators in the 1860s had introduced British concepts of land ownership and tenures. One of the results was the increasing indebtedness of landlords. He summarized his position by saying,

On the face of the question the class which our rule destroys must be more sinned against than sinning. We cannot draw an indictment against half the people of India, and we may be quite sure, whether we can see it or not, that we and our institutions are in the wrong, and not they.¹

Yet in spite of this strong opinion, when Jones reviewed and recommended changes for tenures in a Tenancy Act for the Central Provinces, he said, "When the Central Provinces were formed, English ideas were in ascendent; the pendulum of official opinion has now swung the other direction." But he admitted, "accepting as we must certain irrevocable facts, in particular, the concession of long settlements and the creation of proprietary rights, our revenue constitution is, after all, essentially sound, and that it neither requires nor admits any great modification. . . . I still find myself unable to recommend any revolutionary changes."²

¹W. B. Jones, 1873, quoted in GP to GOI, 11 November 1889, in Ibid., p. 29, par. 3.

²W. B. Jones, Note to accompany the Draft Revenue and Tenancy

Within a decade and a half following the founding of the province, administrators had discussed the merits of conferring proprietorship on malguzars and tenants and which of the two should have the stronger rights and position. Land policy before and during Temple's administration tended to favor landlords or malguzars, while George Campbell, Keatinge and other administrators favored tenants or peasants. Each side at times claimed they were simply re-affirming agrarian relations as they existed or functioned before the formation of the Central Provinces. At other times they emphasized the new features of the 1860s land policies. Jones, especially, felt the 1860s settlements were a foreign or British innovation. The diversity within the province and the variety of British opinions allowed both sides to investigate and find support for their own opinions and proposals by reference to specific cases and opinions or to selected local conditions. Both also felt their support of a level of agrarian society, whether landlords or tenants, would eventually promote and fulfill the goals of stability and development. Each, therefore, proposed and obtained approval of administrative methods which satisfied at least part of their ideas.

By the 1870s, administrators accepted the basic land system in the province and declined to propose further "revolutionary changes." As early as 1873 administrators had begun to make recommendations for land revenue and tenancy legislation, yet any changes would be within

Bills for the Central Provinces, in India, Legislative Department, Proceedings, July 1881, #40, p. 28.

the framework of the land policies of the 1860s and 1870s and not a complete restructuring of relations between the government, landlords and tenants. This was just as true in the late 1880s as in the earlier decades, as Chief Commissioner, Alexander Mackenzie remarked, "It is now too late to adopt the radical measures advocated . . . by Mr. Morris and others in 1874 . . . Any such step would be regarded as a breach of faith on the part of government which granted proprietary rights without restriction thirty years ago."¹

Land Legislation and Settlements
in the 1880s and 1890s

Two periods characterized British land revenue policy before 1880--the formation of policy under Temple to 1867 and the next decade of new directions especially under Campbell and Keatinge. From 1880 to the 1920s two other periods occurred, separated by the famines of the late 1890s. Legislative revisions and the implementation of the second round of land revenue settlements dominated British land policy between 1880 and the mid 1890s. Several land revenue and tenancy acts were passed such as in 1881, 1883, 1889, and 1898. Meanwhile settlement officers were involved in the major task of thoroughly investigating agricultural conditions and revising the land revenue in each district of the province. The famines disrupted the economic prosperity of the preceding decades

¹CP to GOI, 11 November 1889, in CPRAP, November 1889, p. 32, par. 32.

and eventually involved administrators in the large scale famine relief activities. Partly as a result of this, administrators' views changed--they became generally disillusioned with the process of legislative revisions. No major land acts were passed during this time until about 1920. Instead the first two decades of the twentieth century were dominated by administrative programs of recovery from the famines and agricultural development.

Between 1880 and the mid 1890s administrators reconsidered Temple's five questions concerning land policy--the land revenue assets and term of settlement, waste lands, landlord indebtedness, and agrarian relations. The character of the revision of land legislation and the land revenue settlements was greatly influenced by the economic prosperity of the period. Trade and the cultivated area in the Central Provinces expanded rapidly. Generally the British administrators viewed the prospects for continued agricultural growth with optimism and confidence. Especially in the decade of the 1880s administrators seemed to feel they could fully and effectively deal with whatever problems that might arise. No one more fully gave expression to this than J. B. Fuller.

Joseph Bampfylde Fuller was appointed Director of the newly created Agricultural Department in 1882. He had already served in the North-Western Provinces for six years and gained experience about agriculture and rural conditions. During the next fourteen years as the provincial administrator in charge of the Agriculture Department and the second round of settlements, he became the most prominent authority on land policy in the province. Chief Commissioners came

and went--first Morris, who finally retired, then Crosthwaite, Fitzpatrick, MacKenzie, MacDonnell and Woodburn. Fuller retained his position, promoting his policies and advising and instructing the Chief Commissioners.¹ He advocated some changes in land policies and defended others.

Within a year of Fuller's arrival, the first Tenancy Act for the Central Provinces was passed (1883). Two years earlier, the first Land Revenue Act for Central Provinces had been passed (1881). As already indicated, neither made drastic changes in the land policies for the province. In fact, British officials tended to view the main reason for passage of the act was to place the land revenue administration on an uncontestable legal basis. One statement, introducing the bills, noted, "Throughout a considerable portion of the country there is little or no law regarding the settlement and the collection of revenue." An administrator later remarked,

A whole new system of land revenue administration and land-holding . . . had been raised on the basis of executive regulations and instructions, and the need for legislation became patent as soon as questions of rights and liabilities of the Government, landholders, and tenants arose.²

While the Acts made no drastic changes, some Indian groups disputed the "minor" changes which affected them. For example, the Nagpur Landholders petitioned the administration for clarification and

¹See J. Bampfylde Fuller, Some Personal Experiences (London: John Murray, 1930), pp. 35-49.

²Dyer, Land Rev., p. 81.

modification of the Acts,¹

Land Revenue Assessment--Policy

Two of the topics, which Fuller defended, were the proportion of landlord's assets taken as land revenue and new methods of rent assessment. The central government asked why the Central Provinces administration should be permitted to exceed the amount stipulated in the second settlement, in some districts. The amount stipulated was 50 percent of the assets. Almost the same logic and reasons, which had explained the higher assessments of the 1860s in some districts, were advanced again. Fuller explained, (a) assets would be more precisely calculated than previously, and (b) they were current or actual, rather than prospective assets. By the late 1880s, Fuller had devised what he felt was a simpler, more equitable, and more rapid method for settlement officers to calculate the rental value of the land. This he called the "soil unit" which he explained in detail and gave examples.² In the second settlement, therefore, the settlement officer would "have far greater confidence in his statistics than was formerly the case." The "soil unit" method allowed the settlement officer to make equitable enhancements, taking into account the comparative condition of a village, and the status of the tenants and landlords. The provisions of the previous settlement and the recent Acts authorized the settlement officer to enhance the fixed rents of occupancy

¹See Chapter V.

²J. B. Fuller to GOI, 16 March 1888, in CPRAP, Settlement, July 1888, #4, pp. 54-58, par. 3-8.

tenants.¹ The malguzar could not interfere with these rents in the near future; they formed part of his assets. The settlement officer would clearly know the exact assets, as he would have used the "soil unit" method to determine the rents, the value of the landlord's holdings, and the miscellaneous income, all three of which constituted the landlord's total assets. These actual assets he calculated on a basis favorable to the landlord in that the officer would not compute his assets as high as the recent rise in prices, increased trade, and the extension of cultivation indicated. To offset this concession by the government, the administrator called for a flexibility in determining the share of assets, to allow them to compute the government's share as high as 65 percent in some cases, rather than strictly follow the 50 percent assets rule. The central government eventually accepted the proposal in principle, but stated that the government's share should not exceed 60 percent.²

In the following years the topic of assets was revived a number of times--in 1891, 1902 and 1911. Each time the administration or the central government defended the decision to allow the Central Provinces to be flexible in determining the percentage of assets for its share. In October 1891, one of the reasons to revive the topic was that "the subject of the land revenue assessment is likely to be discussed at a meeting of the National Congress at Nagpur" two months

¹Ibid., pars. 7-9.

²GOI to CP, May 1888, in Ibid.

later.¹ The government stated the settlements in the Central Provinces were a "double concession." First, the two-thirds assets of the pre-1860s period had been reduced; and second, in the present settlements, the government "dared not subject the agricultural class to so sudden an enhancement of demand," as improved communications and trade indicated. The Landlords Association in Bilaspur district had recently petitioned to re-open and lower the enhancement of the just completed second settlement. That settlement enhanced the revenue by 89 percent, but the administration rejected the petition as the proportion of assets was 54 percent, and the land revenue absorbed only four percent of the estimated gross produce of the district. (See Chapter V for more details). The other times the proportion of assets was publicly discussed was in the government's replies to R. C. Dutt's accusation that the high revenue in the Central Provinces had helped cause and made worse the famine conditions; and in 1917 when the Central Provinces Legislative Council was discussing a new Land Revenue Bill.²

By the mid 1890s the administration decided to reduce any high share of assets to the "one-half assets" level. This would be done gradually at each revision.³ At the same time, the government wished to "maintain its customary and legitimate share of the produce of the

¹To the Secretary of State for India, 28 October 1891, CPRAP, Settlement, September 1893, p. 90.

²Dyer, Land Rev., p. 65.

³Ibid.

land," by having shorter periods between settlements,¹ The normal period would be twenty years; district settlement revisions would be staggered.

Land Revenue Assessment--Implementation
and Landlords' Views

Indian landlords were not always impressed by the high level discussions, pronouncements, and statements of British officials about "assets" and terms of settlements. As Fuller discovered,

I have explained to large numbers of malguzars the increased security of their position which has resulted from the decision of government to assess in future on actual assets and to generally limit the share of the State to 60 percent, but I have been struck with the indifference with which they regard the question. Their one idea is to ascertain whether the Government proposes to take a substantial increase or not, as to many of them this may mean failure to pay interest on their debts and consequent ruin, whether the percentage of the assets taken is high or low.²

Justification and theories at times mattered little to many landlords; they saw only how much they had to pay the government. In spite of the repeated statements that the land revenue was "moderate," or that the land revenue was easily paid, there were cases of high assessments, and seeming inflexibility of the administration; it was adamant in its insistence on the regular collection of the land revenue.

Even in the 1860s, the assessment of a higher land revenue on villages, and establishment of village lands separate from waste lands, presented problems. In Nagpur in 1863-64, the District Officer

¹GOI to CP, 31 August 1893, in CPRAP, Settlement, September 1893, p. 1.

²Fuller, Minute on Land Transfers (1888), p. 57, par. 9.

reported the government had to continue to manage five villages, because of the "recusancy of malguzars, who have declined to take up the new assessments fixed at Settlement." In the cultivated area of Mandla, the settlement officer had a difficult time convincing anyone to accept the "gift" of proprietary rights and become the malguzars in some villages. On the other hand, a settlement officer reported that village lands near forests had improved in value, because of his efforts to reserve waste land for the government; it had deprived "the Gonds and others . . . of the means or option of wandering," and had forced "them, as it were, to keep to the cultivated villages." As a result, the relations between landlords and cultivators were now "exactly the reverse." Before, "the Malguzar . . . would beg cultivators not to leave; . . . but now, the Malguzar has become independent," with "numerous applications for his lands, who are ready to outbid each other."¹

While the settlement procedures meant landlord refusal to accept unattractively high assessments in some villages and reversed agrarian relations in others, some landlords who retained their positions also complained of high assessments. Both cases, examined here, involved the changing status of villages from paying little or no revenue to being fully assessed. Six Gond estate-holders (called talukdars) of the Narbudda valley, petitioned against the new settlement of their estates in 1866. Previous administrators had allowed them lower

¹CP, Report on the Settlement Operations in the Central Provinces for the year 1865-66, in IFP, Revenue, October 1866, p. 96, para. 60.

assessments. In the 1830s Settlement, Major Ouseley had wished to leave the "very few nobles" of the area "as comfortable as we found them," and had decided on an assessment of 25 percent.¹ In the 1860s Settlement, however, the talukdars were assessed at "one-half assets." They petitioned for a reduction of their assessment to the previous percentage. The administration, however, felt "the character and conduct of these Gond landholders has not been exceedingly good;" they had not given "particular loyalty or good service" to the Government; nor deserved "any special consideration." The Chief Commissioner did not "doubt but that the value of their payment will increase"; but they had "remained comparatively inert," while "ordinary malguzars" had "by diligence and industry, improved their estates." The Chief Commissioner felt "the sole ground for their complaint would seem to be, not that they were worse off than they formerly were, but that other ordinary landholders are nearly as well off as themselves." Four of the six petitions were rejected as the new settlement left them with larger incomes than before the settlement. In the two remaining cases, where the settlement caused a reduction of their incomes, the administration lowered the revenue, but as a favor, not as a right. Under the settlement the incomes of the Fattehpur and Gangia estates would have shown losses of one and twenty-eight percent respectively because of the enhanced revenue. With the

¹Ouseley, quoted in CP to GOI, 25 March 1867, in IFP, April 1867, p. 6, par. 10.

²Ibid., p. 7, par. 15.

administration's "favor" of lowering the revenue, their incomes showed a ten percent profit for Fattehpur and only a one percent loss for Gangia.¹

The other case was the revenue-free or maufi village of Kolamait in Nagpur district in 1870. When the owner died and the village was resumed (no longer revenue-free), the new owner complained that the land revenue of Rs. 150 was much too high; he offered to pay Rs. 40,² The village was evidently small with no residential population; consisting of 1,677 acres of stony ground; the malguzar's land consisted of 112 cultivated acres plus 58 cultivatable acres.³ The assets of Rs. 64 were less than half the land revenue (Rs. 150). In writing to the central government, the Chief Commissioner justified this assessment saying the settlement officer "seems to have considered that the village would improve considerably before any assessment of revenue would come into force."⁴

In May he recommended a land revenue of Rs. 60, since "with care and attention the village might be improved." He also noted the malguzar was an "absentee proprietor" who "has done nothing to improve or even keep the village from deteriorating."⁵ The government asked

¹GOI to CP, 6 April 1867, in *ibid.*, p. 37.

²CP to GOI, 6 July 1870, in IFP, Revenue, July 1870, #36, p. 34.

³CP to GOI, 15 August 1870, in IFP, April 1870, #25, p. 40.

⁴CP to GOI, 6 July 1870, in IFP, Revenue, July 1870, #36, p. 34.

⁵24 May 1870, in IFP, June 1870, #22. This reduction from Rs. 150 to Rs. 60, would then have meant an assessment percentage reduction from 234 percent to 94 percent.

why it should pay even Rs. 60 and in July the Chief Commissioner recommended the Rs. 40 land revenue offered by the malguzar.¹ The central government approved of the reduction to Rs. 40 (still a 64.5 percent assessment), but remarked further--the margin of 58 cultivatable acres was small for improvement, and that "the whole correspondence and the mistaken assessment" at settlement did not "reflect credit on the proceedings."²

An indication of the administrator's strong intent to collect the government's land revenue occurred in the late 1860s. Famines at the time presented the first threat to the easy collection of land revenue in the province. Chhattisgarh was affected more severely than other areas, and one of the local British officials, Mr. Thomson, the District Commissioner of Bilaspur, proposed to ease the landlords' condition by remitting the land revenue. Chief Commissioner Morris had just recently (in late 1868) sent out a circular that "for the present, there should be no question of remission under any circumstances," though suspensions would "be granted only after full consideration and in a discriminatory manner." The recent land revenue settlements in most districts gave him "every reason to believe that it is generally moderate." He however, would be willing "to entertain any well considered cases" where landowners have not had time to settle into their new position, or when a succession of bad seasons

¹CP to GOI, 6 July 1870, in IFP, Revenue, July 1870, #36, p. 34.

²GOI to CP, 28 July 1870, in Ibid.

had shaken their resources,"¹ Morris "regretted to receive . . . proposals of so indiscriminate a character as those submitted" by Mr. Thomson. Morris expected more from his "officers entrusted with the collection of the land revenue than a confession of complete failure at the first sign of difficulty." He suggested that Thomson "exert himself" to amend his proposals and "submit well-considered and discriminatory proposals for relief." If Thomson was "either unable or unwilling to cope with" the situation, Morris would have "to move him to a district where the work of revenue collecting will impose no undue strain on his energies."² As indicated in the Chapter VI landlords and others with sufficient reserves of capital bought up villages for very low prices during the late 1860s famine in Chhattisgarh.

Twenty years later, the prominent author of Land Systems of British India, B. H. Baden-Powell, noted an unusual omission in the system in the Central Provinces. There were no separate rules for the remission and suspension of land revenue. When the central government had proposed in October 1882 that all lands be classified into "secure, partial secure, and insecure," the Central Provinces had replied it would look into the matter; there was no difficulty of collecting the land revenue as it was so light, and there did "not

¹CP, Circular 101, 1 December 1868, in IFP, General, May 1369, p. 42.

²CP to Chhattisgarh Commissioner, 12 December 1868, in Ibid., pp. 43-44.

appear any risk of failure."¹ Fuller also wrote Baden-Powell, "There are no rules for the suspension and remission of land revenue. Luckily in these provinces, owing to the light Settlement, the question very rarely comes up for disposal."²

Yet some landlords continued to feel the pinch between their incomes and their payment of revenue to the government, especially at the periodic revenue enhancements and during the famines of the later 1890s. Neither the landlords nor the government was fully prepared to meet the famines.

Three examples of this are the villages of Khalari, Gattasilli and Khamaria in Raipur district. The Gond landlord family of Khalari had to sell their village to a Gosain in the first year of the 1890s famine for Rs. 400.³ The Gond landlord of Gattasilli was considered "an excellent shikari" or hunting guide. But the village cultivation was poor and the landlord "in straitened circumstances." In spite of a personal gift from the District Commissioner of Rs. 1,100, the landlord had to sell one-third of the village to a Muslim.⁴ Ganga Chamar was landlord of Khamaria in Raipur (Simga tahsil); the officials in the division finally recommended the remission of his land revenue

¹B. H. Baden-Powell, The Land Systems of British India (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892; reprint ed., London: Johnson, 1972), p. 530.

²November 1889, in *Ibid.*, 530n.

³Raipur District Gazetteer (Bombay: British India Press, 1909), p. 298.

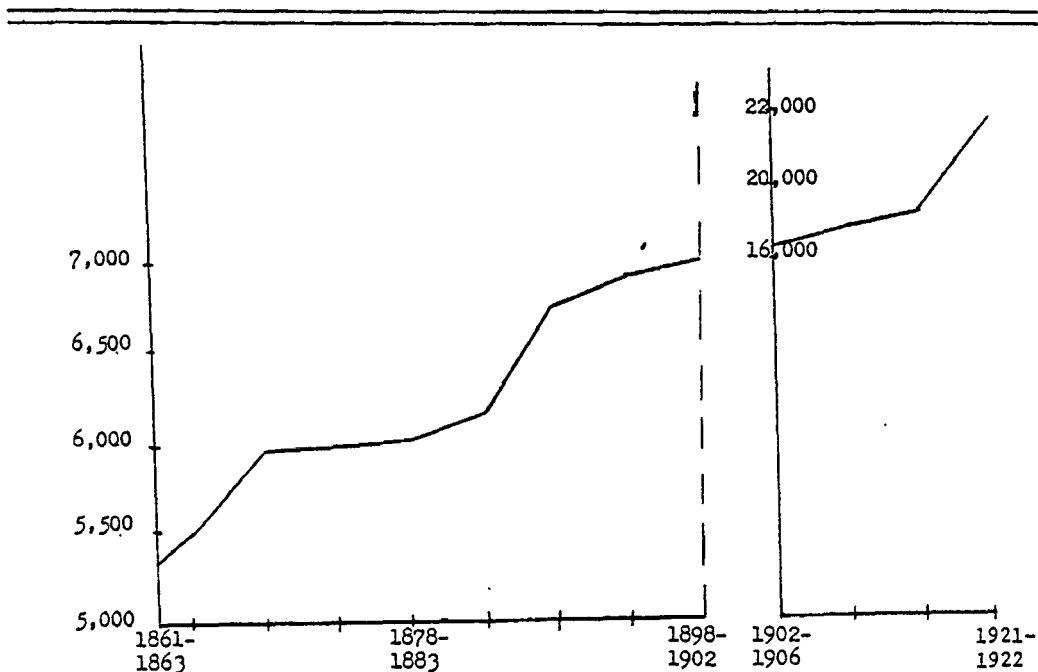
⁴*Ibid.*, p. 291.

of Rs. 55 in 1902. The tenants had "absconded" because of the famine; thus rents had not been paid, the village was uncultivated, and the landlord was very poor. Dacoits had looted "all his savings in cash and ornaments" three years before.¹

The preceding examination of how British land revenue policy was implemented in villages or how landlords viewed British land revenue settlements shows incompatibilities. While the British felt their settlements were moderate or light, some landlords expressed the opposite. These cases occurred especially at two times of stress: at settlements when the landlord's revenue was enhanced, and during famines when the landlord's income was reduced. In the settlements of the 1860s some villages or estates were far from lightly assessed. In the settlement of the 1890s Bilaspur landlords complained that their revenue payments almost doubled. There was also a problem over the strict collection of revenue. In the late 1860s famines, the British seemed intent on still collecting the land revenue, mainly by suspending it for later payments, but were not ready to remit it. The generally favorable economic conditions of the 1880s meant applications for suspensions or remission were so few that the province had no general policy about them. Even when remissions or suspension procedures were formulated in the 1890s the procedures were very elaborate and only applicable to extreme cases such as Ganga Chamar. The British continued to stress the moderate land revenue in the Central

¹District Commissioner, Raipur, Extract from Tour Diary, March and April 1902, in CPRAP, November 1902, p. 107, par. 69.

TABLE 16
 LAND REVENUE IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES
 1861-1921
 (thousands of rupees)



<u>Annual averages</u>	<u>thousands of rupees</u>	<u>Annual averages</u>	<u>thousands of rupees *</u>
1861-63	5,335	1902-06	16,299
1863-68	5,514	1906-11	17,319
1868-73	5,937	1911/12	18,134
1873-78	5,999	1921/22	23,423
1878-83	6,079		
1883-88	6,157		
1888-93	6,739		
1893-98	6,892		
1898-1902	6,984		

Source: "Statistical Abstracts of British India."
 *Central Provinces and Berar.

Provinces and the need to collect it under "any circumstances." They concentrated on theories about "one-half assets," terms of settlement, and emphasized how much more each settlement left the landlords than did the previous one. Some individual landlords, and even groups of landlords, stressed the reverse. They were concerned with the large amount of land revenue, the high enhancements (rather than the proportion of assets), how the new land revenue reduced their incomes from the years just before the settlement. Under British land policy, the landlords paid more revenue than before, and with less ability to modify its stricter collection.

British administrators succeeded in one of the goals of their land policy over the six decades; they provided themselves with an increasing income. From a land revenue of Rs. 5.34 million in the early 1860s it rose to Rs. 5.94 million by the early 1870s. It remained around the Rs. 6 million figure during the period between settlements until revisions began in the late 1880s; then it climbed in the next decade by Rs. 1 million, in spite of famines. With the amalgamation of Berar with the Central Provinces in 1903, the total land revenue stood at about Rs. 16.3 million in the first years of the twentieth century. After the third round of settlements, it reached Rs. 23.4 million by 1921-22.¹

¹Most of these are annual averages over five year periods, except for shorter periods in the early 1860s and at the turn of the century, and single year figures for 1911/12 and 1921/22. These figures were obtained from "Statistical Abstracts of India" Numbers 37(1903), 47(1913), and 57(1925) in Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers.

Colonization of Waste Lands and Agricultural Improvements

In 1887, Chief Commissioner Mackenzie and J. B. Fuller proposed "that the Government should do more to encourage the improvement of land in these Provinces . . . than it now does by making long term settlements." Previously the administration expected progress would occur from the extension of the cultivated areas and improved communications. As both of these were already occurring, they did not need direct or active support of the administration. The administration improved or maintained some major roads in the province through the Public Works Department, but it relied more heavily on the private railroad companies to improve communications and trade. The administration was also only indirectly involved with the extension of cultivation in agricultural areas; rather they relied on landlords and others to use their resources to make agricultural improvements and to extend cultivation in the village areas.

The clearing and cultivation of waste lands formed a separate topic from the cultivation of village areas. Richard Temple's plan for the cultivation of waste lands by immigrant Indians or Europeans had largely been a failure. There had been no rush for the "colonization" of such lands; and in the 1870s the administration decided to prohibit the sale or lease of its waste lands as a result of Keatinge's anti-malguzari ideas. Waste lands became reserved forests in the late 1870s. Two areas, however, were exempt from the prohibition: the adjacent parts of Mandla and Balaghat districts, and the Charwa tract in western Hoshangabad district. It was this latter tract which the administration hoped might still be settled by Indian

immigrants from the over-populated North-Western Provinces and Oudh. The tract was relatively flat and free of forests, sparsely populated, and near the railway. Morris began to formulate rules for selecting "colonists" who could apply and obtain approval to clear, farm and settle in villages. He specifically did not wish to approve "idle" or "disorderly" people who would not be able to face the hardships and "probably betake themselves back to their old homes." He wanted "extreme caution in the selection of colonists"; they should "belong to such castes as are known to be industrious and skillful cultivators."¹ Near the end of 1876, the Bombay Government and the Poona Savajanik Sabha separately enquired if the Charwa tract could be used for settling famine refugees. The Central Provinces replied that refugees were not the type of people the province wanted, nor would they likely be successful.² Other applications also were received, and in 1877 the Chief Commissioner drew up additional rules which provided for two distinct types of colonists: (i) groups of cultivators and (ii) single colonists with capital to supply and settle cultivators.

One applicant in mid-1877 was Mr. Peters, a landholder and manufacturer in Mainpur district who wished to migrate to the Central Provinces and bring groups of cultivators. Mr. Peters then requested

¹Morris, 23 June 1875, as noted in CP to GOI, 11 April 1878, in C. P., Revenue, Agriculture, and Commerce Department, Proceedings, April 1878, p. 28, par. 3. Hereafter, Morris, "Charwa" of 1878.

²Ibid., p. 29, par. 6.

and obtained money for railway fare to send down colonists. This was the first large-scale effort to establish cultivators in Charwa. By the end of September 211 families of 1,054 people were sent down to Charwa from the North-Western Province. But within a year only 15 families remained. It was discovered most of the immigrant "cultivators" were really starving or destitute people searching for food and assistance from the government. Most said they had been promised Rs. 200 per family. When the local officers set them to work on the land, most admitted they were not cultivators, refused to work, and left for home. The project had cost Rs. 17,600, 2,700 acres had been cleared and 64 huts constructed. Morris admitted the Charwa colonization scheme had collapsed but he emphasized that it was mainly because his original guide-lines and rules had been ignored.¹ In later years, the 1877 failure of the Charwa colonization became a prime example in India of methods to avoid in colonization schemes. In 1888 the central government felt the failure of this scheme deserved notice because it furnished a "useful lesson."²

Morris did not consider in 1878, however, the collapse of the large-scale colonization project of groups of cultivators excluded success by colonists of the second type--men of capital to supply and settle colonists. Rather he approved several other applicants, such as Novind Chandra Rai, Moghul Imam Beg, and Ajraj Singh.

¹Ibid., paras. 13, 18 and 20.

²GOI, Circular Resolution, 19 October 1888 in CPRAP, December 1888, pp. 10-11; also Nyaya Sudha (Harda), 1 April 1883, in SVN, 1883, pp. 303-04.

Morris also granted four villages to a Mr. Compertz in 1878 for settling cultivators from the North-Western Provinces, but he failed to fulfill the agreements. After retiring from the Public Works Department in late 1879, Mr. Gompertz again applied for a "free gift of land" in Hoshangabad, to build a house and "start a farm under his personal supervision." Morris replied (10 January 1880) that Mr. Gompertz did not seem to fulfill all the requirements. But Gompertz had, in the meantime, gone to Calcutta, talked with officials there, like the Governor General Lytton, and obtained approval for a grant of 10,000 acres. When Gompertz returned to the Central Provinces, he met Morris and requested the grant. Morris decided to make an exceptional concession in Mr. Gompertz's case and arranged for him to take up less than 5,000 acres on a clearance lease for "farming or cattle breeding" under his own supervision. The grant was for a 4,385 acre block of land on which there were already squatters. This Gompertz soon developed by obtaining cultivators from nearby villages. In the mid 1880s Gompertz applied for 600 more acres, so his grant would total about 5,000 acres. Morris listed the concessions already made to Gompertz, refused the additional grant, and considered the matter closed.¹

This was still not enough for Mr. Gompertz. Five years later (March 1885) he asked for the clearance lease for eight villages. Chief Commissioner Crosthwaite refused; he objected "to rent-speculators

¹Morris to District Commissioner, Hoshangabad, June 1880, in CPRAP, May 1888, pp. 58-59, par. 9.

of Mr. Gompertz's stamp."¹ Chief Commissioner MacKenzie also refused to revive Gompertz's request in February 1887, saying Gompertz had "neither bred cattle or farmed the land." He lived in the resort area of Shervaroy Hills in South India and spent only a month or more each year on his grant, leaving the management to an Indian agent the rest of the time.² MacKenzie informed Mr. Gompertz there would be no more concessions; the administration was presently deciding the best method to colonize Charwa as "hundreds of local" Indians were waiting to take up land in Charwa so MacKenzie was "opposed to making over any part of it to a non-resident European speculator in rents."³

The failure of the 1877-78 colonization scheme and of securing the right type of individual settlers, meant the administration approved only a few annual leases in the early 1880s. In 1886 Chief Commissioner Crosthwaite proposed a second set of rules for the selection and leasing of the Charwa tract. For the first time Indians of the Central Provinces were allowed to apply. In addition each lessee was to "reside on the grant with not less than fifteen able-bodied male cultivators," and should "furnish not less than ten armed men" if called on by the police. This second set of rules was as much for the cultivation of the area as for the security against criminal activity, especially against the leader of a robber gang, Tantia Bhil,

¹Ibid., p. 60, par. 10.

²Ibid., p. 60, par. 14.

³Chief Commissioner's Resolution of 10 February 1888, in Ibid., p. 62, par. 2.

Tantia Bhil was at times viewed as a Robin-Hood type of dacoit. Just before his trial in 1879, he killed the village headman, Bandra Rajput, his son and a third person who had accused him, and escaped.¹ He began to raid villages in the Narbudda valley area near Charwa, eastern Niwar district, and north of the river in the Holkar Princely State. With his gang he raided and looted villages and threatened, mutilated, or killed landlords, village leaders, police and others. On one occasion he returned to his home village and visited his mistress, Jasod. He then went to taunt and threaten the widows of Bandra Rajput and his son. His gang pulled them from their house and dragged them down to a field where they cut off the nose of Bandra Rajput's widow.² The Central Provinces and Holkar police were unable to trail and capture Tantia. British administrators considered his activities one of the worst criminal threats to their peace and security. One proposal at the time was to colonize the Charwa area in hopes to obtain local villagers' assistance to the police against Tantia. By 1887, the British Agent in Central India, Lepel Griffin, regarded Tantia as a myth, but as M. M. Bowie of the police remarked, he did not think "the victims . . . considered him a mere mythical personage."³ Eventually in 1889 Tantia was captured by the Holkar police and brought to trial at Jabalpur.⁴ The Subodh

¹C. P., Report on the Central Provinces Police Administration for 1879, pp. 3-4.

²C. P., Police Report 1887, p. 8.

³Ibid., p. 9, par. 17.

⁴C. P. Police Report 1889, p. 6, par. 12.

Sindhu newspaper of Khandwa, Nīmar district, urged clemency for Tantia's "courage, generosity and freedom from immorality"¹ The British hanged him on the 4th of December. The rest of the gang was soon hunted down.²

The second set of rules to colonize the Charwa tract were evidently never approved, but by late 1888, Fuller had formulated comprehensive proposals concerning reserved forest lands and uncultivated government lands. All of these lands were to be closely surveyed; the Forest Department was to decide which areas contained valuable forests and which could be set aside for cultivation. In the next two decades the Forest Department established "Working Plans" for all the major forest areas to limit indiscriminate cutting and initiate methods for conservation. Isolated villages within government forests would be managed by the Forest Department under special rules for "Forest Villages." In areas set aside for cultivation, such as the Charwa tract, plots of land were mapped, and each given a number. The administration said this "land should not be let out to middlemen in extensive lots, but should be settled with ryots direct,"³ By this policy, the ryotwari land revenue system was established. It was the

¹Subodh Sindhu (Khandwa), 30 October 1889, SVN, 1889, p. 686.

²Madhya Pradesh, Police Department, History of the Madhya Pradesh Police (Bhopal: Government Central Press, 1965, p. 103.

³CP to GOI, 29 October 1888, in CPRAP, October 1888, p. 218, par. 18.

culmination of George Campbell's criticisms of the malguzari system in the late 1860s, and the last major decision concerning waste lands. The Charwa tract and other areas were opened up for cultivation and colonization under the ryotwari system. Fuller's proposals were incorporated in the Amendments to the Land Revenue and Tenancy Acts of 1889.

Fuller revisited Charwa "fifteen years later" (around 1900) and "had the pleasure of riding over undulating expanses of cultivation, with prosperous villages," which he had remembered years before "as a pathless tangle of coarse grass, thorn brake, and scrub."¹ By 1919, the ryotwari area in Hoshangabad district consisted of 30.5 thousand acres, with two-thirds of it occupied and paying Rs. 7,025 annual land revenue.²

While British land revenue systems slowly evolved because of events and decisions over waste lands, Fuller became concerned over ways to stimulate agricultural improvements. He recognized that under British rule "improvements of a costly character" might be "less frequently made" at the present day than under previous Indian rulers. This was probably because a person who made improvements such as irrigation works was often given land or a privileged status by Indian

¹ Fuller, Experiences, p. 52.

² Hoshangabad Settlement Report (1919), p. 50, par. 100. It may also be noted that Elliott had thoroughly discussed the different types of colonization. He rejected the idea that Charwa may have been a well-cultivated area centuries before; rather he thought the ruins he saw in the area were a result of two unsuccessful attempts at colonization under the Marathas in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.. See Hoshangabad SR (1867), pp. 182-193.

rulers. But the "divergence of interest" of "modern Tenancy legislation" greatly hindered "the construction of large irrigation works for which the consent and cooperation of a whole village is necessary."¹

Fuller suggested there were three types of improvements: land reclamation, irrigation, and embankments. The first needed no "special encouragement," as it occurred naturally with population growth. Various types of irrigation and embankments, however, were closely examined, and Fuller decided the methods to improve the "productive capacity of the land," consisted of the construction of (i) substantial embankments for wheat or winter (rabi) crops, and (ii) irrigation works such as tanks or ponds, canals, durable wells, and durable lifts on river banks. The incentives for persons to make these improvements would be that they would receive special certificates or sanads describing the improvement, and the improvement would be exempt from tax assessment in the next settlement.² It was hoped that these status and monetary incentives would stimulate agricultural improvements.

Yet there are indications they were insufficient. In Raipur district between 1896 and 1906 only 102 sanads were issued.³ In Jabalpur the number was small, 181. The writer of the Jabalpur

¹CP to GOI, 25 August 1887, in CPRAP, April 1888, p. 14, par. 3.

²"Revenue Circular," 12 April 1888 in CPRAP, April 1888, #18, p. 13.

³Raipur District Gazetteer (1909), p. 161.

District Gazetteer remarked, "In practice few cultivators care to avail themselves of sanads"; they generally waited until the next settlement to make a claim.¹ He felt the sanads did not indicate the amount spent on improvements, or they made them without the incentives of receiving sanads, and exemption from assessment.

In the twentieth century the whole tone of the administration changed with regard to the role of the government in agricultural development. Two somewhat contradictory ideas emerge from the opinions of administrators about the activities of government. Both grew out of a disillusionment about the government's ability to promote change through legislation and incentives and the confident hopes of administrators for continual and steady progress which the disastrous famines of the late 1890s destroyed. One opinion was that government intervention could not substantially alter the natural law of the "survival of the fittest" in society. This Darwinian call for a passive role of government contrasted with the second opinion. It called for even more active and direct government intervention through programs, not legislation, to stimulate agricultural development.

The administration formed three programs for agricultural development in the twentieth century, aimed first, to reduce indebtedness through conciliation proceedings, second, to increase agricultural credit through Cooperative Credit Societies, and third, to increase the irrigated area of the province through large government projects. These are discussed near the end of this chapter in connection with

¹Jalapur District Gazetteer (1909), p. 189.

agricultural recovery. In addition, the agricultural Department became more than just a department to train land revenue officials, or to collect and maintain accurate statistics, as it had been under Fuller. It began to establish experimental farms, demonstrate new agricultural methods and implements, and supply improved seed. However, there is little evidence that these activities significantly contributed to agricultural development. The settlement officer in Raipur district felt the attitudes of Indian farmers were the main obstacle to agricultural improvement.

The Agricultural department started work in Chhattisgarh hardly thirty years ago and conspicuous improvements can hardly be expected to have been introduced into the agricultural practice of the backward, conservative and unambitious peasantry of the tract.¹

In summary, British land policy concerning the use of waste lands and the improvement of agriculture evolved slowly over the decades from the 1860s to the 1890s. The policy was influenced by many factors, including concepts and plans for colonization, forest conservation, land revenue systems, control of crime, and methods of agricultural modernization. Three evolutionary threads ran through these activities. Waste lands originally intended to attract European or Indian colonists, later were intended to supply land for surplus populations from outside the Central Provinces, and eventually became available to the local population. At the same time, the ideal size of a colonizer's estate, at first considered mainly at the level of large estates,

¹D.G. Deshmukh, Raipur Settlement Report (1932), p. 14, par. 57.

shifted to a mixture of large estates and small plots, and finally to only small plots of land. This evolution coincided with the third change--a preference first for the malguzari land revenue system and later for the ryotwari system.

While these changes occurred over colonization, other changes in the concept of the government's role in agricultural development took shape. At first the administration considered the framework of the malguzari system would be sufficient to ensure agricultural improvements. But by the 1880s Fuller and others felt the administration should provide incentives for agricultural improvements. In the twentieth century the administration went further to directly provide irrigation works and intervene to reduce debts and establish a rural credit organization. While it is clear the administration succeeded in increasing the land revenue, it remains unclear if their policies on waste land occupation and agricultural improvements significantly changed agricultural methods or contributed to a growth in agricultural production.

Landlord Indebtedness and Land Transfers

In the late 1880s British administrators in the Central Provinces once again investigated the indebtedness of landlords. Like the earlier survey of the 1870s, they found it increasing and even worse, causing landlords to lose their land. While one-third of the landlords had been indebted a decade earlier, the 1888 investigation feared in 70 to 80 years "the whole area of the Province will have changed

hands."¹ The District Commissioner of Narsinghpur district reported that one-fifth of the area had been transferred, one-fifth mortgaged or saved by government management, and by the mid-1890s, one-half would have changed hands.

This was certainly not the intention of the British in the first settlement--to establish and support "improving landlords." As Fuller said,

In granting proprietary rights the Government had in view the creation of a body of influential men who would have the incentive to improve their estates and keep their tenantry prosperous which would spring from their position as landlords, and who would retain a sufficiently large share in assets of their villages to enable them to spend money on these purposes. The event has hardly borne out the hope.²

For the first time, the 1888 investigation tried to distinguish between two types of landlords--money-lenders and non-money-lenders. A money-lender was defined as a person "whose main occupation is money lending or trade, as distinguished from land holding, although . . . they may have been in possession of a great deal of land."³ In practice, it appears the definition was based on British concepts of the Indian caste system. Money-lenders included Baniyas, Marwaris, and Kalars.

¹J. B. Fuller, Minute, 15 January 1889, in CPRAP, November 1889, p. 57, par. 8; hereafter Fuller, Minute (1889), in Land Alienation Proceedings.

²Ibid., p. 60. par. 14.

³C. P. Chief Commissioner to Commissioners, 14 April 1888, in CPRAP, April 1888, p. 21, par. 3.

Non-money-lending landlords, sometimes referred to as "traditional agricultural castes," included all other castes, mainly Kurmis, Kumbis, Rajputs, and even Telis, Brahmins and Gonds. The investigation in 1888 found that over half of the land sales were "passing into the hands of the money-lending class."¹ The distinction between money-lending and non-money-lending landlords existed before, but now it was recorded and given greater significance. From the 1880s on, British administrators generally saw the money-lenders as the main culprits, and the "traditional agricultural" landlords and tenants as victims in agricultural financial arrangements.

Some administrators dissented from the main view--producing an ambivalence toward landlords which continued later. If the landlords were the victims, they were also letting a valuable property slip away from them; if money-lenders were the culprits by buying up villages and becoming absentee landlords, they at least were financing agriculture.²

The main British solution had been and continued to be the Court of Wards. Through this institution the British could bring landlord estates of families "of recognized social position and importance" under the management of the administration.³ They were managed for periods of time in order to reduce their indebtedness or to supervise

¹CP to GOI, 11 November 1889, in Land Alienation Proceedings, p. 28, par. 3.

²See J. W. Neill's Note, 21 April 1889, in Ibid.

³CP to GOI, 11 November 1889, in Ibid., p. 30, par. 7.

the estate during the minority of the landlord. The administration could thus save estates from sale and improve their financial condition before relinquishing them to their owners.

Fuller emphasized the importance of the Court of Wards, saying, if the Court of Wards had not saved many estates, even more than one-fifth would have been lost. But the Court of Wards were seen as only a partial solution. Many small estates did not qualify for the Court of Wards and the administration did not have the bureaucracy to manage a large number at any one time. Chief Commissioner Crosthwaite ended his letter concerning the investigation of landlord indebtedness by saying, "the whole question is a large and difficult one" but he hoped that it would "not on that account be once more allowed to pass out of sight," as it had in the 1870s.¹

By the late 1890s British administrators had decided on another method to assist landlords, and it became part of the Land Revenue Act in 1898. Under the Act, landlords (if they were not money-lenders) would become occupancy tenants of their sir or home-farm land when they sold or lost their villages. They would thus retain some property and be able to remain in the village even though they lost their village proprietary rights and landlord status.

Other investigations of indebtedness had occurred in 1893 and the topic was reviewed in 1902 and 1913. The central government initiated each of these investigations in its concern about landlord conditions in British India. The Punjab administration took the most extreme measure

¹Ibid., p. 33, par. 15.

by prohibiting money-lenders from being landlords in 1902.

The 1913 investigation in the Central Provinces revealed a large variety of opinions. Three of these opinions indicate British administrators' attitudes had changed by then. In the first place, British administrators felt the distinction between traditional agricultural landlords and money-lending landlords was becoming less significant. Landlords had adopted money-lending as a part of their role in agriculture and trade. Some administrators felt such landlords were even worse than an absentee money-lender since the landlord could monopolize his position in the village or estate. Extract Three at the end of this chapter indicates this. At the same time, some administrators felt the money-lenders were becoming more concerned and involved in agricultural development.¹

Second, most British administrators felt it was no longer healthy to prop up indebted landlords. They were dead weight on the economy, "like a mill-stone around the neck of the village," and deserved to lose their lands. The administration should not attempt to interfere with "the rule of the survival of the fittest which any legislation that is made cannot surmount."²

The Darwinians viewed the third change as proof of their ideas. The investigation studied the influence of the 1898 Act concerning the retention of home farm-land and found it not achieving its goal. A

¹J. F. Dyer to Settlement Commissioner, 19 March 1912, in CPRSP, February 1913, pp. 33-34, and E. Batchelor, Bilaspur, 22-23 April 1912 in Ibid., pp. 35-36.

²R. G. Patin, 28 March 1912, in Ibid., p. 4.

landlord often sold his village, and soon after sold his home-farm (his new occupancy tenant) land also. The law was not changed but administrators recognized it also was not achieving its goal.

In spite of these three opinions, there was some concern over one type of landlord--the Gond or tribal landlord. Some administrators felt these landlords faced unequal competition and something should be done to save these representatives of pre-Maratha nobility. The Central Provinces Alienation Act of 1916 generally prohibited the sale of their lands.¹ It, however, is questionable whether this ever achieved its goal. By 1917 many tribal landlords had already lost their property.

British opinion on landlord indebtedness, land transfers, and their economic condition gradually but dramatically changed over several decades. At first there was considerable alarm and several proposals were made to "save" the landlords, but only one specific method implemented--the Court of Wards. The alarm continued as the Court of Wards saved only a few estates, and a further measure was tried with little success--to provide ex-landlords with some tenancy land. By 1913, there was no longer a great alarm as the British accepted their inability to effectively save most indebted landlords either through legislation or the institution of the Court of Wards. Their last attempt to save tribal landlords through legislation probably was too late.

Opinion about types of landlords at the same time changed. The

¹CP, Administration Report, 1921-22, Part III, p. 122, par. 167.

British assumed they had established resident village landlords of "agricultural" castes in the 1860s. They subsequently perceived there were two categories of landlords--agricultural caste landlords who were becoming indebted and losing their villages; and second, commercial caste landlords who were buying up villages and thus creating absentee landlordism. From the first alarm in the 1870s to the 1910s, the distinctions between the two categories became more vague with the corresponding change in opinion that some commercial caste landlords were as good or better than agricultural caste landlords.

These changing opinions and other factors make it a difficult, if not a useless, exercise to analyze British statistics on landlord debts and land transfers. Debts increased but this may be tied to the increased value of land rather than indicating landlord impoverishment. Besides debts, the statistics on the number of land transfers can be questioned in three ways: were they increasing, were agricultural castes losing land to commercial castes, and if so what did this mean in the villages? British administrators rarely referred to the period before the 1860s, but the settlement officer of Hoshangabad district examined changes of the malguzars in three villages from the late eighteenth century to the 1830s and they showed frequently changes, on the average every eight or nine years.¹ Similarly, thirty percent of the villages changed hands between the 1830s settlement and the 1860s settlement. Rather than a drastically new trend, the number of transfers after the 1860s continued a pattern from earlier decades.

¹Hoshangabad SR (1867), pp. 152-53.

Second, the original distinction between landlords of agricultural and commercial castes became vague in the minds of local officers by the twentieth century. The two categories were not the same in different districts or even within the same district over time. The Bilaspur District Commissioner E. Batchelor stated in preparing transfer statistics in 1912, he

was at once brought up against the difficulty of framing a definition of "agricultural castes." One could no doubt decide this point if one were content simply with a majority on account of the members of the caste who held land. But I do not think this would be of much value: . . . one cannot decide this simply by ascertaining his caste. One of the finest agriculturalists . . . is a Bania by caste, . . . Many rich landowners of the Bania and Sonar castes . . . are amongst the best agriculturalists.¹

Batchelor left it to subordinate officers to decide who were agriculturalists and non-agriculturalists. A further problem was that land transfers included cyclical changes, for example, of a family buying back a village they had transferred earlier.

Third, transfers may have made little difference if a landlord family lost its legal status to an absentee but remained in the village and functioned as the village landlord. In a case near Dhamtari town (Raipur district), a cultivating caste (Ahir) landlord had chinliya-d (cheated) some Gond landlords out of sixteen villages, but the Gonds remained the effective village headmen while the Ahir lived in town.²

The above problems of British statistics and the changing opinions

¹April 1912, to the Commissioner of Chhattisgarh Division, in CPRSP, February 1913, p. 35.

²District Commissioner of Bhandara, Note, in CPRAP, July 1902, pp. 46-47.

of British administrators make it impossible to reach any clear conclusions about the trends of landlord indebtedness and transfers. Many Indians lost their legal status as landlords; many bought into that position. Some regained it; some informally retained it. There are few indications that ex-landlord families faced extinction because of legal changes or land transfers. In one way or another they accommodated themselves to their new legal status, often becoming another intermediary between the villagers and the new landlord. In specific villages there could be alternating cycles of structural elaboration at the top of the village followed by concentration, but little extinction. Landlords as a class generally remained in a relatively strong position, even when another level of an "absentee" landlord might be added. Their strength is further verified by the way they made adjustments when the British attempted to strengthen and favor the position of tenants under them.

Agrarian Relations--British Policy and

Indian Landlord Adjustments

Agrarian relations had been the fifth and last question Temple had examined in the 1860s. George Campbell had tried to improve the position of the tenants or peasant proprietors and others had continued that effort. In the 1880s Fuller had shown this in proposing the colonization of new land under the ryotwari system and in establishing the incentives for agricultural improvements. In addition he was able to insert an amendment in the Act of 1889 which limited the home-farm land of any landlord to less than one-fourth of the village area. He had feared that a powerful landlord could in effect,

eliminate tenant land by absorbing most or all of the village land into his home-farm.¹

Fuller's main concern about tenants, in the second round of settlements, however, centered in their rents. From the statistics, which his Agricultural Department had gathered and which he had examined in his tours of villages, Fuller knew that rents had generally been enhanced greatly in the past years. This became especially evident in the wheat districts such as Hoshangabad and Jabalpur, when the settlement officers began to revise the settlements in the late 1880s. The wheat boom of the 1880s had made this possible,

The 1860s settlement established three types of tenants: absolute occupancy tenants, conditional occupancy tenants, and tenants-at-will. Rents of absolute occupancy tenants were fixed by the settlement officer at each settlement, while the rents of conditional occupancy tenants could be enhanced at periodic intervals through the courts; rents of tenants-at-will could be enhanced almost at the wish of the landlord. The 1883 Act generally affirmed and defined these tenures; but changed the designation of tenants-at-will to "ordinary tenants," and added a fourth class of tenants, sub-tenants. One of Fuller's proposals, which became part of the Act of 1889, gave the settlement officer the power to enhance and fix all rents. But Fuller soon learned this was not enough. He and the settlement officers found that ordinary tenants' rents had been enhanced to a level which they considered "rack-renting." The law allowed settlement officers

¹CP to GOI, 29 October 1886 in CPRAP, October 1888, pp. 213-215, par. 6.

to enhance and fix rents, but not to reduce them. However, Fuller assisted settlement officers to convince landlords informally it was to their advantage to reduce rents to a level where tenants could easily pay them. They offered the landlords two incentives: (i) since their income from rents was part of their assets and taxable, to lower rents would mean a lower land revenue, and (ii) if landlords cooperated in lowering rents below the rack-renting level, the settlement officer would not assess the landlord's own holdings at their full value. At first these informal proceedings generally worked well with only a few landlords refusing.¹ Those who refused, or whom the settlement officer thought were harsh landlords in some other way, received high, or what was termed, "punitive" assessments. When Woodburn became Chief Commissioner in 1893 he prohibited the continuance of these proceedings as he said they were outside the existing law and unfair to the landlords.² The Act D01898 gave settlement officers the power to reduce as well as enhance all rents.

Administrators, at other times, tried to penalize landlords for their harsh treatment of tenants. In Bilaspur in the famine year of 1896-97, the District Commissioner, Charles E. Low, recommended the land revenue of the Lormi estate be collected in full. Low considered the landholder "wealthy," and "a bad malguzar," who "did not help

¹R. H. Craddock, Commissioner of Settlements and Agriculture to CCCP, 10 November 1888, pp. 6-8, in Jabalpur Settlement Report (1896), and p. 39, par. 57.

²Hoshangabad Settlement Report (1905), pp. 55-56, par. 112. A case of a landlord who refused rent reduction is examined in detail in the next chapter, Chapter VIII.

Government in the famine." Low said, "the result of my blunder" was that "a good deal of rent was collected somehow or another from the miserable tenants." He thought it would take some years for the estate to recover from the blow.¹

It is clear that the formal rules and laws regulating agricultural relations were not always followed in practice, nor did the formal laws adequately reconcile the competing interests of the administration, landlords, and tenants. British administrators tried to revise their laws and procedures to local agrarian conditions; at the same time, Indians adjusted their methods to the new British legal framework.

Between the 1860s and the 1920s Indian landlords adjusted their methods of control over tenants in response to changing British land policies and economic conditions. The first decade of the 1860s was characterized by adjustments to the settlements. In the second period from the 1870s to the 1890s, landlords generally relied on enhancing rents and concealing their assets from settlement officers as much as possible. In the third period of the twentieth century landlords turned from rent enhancement to acquiring other kinds of payments from tenants and other ways to reduce their taxable assets.

In the 1860s the British award of proprietary rights to malguzars increased their power over tenants often far beyond what they had before. At times malguzars could combine their customary powers and position with selected rights of the British legal framework in ways

¹C. R. Low, 20 February 1902, in CPRAP, July 1902, p. 196, #17, par. 4.

the British never intended. In acquiring waste lands for the government, Gonds in Mandla were restricted to village areas and had to compete with other tenants to obtain fields from the malguzars. The strict revenue collections of the 1868-69 famine allowed some landlords to buy villages in Chhattisgarh cheaply.

The attempts to protect and support "peasant proprietors" by George Campbell and others often did little to compensate the tenant in his village. The modified malguzari system could do little for the tenants who came to dislike the stigma of being occupancy tenants, nor for the tenants who cultivated land outside their villages, nor for tenants who lost their holdings. A frantic letter from the Raipur District Commissioner illustrates some of the problems of reconciling the British land system with the way local agrarian relations functioned. The letter concerns occupancy tenants, called mouroosee or maurusi and non-occupancy or gair-maurasi tenants,

Many Mouroosee tenants have left their lands and gone to other villages, where they don't hold the invidious position of being "Mouroosee." How are their names to be recorded in the new village to which they have gone? . . . And how is the name of the man to whom their "mouroosee" land has been given to be entered as tenant?

Many "Mouroosee" tenants have handed over their lands to the Malgoozars, saying that they don't wish to be "Mouroosees" any longer. Are these lands to be recorded in the name of the Malgoozar or tenant? And are the tenants to be entered as Mouroosee or Gair-Mourooses according to their own wish?

Many Mouroosees have come to terms with their Malgoozar, agreeing to give up their rights for a consideration . . . Are they to be entered as "Gair-Mouroosee" or how?

When a Mouroosee tenant wants to get rid of the distinction of being a Mouroosee, how is he to proceed to get his name removed from the record? is there no way but for him to leave the village?

. . . many Mouroosee tenants are paying much more than the rent fixed on them at settlement of their own free-will. What rate is to be entered opposite their names? the rent

they actually pay or what?¹

A letter from the Chhattisgarh Commissioner a few days later partly explained why maurusi were changing villages and giving up their rights. Since "the great bulk of the cultivators had been entirely dependent on the Malgoozar," and though under the British land system, "their position had apparently been improved, they were still not able to carry on without the customary assistance of the Malgoozar." When the malguzar withheld assistance, "the cultivators were at his mercy, and thus the Malgoozars" again became "masters of the situation in spite of all our benevolent intentions."²

In the period between the first settlement and the second ones, many landlords were able to obtain or retain control over their tenantry, in spite of British laws to protect the tenants, because almost every law or procedure protecting tenants had a loophole or a clause which malguzars could use their advantage. Those landlords who had a monopoly over seed-grain which they loaned, or other assistance to their villages, could withhold it from tenants. Legally landlords could not eject protected tenants; except for rental arrears. Landlords could, however, allow rental arrears to accumulate, and then eject a tenant, through a court order if necessary, for non-payment of rent. Even within a harvest season the landlord could delay rent collection until he knew the tenant had sold or eaten his

¹Raipur District Commission, 22 July 1870, IFP, February 1871, pp. 20-21.

²Commissioner of Chhattisgarh, 5 August 1870, in Ibid., p. 20.

crop, and then demand payment and take a debt bond. In Hoshangabad, landlords demanded half a year's rent before the main crop, wheat, had been harvested. Yet the government delayed collection of most (seven-eighths) of the land revenue until after the wheat harvest. Thus the landlords had "been systematically compelling their ryots [tenants] to annually borrow at interest half a year's rental." Though the Tenancy Act stipulated a tenant could "recover" a "heavy penalty" from his landlord if the rent was collected before the proper date, the law was a "dead letter." "Its failure to check a practice, which is injurious to the ryot and is in direct opposition" to government policy, was "striking indication of the failure of legislation on the ryot's behalf."¹

Landlords could both ignore parts of British law (collect rents or not, collect wrong amounts or arrears, at the right time or earlier) and utilize other parts of the Act to their advantage (i.e., eject tenants or threaten to eject them, obtain legal bonds, etc.). British administrators were usually fully aware of these practices and activities and made proposals, but the laws which were eventually enacted remained within a basic framework--the same laws which closed up loopholes opened up others. British administrators felt rent reduction was the most important part of the second round of settlements, and eventually they enacted a law (1898) which allowed the settlement officers to decide the landlords' legal rents.

¹C. P., Report of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture for the year 1892-1893 (Nagpur, Secretariat Press, 1894), p. 5. par. 17.

In these second settlements the landlords also learned two lessons. They would be penalized if they enhanced rents to a level the British considered "rack-renting." Second, their land revenue would be enhanced at the rate the settlement officer decided their assets had increased. In the twentieth century some landlords adjusted their methods to meet both of these threats.

It was no longer very profitable to enhance rents rapidly-- landlords enhanced them but not at the rate of the nineteenth century. In some places landlords even left rents completely stationary after the second settlement.¹ If tenants complained, the landlord could answer, "It is not my fault. Blame the unsympathetic Settlement Officer."² They concentrated on other methods to obtain payments from the tenants.

One method was taking nazaranas,³ When the landlord re-allotted tenant land which had come into his possession (by surrender, or failure of heirs, etc.), he would offer it usually at the same rent. But with this difference; the tenant who took it up would pay a premium for the privilege of cultivating the land at that low rent. The tenant had to pay in cash or take out a bond before he could cultivate the land. In Dhamtari tahsil (Raipur) one malguzar received Rs. 5,000 nazarana for allotting 100 acres to a tenant in 1912. The settlement

¹Raipur SR (1932), p. 30.

²Dyer, Nagpur Settlement Report (1919), p. 33, par. 51.

³A nazarana is a gift or present; a fee paid as an acknowledgment for a grant of land.

officer estimated that the allotment was equivalent to an annual rent of Rs. 6 per acre, compared to the average legal rent paid in the tahsil of 11 annas 7 pice per acre.¹ By taking nazaranas, a landlord received payment from tenants without affecting his rents and assets. The next settlement officer (in 1928) estimated that landlords had received about Rs. 2,000,000 in nazaranas, and that "the nazarana custom" had "become an integral part of the malguzari system." "It would endure so long as" there was "a gap between competitive rents and the rents fixed by the Settlement Officer."²

Another method was for landlords to permit the transfer or sale of tenant land by taking malikana or consent money.³ By law, absolute occupancy tenants could sell their land but the landlord had the right of pre-emption, or if he did not wish the land, the absolute occupant tenant could transfer it, paying the landlord one year's rent. The landlord threatened pre-emption, unless paid a portion of the transfer price, as his consent was necessary. Other tenants had no right to transfer their lands since the Act of 1898. British administrators had thought this rule would make non-absolute occupancy tenants more secure on their lands. Transfers or sales occurred anyway, but the landlord took his price of the transfer before he would give his consent. The settlement officer of Hoshangabad in 1918

¹H. E. Hemingway, Raipur Settlement Report (1912), pp. 26-27.

²Rai. SR (1932), pp. 31, 33.

³Malikana is a fee paid to a landlord to occupy his lands.

commented, consent money "is practically blackmail." "The malguzar steps in and threatens ejection unless his greed is satisfied, at the same time refusing to receive rent from the newcomer."¹

Nazarana and malikana were the two main forms by which landlords received payments from tenants without affecting rents. Settlement officers listed several others which they generally considered were equivalent to rent though not legally defined as such. These included types of sharecropping such as batai and taqism, plus regh rents, annual cash leases of sir and tenant land, and interest on loans.² These examples show clearly landlords were effectively able to adjust their methods and activities when the British administration passed laws limiting landlords' powers to enhance rents.

Two other efforts of British settlement officers may briefly be examined to indicate the degree of landlord control over the tenantry. The landlord methods concerned bhag or produce rent, and begar or compulsory unpaid labor. Most rents were paid in cash except in areas with poor soils or marginally productive. The northeast corner of Jabalpur district, called Bijeragorgarh, was annexed in 1861, after its rebellious ruler had died. The land consisted of a mixture of forest and open country. In the first settlement, rents-in-kind had been allowed to continue. But in the second settlement (1886-1894)

¹H. C. Gowan, Hoshangabad SR (1919), p. 34.

²Dyer, Nag SR (1916), pp. 32-41 includes all of these plus the leasing of the landlord's non-sir land without allowing it to become tenant land. This is similar, if not the same as regh leases in Raipur district. See Rai. SR (1912) pp. 26-28, and Rai. SR (1932), p. 34.

it was decided to commute the grain payment (bhag) into cash rentals.¹ Generally bhag rents equalled two or three times cash rents, so were more favorable to the malguzars and "unfair to the tenants."² It was said the commutation proceedings transformed the "poor bhag" tenantry into "cultivators remarkable for their prosperity and the resources at their disposal." However the next settlement (1907-1912) mentioned in Bijergorgarh, "cash sub-rents are rare," with bhag more common, "the sub-tenant paying one-third or more of his produce."³ In the same vein, the writer of the Jabalpur District Gazetteer, remarked that "the malguzar who favors the bhag system is better off than that of the malguzar who abides by his cash rents." A Gond malguzar of 54 villages in the area, Thakur Hanuman Singh, had "reverted to the bhag system very extensively and has now taken to leaving the right to collect his bhag rents to speculative middlemen."⁴ This would indicate the attempt to commute bhag rents to cash rents was ineffective.

A second "customary" practice was that of begar or compulsory labor. The malguzar required each tenant to work for him during specific days of the year. The earlier settlements of Raipur district before 1926-31 recognized the custom and stipulated the number of

¹R. H. Craddock, 10 November 1899, in Jab. SR, pp. 8-9, and Hussain, p. 25.

²Jabalpur DG (1909), pp. 197, 309.

³H. R. Crosthwaite, Jabalpur Settlement Report (1912), p. 34

⁴Jab. DG (1909), p. 191.

days at sowing, harvest, etc. and the amount of work the malguzar could require; the tenant could not commute the service into cash.¹ Finally in the 1928 settlement, the administration decided not to recognize the custom any more. The comments of the settlement officer indicate the Raipur tenants could have benefitted from its prohibition long before the 1920s. The previous settlement had "sanctioned the ancient custom of bhet begar," under which a tenant rendered to

the proprietor the service of his plough and sickle at specified times of the year. . . . "There is abundant proof . . . the privilege has been misused by the malguzari body in every conceivable way. The demands they make on the tenants' time and services have so transgressed the scale laid down in the wajib-ul-arz [village record of rights] that in many villages the tenants can hardly call their time their own. In one case at least a village has been depopulated on account of uncontrolled begar. Although the wajib-ul-arz prohibited commutation of begar for cash severely, malguzars have made it a regular source of cash income. At its best the custom is irksome. . . . Government has therefore decided not to recognize it any longer. There is every likelihood . . . the custom . . . will die out in the course of time.

The non-recognition of bhet begar has been for the tenant the most gratifying part of the re-settlement.²

Though the present dissertation does not examine agrarian relations beyond the 1920s, the failure of British administrative efforts significantly to affect other local customs, such as bhag, indicates little "likelihood the custom" of begar would "die out" soon.

The second round of settlements had taught malguzars not only to keep rents low, but to try to reduce their assets in other ways besides

¹L. S. Carey, Raipur Settlement Report (1891), p. 117. Also the Wajib-ul-arz example in Rai. SR (1912), App. p. 41-42.

²Rai. SR (1932), pp. 43-44.

rents. In the second settlement as in the first, malguzars recognized it was in their interest to conceal as much of their income as possible from the settlement officers. This had originated even in the first settlements. In 1863-64, British officers in Chhattisgarh said they were "helpless in meeting the appeals of pertinacious malguzars against alleged over-assessment." But a report defended the assessments as not excessive because (i) the landlords had plenty of cultivatable land, (ii) the malguzar prepared his rent rolls in "collusion" with his tenants at a low figure, so they both would "benefit at the expense of the State," (iii) produce had risen fourfold or more in value since the Maratha settlement, (iv) the patwaris (village accountants) were few and new, they could not check "the misrepresentations of the land-owners," and (v) that many Indian subordinates in the Revenue Department were related to the malguzars and "interested in mystifying their superiors."¹ At the next settlement, rent concealment was also attempted. When the settlement officer would discover it he made "assessments of a punitive character . . . to deter malguzars from concealing rent." Thus in one area where 55 percent assets were generally taken, he assessed a village at 64 percent.²

In the twentieth century landlords generally turned to "holding back" or "retardation." By then concealment was more difficult-- settlement investigative procedures were more elaborate, the settlement

¹C. P., Report on the Revenue Administration of the Central Provinces for the year 1863-64, in IFP, September 1864, p. 66, par. 129.

²Rai. SR (1912), p. 108.

staffs large, and the landlords had learned penalties could be severe. Besides keeping rents low, some landlords tried to reduce or keep their cultivated areas small when their lands were being assessed. The Settlement Code allowed the determination of land revenue only on actual assets, not on past or prospective assets. Most British administrators felt retardation was a deliberate effort, as often it was. In a letter concerning the Saugor district's up-coming settlement, the Chief Commissioner mentioned the case of "deliberate deterioration," when "a malguzar had intentionally allowed his village to fall into a bad state as a gamble for light assessment." The Chief Commissioner said such cases should be "strongly dealt with," by assessing the fallow areas so the State would not be "defrauded by unscrupulous gamblers."¹ Even though some attempts at retardation may have been deliberate, there is also evidence that the severity of the famines had reduced the cropped areas, cattle, and population, and made recovery slow and difficult.

The Raipur Settlement Officer, H. E. Hemingway, reported some cases of deliberate deterioration during the settlement proceedings from 1905-1910. The attempts involved several "very influential men." One was Balkrishna Rao Lakhe, an Honorary Magistrate, who "at one time took the lead in municipal matters." Hemingway commented on Lakhe and another landlord's character that "whatever their virtue as citizens of Raipur, these two were remarkably bad landlords." Lakhe admitted

¹CP to GOI, 30 March 1911, quoted in G. L. Corbett, Report on "Intentional Deterioration or 'Holding back' in the Khurai Tahsil," in CPRSP, October 1915, p. 25.

to Hemingway that "his tenants had been deliberately got rid of, and the villages kept waste, in order to obtain a light settlement." But the settlement took five-and-a-half years, and Lakhe could not hold out, rather he lost most of his estate.¹ Others "with larger resources could and did hold out and obtained light assessments."

The attempts at Raipur were deliberate but the reasons for "intentional deterioration" or "holding back" are less certain in the Khurai tahsil of Saugor district. G. L. Corbett's special investigation in 1915 revealed slow recovery after the famines of the late 1890s. Some areas, however, showed worse deterioration. Especially fields with the richest soils in some villages remained uncultivated. He investigated various possible causes--a fall in population, loss of plough-cattle, indebtedness, and the earlier efforts of the administration to temporarily abate the land revenue. None of them could account for the deterioration of some areas except the last. Land revenue reductions on the basis of deterioration had influenced some landlords to continue the deterioration in order to "evade taxation." Corbett concluded that "no malguzar . . . would seriously deny the existence of 'holding back.' When good land is lying waste while inferior land is cultivated, patently there can be no other explanation."²

But even Corbett's report and his later settlement (1918) indicates another explanation: kans grass (a deep rooted "weed") had

¹Rai. SR (1912), pp. 18-19.

²G. L. Corbett, "Holding Back," p. 31, pars. 9-10.

spread over wide areas after the famines and turned them into grazing lands. The Saugor district had two of the few large cattle-slaughter yards in the province. Corbett reported "Ghi [clarified butter] exports are now only second to wheat in value, and in some years have actually exceeded wheat. Large numbers of cattle of all kinds are also sold."¹ It would appear that for the Saugor landlord "holding back" may have been the best method of managing his property. His profits from dairy and cattle farming may have been large, irrespective of obtaining a light assessment or not.

In the period between the 1860s and the 1920s most landlords successfully adjusted their methods to retain first, their control over tenants and second, a portion of their income from government taxation. This occurred in spite of the continued efforts of administrators to protect and strengthen the tenants' position and to enhance the land revenue and more closely examine landlords' incomes. The descriptions of villages, in the extracts at the end of this chapter, indicate a remarkable continuity in the structure of agrarian relations over more than a century, rather than radical changes. In spite of many economic and administrative changes malguzars or landlords remained in a strong position over villagers whether in the 1820s, 1903, or the 1920s.

¹G. L. Corbett, Saugor District Settlement Report (1916), p. 18, par. 29 and pp. 31-32, 35.

British Programs for Agricultural Recovery and
Development in the Twentieth Century

In the three periods before the twentieth century, Temple, Campbell, and Fuller had sought to create a framework within which agrarian relationships could be restructured and agriculture could develop rapidly. Partly because of the famines in the late 1890s, administrators considered that government should take a more active role in agricultural development. In this fourth period, the early twentieth century, the administration supported three programs intended to encourage agricultural recovery and development. Two programs, debt conciliation and cooperative credit societies, sought to reduce the large debts of the agricultural population incurred during the 1890s famines and to provide a new institution for credit. A third program of irrigation projects sought to protect areas from famines and eventually increase agricultural production.

The administration established debt reduction negotiations, which they termed debt conciliation proceedings, in several of the worst affected areas. In 1899, Joseph B. Fuller returned to the Central Provinces after serving for a few years in the North-Western Provinces. He discovered that the famines had caused a "host of evils."¹ "The cultivating community was, in fact, bankrupt. . . . One notices depression everywhere: the fields were under-cultivated or going out of cultivation. The people had lost all spirit." Fuller suggested, "it might be possible to infuse fresh hope into the people by informal

¹ Fuller, Experiences, pp. 85-86.

TABLE 17

DEBT CONCILIATION IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES
(Debt amounts in thousands of rupees)

District	Year of proceedings	Debts amount Dealt with	Debts amount Re-mitted	Debts Remitted percent	Persons included in proceedings	
					Malguzars	Tenants
Damoh	1899	3,000	2,400	80.0	. . .	. . .
Balaghat	1901	1,756	593	33.7	507	8,724
Bhandara	1901	1,232	572	46.4	283	3,072
Hoshangabad	1903-1904	8,108	5,179	63.9	9,045	. . .
Betul	1904-1905	2,048	1,196	58.4	3,600 persons	
Total to date		16,143	9,940	61.6	. . .	. . .
Jabalpur	1907-1912	4,486	2,231	49.7	. . .	. . .

SOURCE: C. P., Banking Enquiry Committee, Report, 1920-30 1 (1930): 149.

TABLE 18

COOPERATIVE CREDIT SOCIETIES
IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES

Year	Societies	Members	Working capital (in thousands of rupees)
1905-06	10	. . .	. . .
1908-09	95	. . .	. . .
1911-12	540	9,516	380
1913-14	2,083	34,242	2,560
1917-18	3,377	55,663	5,750
1921-22	4,496	73,112	12,200

SOURCES: Ibid., 1: 253-59; H. A. Crump, A Note on the past history and future prospects of the Cooperative Movement, 11 June 1914, CPAFP, January 1917, p. 15.

bankruptcy proceedings of a kind: that village arbitration, or conciliation boards might be able to reduce debts that might be paid off within a period of seven years."

Chief Commissioner Andrew Fraser announced the aim of conciliation was not "to sacrifice the interests of creditors to their debtors," but "to set the debtors free from burdens which they cannot bear, . . . and to secure for the creditors . . . all that they can reasonably hope to recover."¹ About Rs. 16 million of debts were dealt with of which about Rs. 10 million were remitted. (See table on conciliation.) Fuller considered this "a very great success. . . . The people were set on their feet again."²

The cooperative movement began in 1905. Conciliation was considered as "remedial only: a positive policy that could of itself supply a stimulus to thrift and self-improvement was required. This, it was hoped, has been found in Co-operative credit."³ By 1912 there were 585 societies with a turnover capital of nearly Rs. 150 thousand. The cooperative credit societies expanded steadily in the next years, as the table on Cooperative Credit Societies shows.

Most of the cooperative credit societies, especially in the early period, were formed under the influence of British officers such as

¹Speech by the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces on the work of the Conciliation Boards in the Central Provinces, at the Darbar, Bhandara, 29 July 1902, p. 542 in P.P., 1902, vol. 70, pp. 439-544.

²Fuller, Experiences, p. 87.

³Charles E. Low, Memorandum, 1902-1912, p. 5.

Henry Crosthwaite and Charles Low.¹ Crosthwaite tried to establish several cooperative societies in Jabalpur district before the first was finally formed in February 1907. Three years later, Jabalpur district had 15 societies. The aim was "to encourage thrift, self-help and cooperation among agriculturalists."² By 1914, H. A. Crump, the Financial Commissioner, announced, "it is now certain that the cooperative movement will prove to be an economic force of tremendous power and far-reaching influence."³ He requested government support of the movement through more salaried government officials assisting in the movement.⁴ He considered it "impossible" for the government to "draw back now, . . . as a failure due to want of Government control, accompanied by the loss of money belonging to the public, would be disastrous,"⁵ Crump linked the cooperative movement with other departments, saying "the work of the Irrigation, Agricultural and Co-operative Departments must proceed hand in hand, if Government is to see all its efforts on behalf of the country and the people crowned with a full measure of success."⁶

¹See Crosthwaite's description in the Jabalpur DG (1909), pp. 185-188; and similarly, Low's in the Hoshangabad District Gazeteer (1908), pp. 152-154; and Henry Crosthwaite, Jab. SR (1912), pp. 22-24.

²Jabalpur DG (1909), p. 186.

³Crump, Note of 11 July 1914, in CPAP, 1917 January, p. 19, par. 12.

⁴Crump, another Note by the Financial Commissioner, 25 September 1915, in CPAP, January 1917, p. 47.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Note of 11 July 1914, par. 12, p. 19.

After much discussion, a program for protective and productive irrigation projects was formulated in 1907. It owed part of its stimulus to the recommendations of the Irrigation Commission of 1903, and partly to the administration's recognition that agriculture in the Central Provinces was too dependent on rainfall as the 1890s famines had shown.¹ By 1908 the Public Works Department had drawn up plans for 200 projects which would protect 700 square miles when completed.²

The largest project was the Mahanadi Irrigation Canal in Raipur district which was built in various stages before completion in 1923. In 1907-08 Government tanks in the district could irrigate only about 19 thousand acres, though only 13 thousand were irrigated in that year of scarcity. By 1920-21 the partially completed canal had an estimated potential to irrigate 120 thousand acres, but only 48 thousand were actually irrigated. By 1930, irrigation potential had risen to 853 thousand acres combining both the canal and tanks. However, many farmers were unwilling to pay the water rate so only 129 thousand acres or fifteen percent of the potential acreage was irrigated.³

The potential irrigated area of the whole of the Central Provinces grew rapidly during the first two decades of the twentieth century. It

¹CPRAP, 1908 January, #3-9, pp. 2-17, Correspondence on the subject of Irrigation Works, both public and private, in the CP and Berar.

²Central Provinces Gazetteer (1908), pp. 45-46.

³Raipur SR (1932), p. 4.

had reached 28 thousand acres in 1911-12, and 439 thousand acres by 1921-22.¹

In 1912, the decennial report on the province emphasized a "new spirit of self-help" among the population. In 1913, Chief Commissioner Benjamin Robertson felt that the famines and other forces had resulted "in the survival of the fittest . . . at the expense of the unfit and incompetent." Administrative programs had helped this process of recovery.

The disastrous cycle of famines, which might have been expected to obliterate distinctions, and to involve all alike, the fit and unfit, in one common ruin, did in fact only accelerate, roughly but effectively, the progress of elimination, and this has been further advanced by the succeeding decade of, on the whole, general prosperity, by the birth of a new spirit of self-help, by initiation and extension of irrigation works, by the efforts of the Agricultural Department, and by the growth of the Co-operative movement.²

While the administration congratulated itself on programs of recovery and development, other investigations and reports reached conclusions which questioned or contradicted the administration's assessment. Conciliation proceedings covered only parts of six of the eighteen districts of the province, and even in conciliated areas creditors still retained forty to sixty percent of the farmer's unconciliated debts. One British officer noted that in Damoh district

¹Central Provinces, Administration Report 1921-22, p. 48. This dramatic expansion of irrigated land, however, meant only a rise from .11 percent to 2 percent of the cultured area.

²Central Provinces to the Government of India, 13 January 1913; in CPRSP, February 1913, #12, par. 11, p. 59.

after the conciliation proceedings of 1899, "the creditors soon repented of the wave of generous enthusiasm that swept like a wave over the district in 1899, and have ever since collected their debts with a rigour which has created much bitterness and caused the absorption of much tenancy land." The Administration offered economic and status "incentives" to creditors if they would participate in the proceedings, and penalties to those who did not. The Narbudda Commissioner felt that those landlords who did not join the proceedings "should be reported at once with a view to the immediate cancellation" of their land revenue abatements and "the immediate realization of [their] arrears of revenue."² On the other hand, anyone who remitted large amounts of debts would be "specially mentioned" by the government. In a public Darbar on the second of June 1902, the District Commissioner of Hoshangabad awarded Arms Licenses to eighteen creditors who had remitted large sums.³ While debt

¹C. G. Cheneyix Trench, in Banking Enquiry Committee, Report (1930), vol. 1, p. 150. Hereafter BEC.

²Narbudda Division Commissioner to the Chief Commissioner, 20 July 1901, in CPRAP, August 1901, p. 22.

³Sunder Lal, Extra-Assistant Commissioner, Note on conciliation in Sohagpur tahsil in Hoshangabad District, in the CPRAP, August 1902, p. 15. Sunder Lal listed 21 creditors who remitted more than Rs. 10,000 in Sohagpur tahsil, while Ganga Singh, EAC, especially noticed 72 creditors who had remitted more than Rs. 1,000 in Seoni tahsil, Hoshangabad district. Lal, p. 16 and Singh, pp. 26-28. A large creditor of farmers and landlords who himself owned considerable land, was refused consideration for the abatement of revenue in his villages of Khurai tahsil, Saugor district, because he refused to join in conciliation proceedings. CPRAP, June 1901, Settlement #7-37, pp. 26-78, "Conciliations of Debt in Khurai tahsil, Saugor." The creditor, Raja Gokuldas, finally "apologized in writing for his previous recalcitrance," when the Chief Commissioner refused to grant him an interview. "This produced the desired effect." He agreed to debt conciliation. BEC, Report, Vol. 1, p. 150.

conciliation might have been momentarily successful in promoting recovery, it was only possible with administrative pressure. Not long after conciliation proceedings, some creditors returned to a rigorous collection of the remaining and new debts which created "much bitterness."

Similar to the conciliation proceedings, the administration was strongly committed to the success of the cooperative movement. On the one hand it had helped to found the movement, and on the other hand it continued to support, expand and maintain it. With government support and involvement, it was hardly an independent farmer's cooperative movement. Chief Commissioner J. O. Miller concluded from his personal investigation of societies in the Narbudda valley that the societies were really agricultural banks: "Not one of the banks is in any sense a co-operative society. . . . All the banks are profit-making concerns, pure and simple, managed by a few people of some position."¹ He also learned that members joined the committees for three major reasons: for profits through the interest on their deposits; to please "high authorities"; and to "obey" lower officials. Some members of one committee "frankly admitted that they had come in as sharers, Sirkar ke hukum se" (by government order). Most detailed reports on local cooperative societies confirmed Miller's suspicion: they were founded because of administrative pressure; they were banks rather than cooperative societies; and they were controlled by prominent landlords and money-lenders rather than by farmer members. In

¹Note by the Chief Commissioner on Cooperative Societies in the Central Provinces, 19 January 1906, in CPAFP, February 1906, p. 3.

Jabalpur district the societies of Sihora tahsil were headed by Vishnu Datt Shukla, the most prominent landlord of the tahsil, owning sixteen villages which gave him an "annual income of Rs. 20,000." In Murwara tahsil, they were under the "guidance" of Bania Mannulal Masurha. In Jabalpur tahsil they were "managed by S. S. Bhargava, son of Rao Bahadur Beharilal Khazanchi,"¹

These characteristics continued into the 1910s and the 1920s. Periodic pressure from the administration helped to expand the societies--one District Commissioner admitted he founded twenty-four societies in one night in order to expand the movement.² With this expansion and soon afterwards the sudden withdrawal of deposits and further borrowing by its members to tide them over the 1918-19 famine, the Cooperative Credit Societies themselves approached bankruptcy. In 1920 the movement was saved and returned to solvency by a loan of about Rs. 2 million from the administration.³ An attempt at the "reconstruction" of Cooperative Societies was carried on in the 1920s, but the Registrar reported in 1924-25 "one-third of the total

¹Jabalpur Settlement Report (1913), pp. 23-24; and information on the Shukla family in Jabalpur District Gazetteer (1909), p. 139; on Mannulal Musurha, p. 371; and on the Khazanchi family, which "owns a large estate of 43 villages, besides having an extensive money-lending business," p. 138.

²District Commissioner K. E. J. Sanjana of Bhandara, in BEC, Report, vol. 1, p. 253.

³BEC, Report, vol. 1, p. 256, as quoted from the Registrar of Cooperative Societies' Report of 1920-21.

loans from Societies consisted of renewals on overdue arrears.¹

In the first three decades of the twentieth century, agricultural debts rose to over Rs. 364 million in the province, of which the Cooperative Credit Societies handled only 2.75 percent.² Jabalpur district provides one of the most striking examples of the failure of debt conciliation and the Societies to reduce agricultural indebtedness. Tenants debts had been conciliated in 1908-1912, reducing them by half, from Rs. 4.49 million to 2.26 million. The district was one of the first to have cooperative societies, and had the largest number (348 societies) of any district in the province.³ But the Banking Enquiry Committee of 1928 reported that:

the total debt of the tenantry is now approximately three times the amount which they owed before these debt conciliation proceedings and the formation of the co-operative credit societies were undertaken.⁴

There were also problems with the administration's irrigation program that were attributed to several reasons. One was the decision of the administration in 1907 to concentrate almost all the government irrigation projects in the rice-crop region of the province. Drought-prone areas such as Saugor district in the north had no government irrigation projects until 1921, that is, two decades after their

¹BEC, Report, Vol. 1, p. 260 for the Registrar's Report; and p. 261, for the character of loans. The exact percentage was 39 percent.

²Ibid., vol. 1, p. 95.

³Ibid., p. 258.

⁴BEC, Report, Vol. II, p. 623.

famines in the 1890s.¹ Another reason was the failure of farmers to formally agree to accept irrigation water from the government, and pay the government rate for it. By 1928 less than fourteen percent of the area commanded by the Mahanadi Canal in the Raipur area was under agreement.²

¹Saugor District Gazetteer (1967), pp. 119-121. Even with the first government canal irrigation in 1923-24, the irrigated crop area did not reach one percent until 1929-30 and it continued to remain very low in the next decades. See pp. 569-70.

²The agreement area was 111,367 acres out of the potential of 801,926 acres. Government tanks showed a higher percentage--thirty-five percent--or 17,967 acres out of 51,542 potential. C. D. Deshmukh, Raipur Settlement Report, p. 11.

There was a host of problems involved in the expansion of irrigation, especially in the rice area. The administration partially recognized that farmers would not agree to pay for government irrigation water unless they were also assured of sufficient available capital for cultivation and fertilizer for the fields. This was one reason Crump insisted on the coordination of provincial departments in rice regions. Crump, "Note," 11 July 1914. Another problem was to convince farmers to transplant rice in irrigated fields instead of using the popular biasi method of broadcasting when planting. The Raipur settlement officer in 1928, C. D. Deshmukh, maintained that the poor draft cattle of Raipur could not work fields of transplanted rice. There was also "no assurance of irrigation"; even in the Mahanadi canal area the government had not built an adequate distribution canal system of "water-courses." Because of the cattle and the lack of a distribution system, Deshmukh was not surprised that the rice crop area, since the last settlement, had increased more in the uncommanded tashil of Baloda Bazar than in the tahsils commanded by the canal (Dhamtari and Raipur tahsils). Deshmukh, Raipur Settlement Report (1932), pp. 12-13. Thomas Weaver in a study of agriculture in Raipur district in the 1960s, reviewed the history of irrigation and the evidence that profits from rice cultivation by transplanting and biasi were approximately equal. He also noted in the early years of the Mahanadi Canal project, Dhamtari tahsil farmers refused agreement for irrigation water as part of the non-cooperation movement of 1921. Whether for political or economic reasons, Raipur farmers were not convinced that they should take irrigation water. Weaver concluded that successful irrigation farming needed a "package" program in which they were assured of water, capital, labor, strong cattle, manure, inter- and intra-village cooperation, etc. Thomas F. Weaver, "The Farmers of Raipur," in John W. Mellor and others, Developing Rural

The original irrigation policy had been based more on "protective" than on "productive" projects. One administrator emphasized in 1906 that "from the view of protection from famine, it is better" that irrigation works "should give partial protection to a large area than full protection to a small area; as such a policy, though it may not be financially directly profitable . . . will protect from actual famine a larger number of people and tend to keep down famine expenditure."¹ The irrigation projects eventually constructed seemed, however, to be "productive" (producing government revenue through water rates) more than "protective." The absence of irrigation works in dry areas such as Saugor district and the concentration on large irrigation projects, such as the Mahanadi Canal in Raipur district, show that the administration largely lost sight of its original policy as it proceeded to implement its irrigation program. In the Mahanadi Canal area some farmers felt irrigation produced more problems than benefits--it enriched a few farmers adjacent to the Canal who took most of the water, and thus caused intra-village competition and disputes.²

India: Plans and Practice (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1968), pp. 143-397. In another study of the Central Provinces, William Wake has traced the very slow and almost insignificant increase of the irrigated area of the province during the first half of the twentieth century. William H. Wake, "The Relations between Transportation Improvements and Agricultural Changes in Madhya Pradesh, India, 1854-1954," (Ph. D. dissertation, University of California, 1961), pp. 130-136.

¹GOI to Central Provinces, 1 May 1906, in CPAFP, July 1906, p. 16.

²Weaver, "Raipur Farmer," pp. 191-192.

Famines, conciliation, cooperation and irrigation all had uneven and unexpected results. In 1912, E. R. K. Blenkinsop, Commissioner of Settlements in the Central Provinces, presented his view of the lowest class of cultivators in the areas of Saugor and Damoh districts hardest hit by the famines. He saw the "Gallia" (galla-wara, grain-man, or payer in kind) as having the status "not . . . of a bond-slave, but of a contented dependent."¹ The Gallia's creditor brought him "into the world, marries and buries" him. The famines had proved a "salutary though severe corrective" to the farmers' increasing laxity "in thrift, industry and enterprise," which they had exhibited before the famines. The "unfit, who" survived the famines, "are the Gallias swamped in debt." More than ten years after conciliation, he reported "the burden of debt is by now as heavy as before." Blenkinsop felt the Gallias were "not fit for independence"; and were "not worth legislating for"; it was "better still that they should descend to their proper status of labourers." Blenkinsop and others viewed the famines in a particularly social Darwinian way--the famines had helped to eliminate lazy, unproductive people. It had lowered the economic position of the survivors and forced them to work hard. He and others also recognized debt conciliation had not achieved the goal of reducing agricultural indebtedness. Perhaps more significant than reducing the amount of debt, the administration's programs for recovery had not improved economic and social agrarian relations; the structure of agrarian relations remained the same, or even worse.

¹E. R. K. Blenkinsop, 26 April 1912, in CPRSP, February 1913, p. 18, pars. 9-13.

It becomes evident, then, that the 1890 famines not only produced certain immediate results but some that continued into the future. Immediately, the population and the cultivated areas declined. Very soon the administration took seriously the need to develop more efficient famine procedures and this led to a new Famine Code that was backed by the experience of the 1890s. The longer range programs included the administration's programs for agricultural recovery: debt conciliation, Cooperative Credit Societies, and irrigation projects. The enthusiasm of administrators for recovery policies was heightened by a decade of general prosperity, and it produced self-congratulatory assessments of success. But each of the three programs of recovery also had hidden flaws and these became more evident in time. The amount of debts was not reduced but in some areas increased; the cooperative movement failed to provide a large proportion of agriculturalists with credit, nor did it become self-sustaining, and did not measure up to the definition of a cooperative society; and the irrigation schemes did not accomplish their purposes. Farmers in Raipur and other areas lacked capital, or manure, or other means that would make it to their advantage to use irrigation water, so these projects did not achieve the hopes of the administration for the irrigated areas. A Chhattisgarhi farmer expressed something of the desperation of the farmers, when the Banking Enquiry Committee interviewed him in the late 1920s:

Our cattle often die of cattle epidemics and thus puts us to a loss. We sometimes suffer from attacks of cholera and small-pox. Sometimes our crops fail owing to the failure of the monsoon. These are all misfortunes which come to us from Heaven and they depend on the displeasure of our Great Master. These we endure as best we can. We do not ask you, gentlemen, to do anything for us. You may do

anything which you think good; but we pray you, in your kindness, not to bring any Government irrigation canal here, nor to open co-operative credit bank. These are misfortunes which we should not be able to bear. Any other misfortunes we can tolerate but these.¹

Agriculturalists, at least in some areas, regarded the recovery projects of the administration, a failure, or at best a mixed blessing.

Conclusion

Land policy may be viewed from many levels and may include many topics and attitudes. This chapter has viewed land policy from two levels: the levels of those formulating land policy, and those primarily affected by land policy. It has concentrated on three main topics: consolidation, development, and agrarian relationships. Five questions are involved: the proportion of the landlords' assets taken as land revenue, the periods between revisions or settlements, increasing agricultural production and plans for colonization, the condition of landlords, and agrarian relations. Each issue, in one way or another, influenced the others, but they did not have the same significance for the participants at each level.

For those formulating policy, the British, the determination of a fair and moderate land revenue, and the methods of its collection, were most important. The British were largely successful in achieving this goal. The value and amount of agricultural production generally grew, but this was not directly the result of the efforts of the Central

¹BEC, Report, I. 155. The villager was from Baiji in Bametara, Drug District.

Provinces administration. Rather it was based on an expansion of crop production and trade. The British administration was only moderately successful in its efforts for colonization of waste lands and agricultural improvements. Lastly the administration was least successful in establishing either of the two types of British agrarian structures. Both efforts to establish their ideals of "improving landlords" and peasant proprietors failed. The diversity of interests and the separation of British and Indian participants was clearest in this third arena of activities.

For those affected by policy, agrarian relations were most important, and one segment, the landlords, appear most successful in this arena. Because of their intermediate position between the administration above and villagers below, landlords tended to view issues of land revenue policy and their indebtedness or economic condition as integral parts of agrarian relations. They attempted to minimize land taxes and enlarge their payments from villagers. Indians discovered and used many methods to adjust to the changing administrative rules and economic conditions.

Broadly viewed, however, it was not just Indians who were adjusting their methods, but rather mutual adjustments by participants at both levels. Thus, the British were also forced to adjust their land policies and programs to deal with Indian activities. These policies and programs often clashed with local conditions and institutions. Though the British collected land revenue and attempted Western forms of economic development, they were unable to transform Indian agrarian relations. Over these six decades many methods were tried and many adjustments made, yet the basic agrarian structure

persisted.

The next three chapters are concerned with specific case studies of the interaction between different segments of the population under British rule. The first examines an Indian commercial and landlord family, while the second and third study a tribe and a tenant group.

Figure 2

EXTRACTS DESCRIBING VILLAGES IN THE
CENTRAL PROVINCES AREA, 1819-1929

1. Jabalpur District, villages of Kesrondh, Pondi and Dighori, 1819

[In these villages] there is not a single cultivator who pays rent in money nor in produce. The whole of the produce belongs to the patel who feeds the cultivator gratis in the rains according to the number of his family and not according to the quota of his work. In the other eight months the cultivator is paid in kind for embanking, ploughing, sowing, weeding, watching, reaping, threshing and housing. Cattle and seed are supplied by the patel, but, if the cultivator have them, he is allowed a consideration.¹

2. Jabalpur district, 1827.

I know that in villages held by mahajans they have claims on the cultivator which both parties are perfectly sensible can only run up to higher sums by the annual addition of coumpound interest and under the most favourable circumstances are not to be satisfied.²

3. Drug tahsil, Raipur District, around 1903.

A malguzar of character is all powerful in his own village. No law that can be framed can bind him. He is or always can be there. If a tenant goes against the malguzar, the malguzar without transgressing any law can stop him drinking from the village tank, can refuse assistance and prevent others giving him assistance with seed loans, &c., can forbid the village herdsman to graze his cattle, can even drive the cattle into his fields. If he is unscrupulous he can do a good deal more. He is on the spot and his control is absolute. Such cases are not numerous, but I can give instances of a Bhat, a Rajput, a Gosai, a Brahmin, a Bania and even a Kurmi and a Lodhi who have cleared their villages of tenants, not in the jungly tracts, but in the long settled open country, and all except the Gosai within this tahsil.

Such cases show that it is useless to try and bind malguzars by sections and clauses and if so it is unwise to introduce inoperative restrictions in their dealings with tenants. It is necessary to enlist their interests; first, they must see their profit in cooperating with the wishes of Government; and secondly, they must see that they will suffer if they do not.³

¹Jabalpur SR (1912), p. 21, quoting Mr. Cockerell.

²Ibid., quoting Charles Fraser.

³Drug Tahsil SR (1903), p. 37.

Figure 2--continued

4. Damoh District, Abhana village, 1929.

Under ordinary circumstances a village of this kind might be expected to be in prosperous condition and the cultivators well off. The village [has], however, a large amount of old debts due to the malguzar, . . .

The malguzar, Seth Gulabchand, a minor, is the son of Seth Dalichand. The village is in the possession of this family for many years, and they are very rich with a large money-lending business.

As regards old debts, the cultivators themselves are unable to state the exact amount due and as to how they first originated. The agent of the munim . . . was unable to state, however, what sum was originally advanced on these old debts. The custom was to get a bond written in case of default in payment of installments, so as to prevent the amount from becoming time barred. But if the debtor refused to execute the bond they filed suits and obtained decrees In execution of the decree they did not take the land, but seized the cattle and other moveable property.

It was clear that the main object of the malguzar was to keep these persons under his thumb as practically bond slaves.

No one could tell us how much money was originally advanced and how much has been paid off on the old debts of Rs. 98,849. Repayment is generally taken in kind and the cultivators say that it is easy to practice fraud in weightments. No receipts are ever given The debtors are kept alive simply to keep these cultivators under the control of the landlord.

This was one of the few villages in which there was no debt conciliation proceedings after the famine Our enquiry shows that on this occasion the malguzar refused to agree to any debt conciliation.

The tenants say that in bad years the malguzar did nothing, but in good years he seized their crops, allowing them only sufficient margin for food and clothing expenses. As one of the tenants stated, to be in the village was of itself a perpetual famine. It does not seem possible that the tenants and their children or grand-children with these old debts outstanding can ever free themselves from the debt. Even if they surrender their land, the debts would still be hanging over them.¹

¹Central Provinces, Banking Enquiry Committee, Report 1929-30
2 (1930): 268-71.

PART III. ARENAS OF INDIAN ACTIVITY

CHAPTER VIII

THE COMMERCIAL KINGDOM OF RAJA GOKULDAS

The Raja Seth Gokuldas family of Jabalpur became one of the most renowned wealthy families of the Central Provinces. In late 1908, on the day after the death of Raja Gokuldas, the head of the family, twenty-five thousand persons in Jabalpur accompanied the funeral procession; the city's courts, schools, shops and markets were closed. In respectful recognition of the family's substantial business in Bombay, the cotton market at Kolaba and the wheat market in Dana Bandar also closed.¹

This Marwari family exhibited many characteristics of other Marwari "great firms" in different parts of India.² In the Central Provinces it was one of the wealthiest elite families. During the nineteenth century other Marwari families spread out into many parts of India; northern India, Calcutta, Bombay, the Deccan, and Madras. Early in the century, Raja Gokuldas' grandfather, Seyaram, settled in the small trading town of Jabalpur and soon began to establish the family's position in

¹Babu Jiwanchandra Mukerji, Raja Gokuldasji ka Jivan-charit (Bombay: 1929), p. 114. This is a bi-lingual biography, English and Hindi, mostly in praise of its subject. Hereafter, RGDB.

²Thomas Timberg's ideas are referred to in this chapter for all-India comparisons with other Marwari firms. Thomas Timberg, "The Rise of Marwari Merchants as Industrial Entrepreneurs to 1930" (Ph. D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1972). Hereafter Timberg, "Marwari." Chapter V, "Great Firms," pp. 161-187, and App. A, "Central Provinces and Berar," pp. 291-294.

society and their rapid rise in wealth. Eventually their business and trading activities spread to several parts of northern Central Provinces, then to other parts of the province, and in time to Bombay, Calcutta, Rangoon, Central India, Etawah (United Provinces), and Multan (Sind). Few other families of the Central Provinces had such far-reaching connections.

Like other large Marwari firms the family participated in a wide variety of economic activities. They were money-lenders, brokers, traders, government treasurers, industrialists and landlords. As in other Marwari firms, the management and ownership was retained in the hands of the immediate family. The firm rarely allowed others to become partners in the firm or its branches.¹

The relations between the firm and the British rulers and administration was not consistently good. At times the British welcomed the financial help the family offered in loans to indebted families under the Court of Wards, for municipal development and other purposes. The British frequently used the firm's financial facilities to handle and transfer funds. At other times the British strongly objected to the role of the family as large landlords. Local British officials favored village landlords of agricultural castes and often cited the family as an example of an unwanted development--the transfer of village ownership to large absentee money-lending families. Though the family

¹See three articles by Thomas Timberg; two in the Indian Economic and Social History Review--"A North Indian Firm Seen through its Business Records, 1860-1914; Tarachand Ghanshyamdas, A 'Great' Marwari Firm" (September 1971), pp. 264-283, and "Three Types of the Marwari Firm" (May 1973), pp. 1-36; and one in Bengal Past and Present--"A Note on the Arrival of Calcutta Marwaris" (January-June 1971), pp. 75-84. Hereafter respectively "Great Firm" "Types," and "Arrival."

members acquired honorary titles, participated in district and municipal government institutions, and continued to reside at Jabalpur for almost a century, they were not included among the nominees for selection to the Governor-General's Legislative Council in 1893.¹ The Chief Commissioner considered the family still foreigners (Marwaris) whose reputation was based solely on wealth rather than landlord status. This tension and difference with the British may have encouraged the grandson of Raja Gokuldas, Govind Das, to join the Indian National Congress in the early 1920s. He continued to carry on the tradition of a respected family in the Central Provinces, and eventually represented the state of Madhya Pradesh in the Lok Sabha (National Assembly).

History of the Family and the Firm

The forefathers of Gokuldas originally came to Jabalpur from Jaisalmir, Rajasthan, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. They belonged to the Malpani section of the Maheshwari caste-cluster.² The reasons for their departure from Jaisalmir and for going to Jabalpur are uncertain. The Jaisalmir state, located at the extreme western part of Rajasthan, reached its height in power and wealth in the middle of the seventeenth century, but steadily declined thereafter. The departure of the Gokuldas family and other merchants may have been due also to local political changes of the

¹Central Provinces, Home Proceedings, Judicial, 1893 November, #18, p. 73.

²RGDB, p. 1.

area. Because of the state's isolation, it was saved from Maratha invasion, and the British did not establish treaty relations until 1818. Yet Jaisalmer's internal rule was far from quiescent. The prime minister, Mehta Salim Singh, assisted his king in destroying all potential rival relatives, and he acted unscrupulously toward his fellow merchant-caste members (Mahajans). He drove out the most enterprising landholders and cultivators--the Paliwal Brahmins--from the kingdom. The wealth, produce, and political viability of the state almost collapsed as a result of Salim Singh's rule which did not end until his death in 1824.¹ By that year the grandfather of Gokuldas had already been in business in Jabalpur for several years. When he first arrived he had settled in a rich farming area west of Jabalpur where he made a small fortune. This he turned over to his brother, Girhardas, when he moved into the town proper.

Jabalpur was not a particularly large trading or administrative center during the early years of the nineteenth century when Sevaram arrived. The area had been the historical center for several local kingdoms, and it lay on the crossroads midway between Mirzapur and Nagpur and at the head of the cultivated portion of the Nerbudda valley. With the establishment of the Saugor and Nerbudda Territories under British rule in 1818, the town became an administrative and military headquarters. By 1828 Sevaram had earned a place of

¹The Imperial Gazetteer of India (1908), Vol. 14, pp. 3-4 in the article on "Jaisalmer." Hereafter IG. The IG relies heavily on Todd for its interpretation of the Jaisalmer state during this period. Timberg feels Jaisalmer's trade decline was after 1835, and not directly related to Salim Singh's rule. Timberg, "Marwari," p. 142.

distinction in the area. A British official described him as "one of the most opulent Mahajans of Jabalpur."¹ Most of Sevaram's wealth was derived from partnerships in the banking business, but he also had established shops in neighboring trading centers and had the right to collect revenue from fourteen villages, before his death in 1834.²

Estimates of the family's income and fortune, from time to time, have been made by Gokuldas' biographer and Govindas; their accuracy is open to question, but at least roughly indicate the rapidly expanding wealth of the family. At the time of his death in 1834, Sevaram was reported to have an annual income of between Rs. 25-30,000, of which he expended only Rs. 3,000. His total wealth was estimated to be Rs. 500,000. This estimate was apparently low, for two years after his death, the family loaned Rs. 530,000 to the Bhonsla Raja of Nagpur (1836).³ Sevaram's son Khushalchand evidently continued to expand the family's fortunes so that by his death in 1864 his annual income was around Rs. 200,000 of which he spent about Rs. 20,000 to 24,000, and in that year his wealth was estimated to be Rs. 2,500,000. In turn, his son Gokuldas, expanded the family's worth to around Rs. 70 million, with an annual income of more than Rs. 1 million, derived

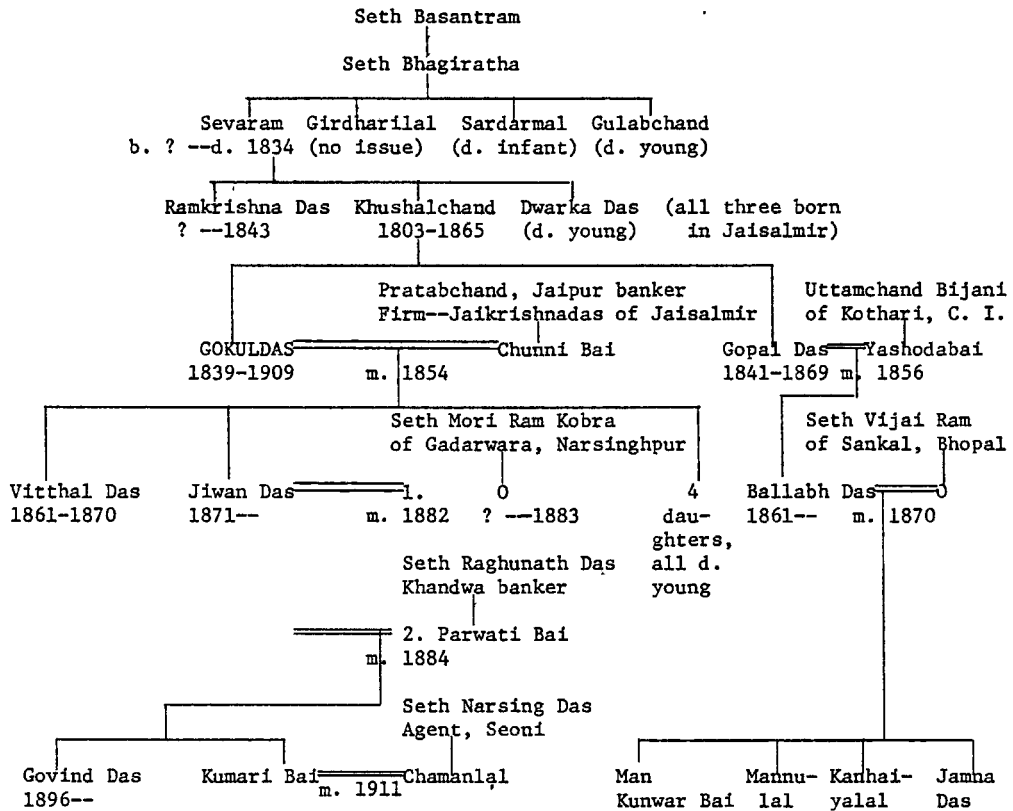
¹C. Fraser, Political Agent, Jabalpur, letter of 22 February 1828, quoted in RGDB, pp. 2 and 5.

²RGDB, p. 4.

³Annual income and expenditure estimates found in RGDB, pp. 4, 12, and 43; while total wealth, villages, acres, and shops are from Gokuldas' grandson, Govindas, in his shortened autobiography, Uthal-Puthal ka Yug (Delhi, 1963). Hereafter Yug.

FIGURE 3

GENEALOGY OF RAJA GOKULDAS
Mal-pani branch of
Maheswaris, Jaisalmir

SOURCE: RGDE.

in part from income from 800 villages or 63,000 acres of land, 300 shops, and several modern factories.

The rapid growth of the family's fortune appears to be the result of at least three factors--the personal business ability and effort of each of the heirs to the family estate, the maintenance of relatively good relations with government officials, and the accident of circumstances by which the estate was not partitioned or divided until Raja Gokuldas' death in 1908. In the nineteenth century, for three generations, the family estate was under the control of a sole heir. Sevaram was the younger of two surviving sons; his other two brothers died when they were young. When Sevaram moved from the country into the town of Jabalpur, he left his fortune of that time with his older brother, Girdhardas, and built his new wealth in Jabalpur. Khusalchand inherited the management of the estate in 1834 when his father died. He also was the younger of two surviving sons; another brother having died before maturity. Khusalchand's older brother, Ramkrishnadas, devoted himself entirely to a religious life, leaving worldly matters in Khusalchand's hands. When Ramkrishnadas died childless in the early 1840s, Khusalchand offered to have his own son, Gokuldas, adopted in his brother's name, but the widow of Ramkrishnadas refused this and filed a partition suit in Calcutta against Khusalchand. The suit was never decided as the widow died before judgment was made. In the third generation, only two of Khusalchand's three sons survived his death in 1864. The older of the two survivors, Gokuldas, experienced a number of crises during his twenties. At twenty-two his younger brother, Gopaldas had his first and only son, Ballabhdas,

and a year later, a son Vittaldas, was born to Gokaldas. When Gokuldas was 26 his father died, and four years later his younger brother Gopaldas, followed soon by the death of his son, Vittaldas. Gokuldas immediately took his brother's son, Ballabhdas, under his care and supervision, and soon after arranged his marriage. Then when Gokuldas was 31 he had a second son, Jiwandas. He showed equal affection and responsibility for both Jiwandas and Ballabhdas and arranged that when he died the family wealth would be equally divided between them. In each of these three generations, the head of the family, first Sewaram, then Khusalchand, then Gokuldas, had sole charge of the firm's affairs.¹

It was while Khusalchand was head of the family, that the firm acquired various connections beyond the confines of Jabalpur region. In the 1830s through his brother's (Ramkrishnadas) religious activities, the family formed a permanent relationship with a line of gurus of the Vallabha sect of Benares. Khusalchand and Ramkrishnadas were initiated into the sect and continued to make regular journeys to that religious city. During the difficult family times in the 1860s, the daughter of the family guru, Shri Shyam Beti, lived in the Gokuldas home and predicted the birth of Gokuldas' second son. He was named Jiwandas in honor of Jiwanlal, the recently adopted son of

¹RGDB is the basis for this information. Further demographic analysis of this wealthy family might be interesting if other comparisons could be found--the high mortality and lack of surviving heirs, etc. Timberg makes an inconclusive comment on Hindu inheritance laws and practices, "Marwari," p. 48n.

Shri Shyam Beti.¹ By the late 1840s Khusalchand had established a business in Calcutta, and the marriages of both Gokuldas and Gopaldas into families outside the Jabalpur area led to further expansion. In 1854 Gokuldas married Chunni Bai, daughter of Prathabchand, a Jaisalmir banker of Jaipur. Two years later Yashodabai became the wife of Gopaldas. Her father, Uttamchand Bijand, conducted business in Kothari in Central India.²

The Khusalchand family status grew considerably in the eyes of British officials during the Mutiny. In 1857 Khusalchand loaned over Rs. 300,000 to the Jabalpur Commissioner who desperately needed funds for the military expedition in Jabalpur-Saugor area. At the same time Khusalchand used his influence with his villagers in eastern Jabalpur district to capture rebels. In addition, when the Allahabad troops required transport bullocks for the forthcoming campaign to relieve Lucknow, the British sent a local agent, Bholanath Misra, to Magpur to obtain them. With money loaned by Khusalchand, Bholanath bought the bullocks and returned to Allahabad. In reward for his services, Khusalchand received a robe of honor (Khillat of shawls) valued at Rs. 500 and parwana, a government certificate of appreciation.³

¹RGDB, pp. 5 and 26. Timberg, "Marwari," from p. 41 and after, discusses Weberian ideas in connection with ethics of merchant groups, especially Jains and Vallabhas.

²RGDB, pp. 22-23 for marriages, and p. 12 for the Calcutta shop.

³RGDB, pp. 12-17; and CPRAP, March 1904, Revenue #25-29, especially Apps. A, B, K, and O.

Gokuldas continued this tradition of assistance to the British. During the last part of the nineteenth century he provided loans to Indian families whom the British brought under the Court of Wards. The extent of these loans is recorded in his biography.¹ Between 1873 and 1905 the Gokuldas firm made 43 loans, each exceeding Rs. 25,000 (nine of them over Rs. 100,000) in 13 of the province's 18 districts. This amounted to nearly Rs. 3 million, 40 percent of which was loaned between 1876 and 1884. The firm also made a large number of smaller loans (under Rs. 25,000) to the Wards as well, for example in 1889/90. In that year not only did the firm loan a total of Rs. 19,500 to three Wards, but it received Rs. 53,500 from 18 estates in payment to previous loans.² Outside the Central Provinces, the firm was also active, lending a total of Rs. 241,000 to three wards in the United Provinces in the districts of Mirzapur and Shahjahanpur. They made even larger loans to Nawab Mohommed Haidar Khan of Aligarh (Rs. 385,000) and to the Jannagar State in Kathiawar (Rs. 380,000).

Besides these loans, the Gokuldas firm made money available to other British enterprises: Rs. 200,000 to the Raipur-Nagpur Railway company in 1880, Rs. 30,000 to the Burhanpur municipal Board in 1881, over Rs. 550,000 to Jabalpur municipal board in 1881, and Rs. 25,000

¹RGDB, pp. 61-65; my calculations are based on those pages.

²"Resolution of the Chief Commissioner on Reports by District Commissioners . . . the working of Estates under Government Management during the year ending 30/9/1890," in CPRAP, June 1891, Revenue #10.

to the Kasganj municipal board in the United Provinces in 1884,¹ Gokuldas was considered a public spirited man because of his many contributions to various funds and institutions such as the Jabalpur Town Hall, the first women's hospital--the Lady Dufferin, and famine relief. In recognition of these, the British honored him with the titles of Rai Bahadur in 1883 and "Raja" in 1889. The title of "Raja" was only rarely, and exceptionally given a commercial man and a Marwari.²

Gokuldas appears to have brought the family enterprise to its height in the prosperous years of the last two decades of the nineteenth century, before famines occurred in the province and other parts of India in the 1890s. He increased the number of his shops and banking branches in the province and established branches in Bombay and Rangoon, adding to those in Calcutta. While extending his father's banking and trading businesses, he added villages to the family's landed estates and began to invest in industry. In 1885 the Raja Gokuldas Cotton Mills were built at Jabalpur and provided employment for 700 persons. A few years later the firm's Perfect Pottery Company, a tile production factory, was built on the edge of town. These were among the first industrial enterprises in Jabalpur. In neighboring Narsinghpur district, Gokuldas had two cotton ginning and pressing mills at Chindwara and Kareli, constructed at a cost of about 30-35,000 each, and employing about 65 persons each.³

¹RGDB, pp. 65-75.

²RGDB, p. 91.

³Narsinghpur District Gazetteer (1906), p. 136.

Besides these he had ginning and pressing factories at ten centers in the Central Provinces and Berar, and others at Banda and Etawah in the United Provinces and Multan in the Punjab. He appears to have acquired another cotton ginning mill in Khandwa, Nimar district, in 1896 at the death of the father of his daughter-in-law.¹

Besides expansion in shops, banks and industry Gokuldas added to the landed estates of the firm. Although one source estimated that Raja Gokuldas held 800 villages, it is difficult to account for that number and their precise location. His biography states he held "hundreds" of villages in Jabalpur district, while the district gazetteer limits them to 158.² In giving evidence before a committee in 1898, Ballabhadas claimed he possessed land in the districts of Jabalpur, Saugor, Mandla, Narsinghpur, Chanda, Wardha, Hoshangabad, Damoh, Seoni, and Raipur.³ Outside the Central Provinces he also owned many estates in the United Provinces and Bhopal.⁴

There is no break-down of the proportion of the Gokuldas firm's wealth in the different fields of trade, lending, land and industry.

¹CPHP, August 1896, General #38-49, especially pp. 101-102.

²Govindas, Yug, pp. 8-9 for 800 villages; RGDB, p. 42; and Jabalpur District Gazetteer (1909), pp. 109, 143.

³Parliamentary Papers (1899), volume 33, p. 187, c. 9255; East India Famine: Appendix to the Report of the India Famine Commission, being Minutes of Evidence . . . Vol. IV, Central Provinces and Berar.

⁴RGDB, p. 96, states he was the "greatest mustajar" or revenue contractor of Bhopal State.

All but the last had been started by his forefathers, and he had added industry. He did not participate in the speculative market as some other large firms did, and in fact opposed his own family when Balladhas did, as also he opposed the extravagant spending of Jivandas.¹

Though he made large contributions occasionally to public institutions and spent different amounts on family ceremonies, Gokuldas acquired a reputation for shrewdness, business ability and hard work. One story relates that once he accidentally dropped a rupee in Hunnumantal, a lake in Jabalpur on which the family palace is located; he paid a diver one fourth of it for its recovery. A popular saying characterized him, that "even a clod of earth would turn to gold if he touched it."²

As long as Raja Gokuldas remained at the helm of the Raja Gokuldas Firm, it continued to prosper, but the extravagances of Jivandas and the speculation of Ballabhdas brought the firm to the brink of ruin in the years 1913-14. Jivandas' son, Goyindas, writes that during the five years after Govindas' death, in addition to daily expenses

. . . there arose many exceptional expenses, such as the public exhibition at Prayag, my sister's wedding, the Delhi Darbar, and tours to Bombay and Calcutta. In each trip

¹Timberg analyses the chronological stages of Marwari involvement in different commercial activities such as trade, speculation and industry in "Types." See RGDB, pp. 34-35 for Gokuldas' attitude toward speculation and extravagance.

²RGDB, p. 44.

thousands of rupees were spent effortlessly. . . . In addition clerks and accountants in the course of things lost money while conducting the family business. Because of these expenses, our family had debts amounting to some 45 lakhs of rupees. Notwithstanding the fact that we still had crores worth of landed property, our liquid assets were gone.¹

Added to this, the firm lost heavily when the Specie Bank of Bombay failed. In 1914 Ballabhdas was forced to take a loan from the Raja of Darbhanga for Rs. 1,400,000, for which he mortgaged all his lands in the Central Provinces.² Over the next decades the firm slowly recovered. A 1938 directory of the Central Provinces mentions this about Goyindas,

the last four years found him a business man of great ability. He is reckoned as the commercial magnate of the Congress Party in the Assembly. Several business concerns that he has set up are prosperous. In the Assembly he is a frontbencher, the treasurer of the Congress Party and is a member of the Executive.³

The dismal state of the firm following Gokuldas' death is in sharp contrast to the business reputation of Gokuldas. He had received a type of practical training which his successors failed to get. This training began at an early age. His father enrolled him in the school of Gulaḅ Rai in 1840. There he learned accounting methods, book-keeping, and some Hindi. At home he learned Marwari

¹Goyindas, Atma Nireekshan, p. 146, as translated and quoted in Peter Mayer, "Mofussil; Political Change and Community Politics in the Indian Provincial Cities," Ph. D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1971, p. 133.

²CPRSP, Part B, January 1914 # 85 and December # 38.

³The Commercial and General Directory of the Central Provinces (1938), p. 956.

and further business methods. When he was twelve he was already managing the household affairs and soon he became a cashier. He learned more about the family business by touring villages and shops.¹ Four years after his father's death, when he was thirty-one he ran the entire firm's business. His younger brother had just died.

Ballabhdas and Jiwandas received similar privileged education, appropriate to the family's financial standing, but they did not have charge of the firm until late in life. Ballabhdas had received his formal education in a Jabalpur school where he also learned some English, and Gokuldas taught him some business methods. Jiwandas started his education while living with his mother in Jaipur until he was twelve. After he returned to Jabalpur, he attended the "Mahajani Middle School" which his father had established for him and other students in 1885. Later Gokuldas arranged special private schooling for his grandson, Govindas, as well.²

Ballabhdas shared in the management of the Gokuldas firm for many years before Gokuldas died. Jiwandas took less active interest in business affairs. The partition of the estate was effected in 1911 when Ballabhdas was 50 and Jiwandas 40 years old. Their lack of business ability, as shown in the firm's near disaster in 1913-14, may be attributed to their lack of business experience during

¹RGDE, p. 21.

²Madhya Pradesh, District Gazetteers, Jabalpur (1968), p. 532.

the formative years of their lives. Jiwandas travelled extensively but most of his tours were to permit him to attend English and Indian honorary ceremonies, such as the Darbar at Delhi. Gokuldas, in contrast, was an effective manager and his tours were largely for business at least nine months of the year when he would attend his shops and villages and personally oversee and manage them.¹

Raja Gokuldas, the business man

The Raja Gokuldas Firm was structured on a pattern widely followed by the Marwaris. At the head was Gokuldas, himself. He preferred to manage the firm's affairs personally from its headquarters in Jabalpur. Next, under him were his partners, advisors, and top agents. The partners of two branches of the firm were persons he had known for a long time. One was Kunjbeharilal of Jabalpur, a childhood classmate. The other was Ramalal of Bhopal and his son, Ramkrishnadas.² Among his main advisors in business and legal affairs were the two Russel brothers, and the lawyers, Ambikacharan De of Narsinghpur, and Srishchandra Ray Chaudhri of Jabalpur.³ S. R. Chaudhri handled almost all the legal aspects of the firm's association with the British government. Both Russell brothers (W. R. and E. A.) took management positions with Gokuldas after retiring from the Jabalpur

¹RGDB, pp. 46-47.

²RGDB, p. 52.

³RGDB, p. 41. S. R. Chaudhri appears to have come from Bengal to Jabalpur in 1875.

Commissioner's office,¹ The firm continued to acquire well-known government officials as advisors even after the death of Gokuldas, such as Ganga Singh who helped in the management of Jiwandas' affairs after 1911.² Finally there was a group of agents; Bachulal, Nanakram, Kanhaiyalal, and Punamchand; whose families had served the firm almost from their first arrival in the Jabalpur area.³

The third level of the Gokuldas firm's management consisted of agents spread throughout the Central Provinces and in the United Provinces such as Amarchand at Jabalpur, Jethmal at Saugor, Bazarimal at Nagpur, Rikhabdas at Raipur, Banvarilal at Gadawara (in Narsinghpur district), Kanjimal at Mirzapur, and Phulchand at Bareilly.⁴ Managers of Gokuldas' factories might also be his associates at this level, such as Mr. Wright of the Raja Gokuldas Mills in Jabalpur. In order to maintain control and discourage dishonest dealings of his agents, Gokuldas personally scrutinized their accounts on his tours, sometimes paying surprise visits. He often transferred munims (agents) without warning and sometimes without giving them reasons; and he ensured that none of the agent's relatives were appointed at the same place.

At or near the bottom of the firm's management structure one would find a large, mixed category of persons: petty traders, brokers,

¹RGDB, p. 41. Could this rather be A. M. Russell who helped in the first settlement of Jabalpur district in the 1860s?

²CPAFP, August 1910, Agriculture # 2.

³RGDB, p. 50.

⁴RGDB, p. 51.

moneylenders, merchants, clerks, weighmen, village loan and rent collection agents, accountants, cultivators, laborers, and tenants, factory labor contractors and workers. In Jabalpur district the firm had at least 1,525 tenants in its villages while the Spinning and Weaving Mill employed 700 persons.¹ He was continuously in contact with a large number of persons subordinate to him.

Raja Gokuldas' typical day at Jabalpur, as reported in his biography, started at 3 or 4 A.M. when he arose, took some milk, bathed and meditated until 7 A.M. He then went out to visit friends until 10 A.M. when he returned home to bathe, attend the family's Gopal Lal Temple, distribute food to the poor and to cows, and return to dine with his wife. After an hour's rest he conducted business until 5 P.M., when he again went out to visit friends. He usually retired before 9 P.M., after dealing briefly with urgent business presented by Ballabhdas, Jiwandas or an agent, and after conducting evening worship.²

Religious and Social Relationships

At different times in his life Gokuldas made pilgrimages to religious centers. Some of them were to temples run by the Vallabha sect to which he belonged. Among the centers he visited were Shri Vraja in the United Provinces, Shri Gaya in Bihar and Shri Jaganath Puri in Orissa.³ At these places he celebrated his pilgrimage with

¹CPAFF, August 1910, Agriculture, # 2 gives tenants, and JAB. DG (1968), p. 267 and CPHP, August 1896, # 48, lists the number of workers.

²RGDB, pp. 32-34.

³RGDB, pp. 35, 39.

worship and feasted the Brahmmins. . He established dharmashalas (pilgrimage rest-houses) at Itarsi and Mathura, and endowed the Gopal Lal temple at Jabalpur.¹ Accompanied by his nephew in 1892, Gokuldas toured Rajasthan on the invitation of the Raja of Jaisalmir. The previous Raja had invited Gokuldas to establish a branch of the firm's business in Jaisalmir, which was his ancestral homeland. The Maharaja granted privileged concessions to the firm's branch. At the same time the Maharaja borrowed Rs. 240,000 from the firm. A special honorary darbar was given Gokuldas, and during the two weeks of his stay, Gokuldas gave a "grand feast to Brahmins and the members of his own caste."² He then went to Jodhpur where the Maharajah, Jaswant Singh, also received him with honors. At other times Gokuldas visited Jaipur and Bhopal where the rulers gave him similar honorary receptions.³ On those occasions when Indian royalty traveled through Jabalpur, Gokuldas provided accommodations for them. Among them were the Maharajas of Mysore, Indore, Travancore, Rewa, and Ratlam.⁴ Gokuldas knew many of these Maharajas, having been with them on different occasions, such as the Queen's Jubilee celebration at Simla in 1897 and the Delhi Darbar of 1903.

His religious and social activities and his travels brought him in contact with a wide variety of people in Indian society. This involved a mutual exchange of recognition among persons of almost the same general status, but engaged in different activities. There

¹Ibid., pp. 57, 38-39.

²Ibid., pp. 94-95.

³Ibid., p. 96.

⁴Ibid., pp. 97-104.

were many such occasions; when he feasted the Brahm̄ns at religious centers, invitations to the courts in many states, gifts he made, and his attendance at marriages and other ceremonies of outstanding families. In a somewhat similar manner the British conferred on him honorary titles and privileges in recognition of his public services, loans, and contributions to various charitable funds. In these ways the British administrators seemed as satisfied as he did in finding an area for mutual support and collaboration.

Areas of Friction with the British

In the area of land control and what land symbolized to the British on the one hand and Gokuldas on the other, there was room for conflict of interest and theoretical differences. Often the disagreements were not strikingly unusual in form. They arose mainly from the feeling that the other "partner" was not providing enough or the right kind of cooperation. Both agreed that sometimes they arose because they did not fully understand what the other party thought, or wanted, or it was a matter of difference of language. At other times their differences were substantial, and though they might not be unusual in form, they took on significance because of the two participants. On the surface it appeared that Gokuldas was raising issues because of differences about the types of land he held, or the amounts of taxation, his economic losses, etc., but underneath it all, as a large Marwari landholder, there was implied criticism of British land revenue policy, of British law in India, and the assumptions on which the British government rested its position and power in India. Here was a conflict of world views in a setting in which Gokuldas

functioned as a landholder in British India in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

This becomes clearer by examining specific examples of Gokuldas' relationship with the administration. Four instances when this came to the surface are i) his request to endow a temple with revenue-free land in 1880, ii) his efforts to get a lower assessment on his land in 1890, and iii) his request for freedom to remit rent arrears on his own terms and later to obtain abatements of revenue, and iv) his attempts to acquire land as payment for various overdue debts in the early twentieth century. Many complicated legal, economic and policy matters were involved, not all of which bear on this investigation, or merit careful examination. We are mainly concerned with the characterization of his relationship with the British administration, particularly as it dealt with land control, and a few of those implications that emerged from this relationship.

It would help first to review two matters which provide a setting for his involvement with land control--first his image as a Marwari landholder, and second, some basic aspects of land policy and agricultural development in the Central Provinces.

In pre-British India, businessmen, traders and merchants were often accorded secondary status below the ruling landed aristocracy. Hindu classical literature consigned the third place to the trading castes, in the varna scale, after priests and rulers. Whether this was actually reflected in Indian society or not, it strongly influenced British perceptions and policies. In the 1860s when the first land revenue settlements were made in the Central Provinces, the

British created landlords or malguzars, most of whom belonged to castes traditionally described as non-commercial. Almost all of them had previously acquired control over land as rewards for activities or services under Indian rulers, or by founding or improving villages, or by contracting to pay the land revenue of the village. In this settlement, as in some others in British India, administrators sought to create a class of resident village landlords who would benefit from their new position and ownership of land. The British intended the landlords would use their position and profits, after paying the governments land tax, to assist villagers and improve agriculture, and to maintain themselves.

Some landlords, however, became indebted beyond their ability to manage their villages or pay the land revenue. Their villages were therefore sold to pay off debts or auctioned to the highest bidder. In some cases the new owners were wealthy commercial men who became absentee landlords. The government expressed disapproval of the transfer of land to any but those belonging to traditional agricultural castes; but they were unable to halt the process of land transfers as their laws and principles of free enterprise allowed it. Only in cases where large and important malguzari families became hopelessly indebted, did the British attempt to intervene. They brought these indebted landlords under their supervision through the Court of Wards, until their debts could be cleared. Generally, however, the new land revenue settlements and British laws resulted in the transfer of some land and villages to men of commercial castes, whom the government strongly disfavored because of their non-residence

and not being of agricultural castes.

Gokuldas was one of the "commercial" landlords, to whom the government attached this stigma. In the first Settlement Report (1869) these absentee landlords were characterized as bania (commercial) landlords, mostly Marwari speculators, who had been settled in the district for some time, but who had only recently acquired their status as landlords.¹ The second Settlement Report (1896) went further to explain land revenue policy and its results:

The conferral of the proprietary status at the last thirty years' Settlement (1869) was a great gift from the Government, which bestowed the concession on the people for their good management of the villages during the terms of their leases. But owing to their indebted state, many of the proprietors have, during the course of the Settlement, lost their property, which has now fallen into the hands of rich people.²

Looking back to the first Settlement, the Settlement Officer wished that the North-Western Provinces policy of prohibiting land sales until old debts were liquidated had been followed in the Central Provinces. Fewer transfers would have taken place. He consoled himself, however, that at least some estates had been saved through government assistance to "indebted proprietors by taking their estates under the management of the Court of Wards."³

¹W. Nembhard, Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Jabalpur District (Nagpur, 1869), p. 24. Hereafter Jab SR (1869),

²Ashland Hussain, Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Jabalpur District (Nagpur, 1896), p. 24. Hereafter Jab SR (1896).

³Ibid.

As in other areas of the province, the Settlement Officer distinguished two types of landlords:

mahajans (commercial men), and men of the ordinary cultivating class. Experience has shown that the latter (who can most appropriately be termed "land-grabbers") are always inclined to expand their home-farms by dispossessing tenants of their land . . . The mahajans, on the other hand, are always aiming to make rent enhancements; so much so that the whole produce of a tenant's field often comes into their hands in lieu of seed grain advanced to him, interest on the advance and rent. Whenever a holding is surrendered by a tenant, the mahajan malguzar gives it to another tenant on enhanced rent, while the cultivating malguzar annexes it to his home farm.¹

The Settlement Officer of the third Settlement (1912) in Jabalpur district made the same type of distinction, calling them "agricultural" and "non-agricultural" landlords and further defined them:

. . . the term "agriculturist" embraces landlords who are actively engaged in agriculture as their ancestors were before them. Such men have usually a money-lending business of more or less importance and sometimes they trade as well. But, even if the money-lending business or trade has become the main source of income the malguzar remains an "agriculturist." The "non-agriculturist," on the other hand, comes of stock of another sort. His forefathers were men of business, and their desire to acquire landed interests arose . . . chiefly from the fact that rights in land give to their possessor special prestige.²

Though British officials sometimes recognized the connection between status and land ownership in Indian society, they never completely accepted the position of "non-agriculturists" as improving landlords. Gokuldas exemplified several aspects of the changing

¹Ibid., p. 23.

²H. R. Grosthwaite, Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of Jubbulpore District . . . (Nagpur: 1912), p. 18. Hereafter Jab SR (1912).

social structure of the province. With money obtained in commercial enterprises, he made loans to the members of the agricultural community, often acquiring land from bad debts and mortgages. He therefore contributed to the demise of the pre-British landed "aristocracy," while being a member of the rising landed elite composed of those who combined commerce and agricultural enterprise. Thus, he represented the opposite of British expectations about the direction of social change--they had hoped the landed aristocracy would become commercialized or capitalistic; but instead the commercial men were becoming landed.

Another basic factor in Gokuldas' relationship to the British government over land was associated with settlements and the trend of agricultural development in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. At each one of three revisions of the land revenue settlement (1869, 1896, and 1912), the British attempted to increase their supervision and improve their methods of land revenue assessment. The land revenue of each successive settlement was thought to be more scientifically calculated and therefore closer to government's "fair share." The land revenue was calculated as a percentage of the landlord's net assets, which in most basic form meant a portion of the rent. In the first settlement in the 1860s the entire area generally, and village fields specifically, were surveyed for the first time, and, instead of uncritically accepting the landlords' estimates, the Settlement Officer made his own rough calculations of rent. In the second Settlement of 1890s, the area was mapped in even more detail and various rates of soil productivity were carefully calculated in

addition to rent rates. The last settlement period in the early teens found Settlement Officers calculating revenue on the basis of a percentage of actual rental receipts in conjunction with existing prices, productivity and soil classification.

The second settlement also saw a large increase in the amount of land revenue as the previous thirty years had been extremely productive and fields under cultivation had increased considerably in some areas. Also agricultural prices had risen sharply. Almost no area of the province, however, was able to pay the full land revenue during the second settlement period because of the famine years in the late 1890s. Extensive suspensions, remissions, abatements, and debt reduction procedures had to be carried out in order to prevent complete agricultural bankruptcy. In these proceedings the government attempted to convince landlords they should cooperate and those who did were given more favorable terms.

Several large landlords, including Gokuldas, objected to the large land revenue increases at the time of the second settlement. Some also refused to reduce the rents of their tenants during the second settlement and also following the famines refused to participate in the debt reduction or conciliation procedures, or to remit much of their tenants' arrears. Because of this, the government often refused them revenue remissions. Subsequently these landlords found that the frustrated governmental officials used their offices and powers to put pressure on them affecting other spheres of their economic activity. Particularly during these post-famine years Gokuldas found it difficult to balance the status and approval, which

the British officers had shown him as the result of the loans and money he had made available over the years, with their mounting displeasure and pressure, which accompanied his effort to retain an independent prosperous economic control over his land. British official categorization of him as a "non-agriculturalist," and a large Marwari landholder seemed to have made matters worse.

These underlying attitudes and policies form the background for an examination of four separate episodes, of which we spoke earlier.

The first developed when Gokuldas, probably seeking to acquire equivalent status with other Indian landowners, presented a petition in 1879 to allow him to endow a temple with the revenue of one of his villages. The petition went through all the levels of appeal--from the first verbal appeal to the Jabalpur District Commissioner, then to the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, the Viceroy of India, and finally to the Secretary of State for India in London. The Chief Commissioner was the first to reject the petition and both higher appellant officials concurred with that rejection. In his petition, Gokuldas rested his request for endowing a temple with village funds on two basic premises--he himself had no revenue-free villages, and secondly, "the only proper way for a Hindu of these parts to endow a temple for its support and for charities given at the temple" was with "rent-free lands." He further mentioned that he and his family had "done some political service for the Government of India" by numerous loans at low interest rates for long periods to the Court of Wards. He therefore claimed that he had assisted the Government in saving "estates of old families" which "would have

been sold by auction to strangers, and thus old families ruined, thereby introducing an element of dissatisfaction into the estate." The Chief Commissioner rejected the petition citing previous laws which specified various grounds by which land revenue could be redeemed. He felt none of them provided legal grounds for permitting his request. However, he went on to suggest that Gokuldas could purchase government promissory notes and assign the interest for the same purpose. In his cover letter to the Secretary of State, forwarding the petition, the Chief Commissioner also made it clear that he felt his services were not "of an exceptional kind." Other bankers, he said, had also made low interest loans, mainly because "the security offered protects the creditor from all risks of loss."

Gokuldas replied that to support a temple by promissory notes was not the same, nor a proper Hindu way, and it presented economic difficulties. Promissory notes were easily sold, fluctuated in value, and were paid up after a number of years. They thus did not have the same permanency as rent-free lands. In addition, land provided grain, forest and dairy produce for the temple, whereas in buying such produce with cash from interest on notes, it would be "to the loss of the poor attached to the temple and to the mere profit of middlemen." In spite of these observations, the Secretary returned the petition and refused to interfere in the matter.¹

¹Gokuldas, Appeal to the Viceroy, 19 August 1879, in IHRAP, February 1880, Revenue # 19-21; includes also the Chief Commissioner's letter of 6 September 1879, and the Government of India's answer, 5 February 1880; Chief Commissioner's letter of 9 August 1880 and GOI to the Secretary of State of 14 September 1880. In IHRAP, September

The second case of Gokuldas' petitions occurred ten years later (1890), in connection with the land revenue settlement in Jabalpur district that raised the matter of the land revenue assessments. Gokuldas requested that the land revenue assessment system being used to assess his villages in the Jabalpur district be "declared inapplicable" for his villages, that rents should not be enhanced, nor should the full 60 percent revenue-share of the assets be taken from his villages.¹ He based his request on a presentation of the economic facts and figures for 13 villages he selected as examples. These included his claim that in the previous settlement his villages had been over-assessed; that prices of various crops had not risen drastically since the last year of settlement, 1867; that Government had no right to take a share of increased values which had been a result of improved railway communications; that the productivity of the soil had decreased; and that, through land sub-divisions, the larger number of tenants found it more difficult to pay their rents as indicated by the large percentage of arrears which occurred every year. Consequently he requested leniency in regard to the revenue assessments of his villages.

The Chief Commissioner replied to each one of these specific points, and made further suggestions. First, he mentioned that

1880, Revenue # 34-38; and Secretary of State returning the petition, IHRAP, December 1880, Revenue # 16, Part B.

¹Raja Gokuldas petition of 5 December 1889 referred to in Chief Commissioner's Resolution, CPRAP, May 1890, # 24.

rental enhancement depended on the actual level of rents and thus they might be either enhanced or decreased; there was no fixed policy that all rents had to be enhanced. In the same way, the revenue percentage of assets depended on the specific villages' circumstances and was not always 60 percent. Concerning the 13 villages and their statistics, the Chief Commissioner complained that he found many of Gokuldas' figures and calculations incorrect and misleading. His own calculations revealed "an extremely lenient" assessment at the previous settlement. Prices for various crops had risen sharply since the last settlement based on 5-year averages before 1867 and thereafter. The high prices of 1867 could not be taken as a correct basis for comparison since they were due to scarcity that year. The Chief Commissioner found, for example, that the prices of the district's staple crop, wheat, had risen 50 percent, instead of Gokuldas' figure of 14.3 percent. Concerning railway improvements, the government found such rise in produce value to be one of the most legitimate grounds for revenue enhancement. The Chief Commissioner conceded that soil productivity may have decreased, yet, the crop stood at nearly 7 times the seed sown. And he was not willing to accept Gokuldas' figures on the increase in number of tenants. The figures supplied did not agree with the 1881 census. Also the percentage of annual rental arrears reported was too high.

The Chief Commissioner noted further, that while the cultivated area had increased by only 9 percent, rents had been enhanced by 52 percent, since the last settlement. Finally, the

Chief Commissioner stated that a landlord, like Gokuldas, who had "treated his tenants with little consideration, is hardly in a position to ask Government to forego any portion of its due from him," that for some years the administration had been "well aware of the deplorable state of the petitioner's tenantry. He is well known to be a most exacting Landlord, and to have set an example of rack-renting which has been followed by numerous other landlords in the Jabalpur district." He also accused Gokuldas of shifting his tenants to prevent them from acquiring occupancy tenant rights, and causing them to be so indebted they practically became his "bondsmen." Rent arrears were always recorded with a 24 percent interest charge, and the same was done in lending seed. Nor had Gokuldas made improvements on his lands at his own expense, nor reduced rents. He transferred his mumims (agents) from one locality to another every two or three years so they never acquired knowledge of local conditions. The Settlement Officer found no evidence for any consideration "arising out of any general benevolence shown by him to his ryots [tenants]." In the end the Chief Commissioner suggested that Gokuldas accept a government offer to lower the land revenue assessments on proof that the landlord would correspondingly reduce rents over a period of time. He pointed out that other landlords, "save the petitioner" had formally accepted this kind of offer, in similar circumstances.¹

Gokuldas accepted this offer--but only in a few of his villages,

¹Chief Commissioner's Resolution in Ibid.

otherwise he remained convinced the government was acting incorrectly in its land revenue settlement policy.¹ Even after the famines, the government never conceded that the 1896 settlement had been too high; rather they felt it was appropriate for the time and would have been easily realized, except for the bad years immediately succeeding the settlement. In connection with rent reduction efforts, officials delighted in the testimony given by Ballabhdas and other landlords who later admitted they should have agreed to rent reductions at settlement time.² In the light of more than twenty years of famine-free prosperity, neither side appears to have anticipated agricultural difficulties and thus both had decided to maximize their separate share in the early 1890s.

A third disagreement with government, which led to a petition in the early twentieth century, arose because Gokuldas did not completely participate in schemes for the reduction of rent arrears and debt conciliation after the famines of the late 1890s. In the spring of 1901 when the government was carrying out debt conciliation procedures in Khurai tahsil of Saugor district, Gokuldas agreed only to partially accept the government's concessions. As a result the Chief Commissioner decided that he had "no other recourse but to refuse the concessions which would have been allowed to Raja Gokuldas had he

¹CPRAP, June 1890, Part IIB, Rev. #17.

²Jab SR (1896), p. 13 of Settlement Commissioner's letter proceeding the SR which quotes from the Indian Famine Commission Report (1898), Ballabhdas' evidence. Ballabhdas remarked that landlord refusal to reduce rents was a result of their own "misconception and foolishness."

consented to abide loyally by his word and deal leniently with his debtors as the government was willing to deal liberally with him."¹

The primary reason Gokuldas was not allowed concessions appears more precisely to have been his reluctance to conciliate debts, not of tenants, but of other landlords in Khurai district. The prohibited concession was the abatement of his land revenue which all other Khurai landlords received since they participated in debt conciliation. He petitioned the government two years later (1903) requesting to be allowed this abatement. He felt that the government had unjustly singled him out. One of the reasons Gokuldas requested the abatement was as a "kindness" to his tenants. They, also, had been required to pay unreduced rents, but his petition stated, "It is not understood what connection there existed between the tenants' rents of the memorialists' villagers and the debts payable to them by the landlords of other villages."

In his petition, Gokuldas reviewed the situation of the Khurai Tahsil after the 1894-95 settlement proceedings. He quoted government reports to show that the land revenue settlement completed in that year never came into effect as the area was already suffering from scarcity. The area deteriorated even more in succeeding years and the government made proposals and efforts to minimize the impact of the agricultural depression by revenue remissions, debt conciliation and

¹ CPRAP, June 1901, Settlement # 7-9, 11, 13, 15, 17 on the debts in Khurai Tahsil. Saugor District: and CPRAP. July 1901. Part IIB # 14-15 on Gokuldas' refusal to agree to arbitration in connection with proprietary debts.

subsequent revenue abatements, Gokuldas felt that his firm had cooperated in these efforts as much as possible, for they had reduced rent arrears by Rs. 100,000 and had sent Ballabhdas personally to confer and negotiate with the Saugor District Commissioner in 1899 and had done all which they thought he suggested. They had reduced other landlords' debts to a considerable extent (though they were not fully participating in debt conciliation themselves), and had made a formal apology to the Chief Commissioner for their actions in the conciliation misunderstanding. From these cooperative efforts they had expected to receive abatement similar to other Khurai tahsil landlords. Instead they had been called on to pay the fully enhanced revenue of 1894-95, even though the central government had not yet sanctioned it. The petition reiterated,

In no other part of British India does a penal revenue assessment, or an assessment of land-tax exist which varies in ratio with the personal demerits of the proprietors; such a rule of assessment is distinctly against the ruling of the Supreme Government (yide letter No. 397-91-92, dated the 31st May 1888,) according to which the central "soil unit-rates" should not be deviated from, and distinct grounds must be assigned why the assessment of one village is above the level of its neighbour. Misconduct of the proprietor is not one of the said grounds, nor was the Local Government given a perfectly free hand in the matter of assessing different rents on the same class of soil similarly conditioned.¹

The petition asked that their villages be treated the same as other villages, and that both abated arrears before 1901 and the higher

¹Gokuldas' petition of 13 October 1903, par. 9, CPRAP, March 1904, p. 198. Though government revenue policy strictly forbade discriminatory assessment for different landlords based on caste or any other reason, several settlement officers privately admitted that this had occurred and continued, not just in Central Provinces but in most parts of India.

revenue collected from them be refunded to them.

When the Jabalpur District Commissioner forwarded this petition he attached a very critical note. He pointed out that the firm had written off tenants' debts of only Rs. 95,197 instead of the Rs. 100,000 stipulated. He implied that these debts were probably irrecoverable anyway. He added that the government had never officially promised to reduce revenue if tenant arrears were reduced, and said that Gokuldas' argument that their tenants were punished for the fault of their landlord was of little importance as "it is generally found that in villages held by this firm the actual pitch of rents makes little difference, the tenants being for the most part hopelessly indebted to the firm for seed grain and on other accounts." These misrepresentations, the District Commissioner felt, "impinged on the legality and equity" of the Chief Commissioner's orders. Finally he clarified that Gokuldas had been requested to apologize, not because of his refusal to participate in debt conciliation, but because of "conduct disrespectful to the Chief Commissioner."¹

The tone of the Chief Commissioner's reply to the petition was less critical. He acknowledged the firm's further debt conciliation and their cooperation with government in making agricultural improvements and reclaiming the Khurai area. He also admitted that the experimental abatement proceedings of the Khurai tahsil in 1901 had been carried out in more demanding terms of creditor participation than later ones in other districts. This being true, the grounds for

¹I still have not uncovered the exact nature of this "conduct."

originally excluding the firm and their tenants from abatement no longer could "be justified on the ground on which it was given."

The Chief Commissioner sanctioned the abatement for Gokuldas' villages to take effect from 1904, but he did not refund the higher revenue which had been collected before that time.¹

Because of Gokuldas' financial position in the Central Provinces, his refusal to participate fully in conciliation in Saugor District also affected government policy and action in other districts.

When the government's conciliation team began its work in the Sohagpur tahsil of Hoshangabad district they soon discovered they were dealing with a different land control structure than in Kharai tahsil. In Kharai most of the landlords were members of "agricultural castes" and had a monopoly on financial relations with tenants. Only a few "outside" money-lenders (the primary one was Gokuldas) had obtained village ownership and established lending relations with tenants or with a few landholders.² In Sohagpur, on the other hand, the landlord had become all powerful, partly because of the wheat "boom" in the late nineteenth century, and his tenants were heavily indebted to him. He, in turn, had borrowed heavily from local money-lenders, but unlike Khurai, these money-lenders had not acquired land

¹ CPRAP, March 1904, Revenue, pp. 194-203, the Chief Commissioner's orders on Gokuldas' petition for abatement of his villages' revenue in Khurai tahsil. Includes Gokuldas' petition of 13 October 1903; the District Commissioner's note of n. d.; Jabalpur Commissioner's letters of 3 November 1903 and 17 December 1903; and Chief Commissioner's letter of 11 February 1904.

² CPRAP, April 1901, Settlement # 1, 2, the Revenue situation in Hoshangabad District.

ownership. The District Commissioner noted that the largest of these creditors "are Marwaris who are not malguzars, and many of whom are themselves in debt to Raja Gokuldas." He concluded that "where these people [money-lenders] are concerned the results will be absolute failure, though some of them may consent to finally writing off irrecoverable debts."¹

From the recommendations for further debt conciliation, the Chief Commissioner ordered that the proceedings should not be extended to other tahsils of Hoshangabad for the time being; they should be confined to tenants' debts until Marwaris showed signs of cooperation; and all efforts should be made to convince the landlords to cooperate in the proceedings. The government also made it clear it would not show any lenience in remissions and abatements to landlords who refused to join in the proceedings. The government did not anticipate extraordinary success and seemed to agree with the Special Revenue Officer's final remarks that "The most unfavourable circumstances against the success of the scheme is the hostile attitude of the Marwari creditors, some of the most important of whom are heavily indebted to Raja Gokuldas."² In this instance Gokuldas' financial ties with the Sohagpur money-lenders and his attitude toward conciliation of landlords' debts considerably inhibited the implementation

¹Ibid.

²CPRAP, August 1901, pp. 22-29, Debt Conciliation in Sohagpur Tahsil, Hoshangabad District. Includes Nerbudda Commissioner's letter of 20 July 1901; District Commissioner's letter of 18 July 1901; Ganga Singh's report of 29 June 1901; and Chief Commissioner's letter of 19 August 1901.

of revenue policy, even though he was not directly involved.

As in other instances of Gokuldas' relationship with the government over land matters, it is difficult to limit his efforts for debt conciliation to economic concerns alone. One British official connected with the debt conciliation proceedings during the first years of the century in the Jabalpur Division noted these non-economic Eastern or Indian motivations. He felt that while proceedings were generally guided by "business principles"

sentiment played a very important part. There were cases in which creditors relinquished their claims on condition that their debtors would bring water from the Ganges and pour it over the image of a god. And the idea of self-sacrifice . . . is still a compelling force in the East.¹

Debt conciliation continued to involve the successors of Gokuldas after he died in 1908. Sentiment as much as "business principles," characterized the new attitude of Jiwandas, who was in charge, toward debt conciliation. Shortly before his death a British officer had talked to Gokuldas about the beneficial results of conciliation for both the tenants and landlords. Jiwandas then accepted these ideas and agreed to extensive conciliation. His cousin, Ballabhdas, at first refused the government offer for conciliation, stating that he felt conciliation made the impression that the government's sympathy always lay with the tenant (debtor); furthermore he did not like third-party intervention in tenant-landlord

¹Bampfylde Fuller, Some Personal Experiences (London: 1930), p. 87.

conciliation.¹ As an additional side-effect of the conciliation proceedings, Jabalpur's Cooperative Societies received a stimulus. The agreements between the landlords and the government over conciliation convinced the landlords that they had nothing to lose in supporting the government's efforts to do something positive about rural indebtedness--the establishment of Cooperative Credit Societies in Jabalpur district. Though a small Cooperative Society had been founded in 1907, by 1912 after conciliation and with the landlords' support, Cooperative Societies had proliferated and were described as "thriving."

The British officer who conciliated the debts of the tenants of Jiwandas felt that he was sometimes too lenient, "He has indeed--I think--in some cases persuaded me to be too indulgent to men who appear to possess no merit."² Though the officer felt conciliation worked best when debts were remitted on certain conditions, Jiwandas wanted to grant his tenants "unconditional receipts for remission."³ Jiwandas' willingness to conciliate his tenants' debts may have been as a memorial to his recently deceased father. Though conciliation reduced the debts of Jiwandas' 1,525 tenants to almost a tenth of their original amount (from Rs. 1,195,110 to Rs. 136,632) each tenant on the average still owed his landlord about Rs. 90 in addition to the

¹ Jab SR (1912), pp. 23-24.

² CPRAP, August 1910, Agriculture # 1-3, Jiwandas debt conciliation.

³ Ibid.

annual rent. Jiwandas' willingness to agree to debt conciliation, his attitude during the proceedings, and his uncomplaining acceptance of the results would tend to support the idea that Jiwandas was as much concerned with "sentiment" as with "business principles."

The good relationship of Jiwandas with the administration over debt conciliation around 1910 contrasted sharply to Gokuldas' relationship with the administration a few years earlier. Gokuldas had petitioned the government about three matters earlier--temple endowment in 1880, over-assessment in 1890, and conciliation in 1901 and 1903. Gokuldas petitioned the administration in 1903 again on a fourth matter, three mortgage cases. The petitions hoped the administration would recognize the firm's assistance in the past and would thus help it recover some losses. Each of the petitions complained that recent government actions would cause further financial loss to the firm, labeled the government action as either unjust or illegal, and made suggestions for rectifying the situation. In one petition the firm mentioned that

Your humble memorialists, who are considerable landholders in these Provinces, and who also make large advances to the cultivating community, have sustained a loss of about forty lakhs of rupees due to the famine and scarcity following on the heels of a much enhanced revised Settlement Assessment. Your humble memorialists, therefore, can hardly bear without a humble representation to your Honour the further loss . . . which your memorialists are called upon to bear for no fault of theirs.¹

¹CPRAP, March 1904, Revenue # 25-29, Hoshangabad Court of Wards Petition, pars. 16 and 18 of 13 October 1903.

They chose to petition the Chief Commissioner instead of appealing to the Government of India or taking their cases to the law courts because

they apprehend incurring the displeasure of the local authorities, as your humble memorialists are fully assured from past experience that to incur the displeasure of officers in any matter will result not only in loss to your memorialists, but humiliation.¹

As in previous relations with the government over land matters, the Gokuldas firm seemed as much concerned about their standing with the government as about economic aspects.

The longest and most detailed of the 1903 petitions arose from an event in 1902 when the government relinquished five Court of Wards estates back to their owners in Hoshangabad, leading to a loss of over half of the Rs. 400,000 in loans which the Gokuldas firm had made to the estates in the early 1890s. In the petition Gokuldas asked the government to resume management of the estates, so that he could receive full payment or compensation for his loans as the mortgage agreements had stipulated he could. He blamed part of his problem on "the innocent mistakes" of officials. They had not provided him with accurate information about the value of the land and its income but had overestimated it. They had failed to recognize his right to the valuable home-farm lands in case of default, which had been written into his mortgage contracts. Gokuldas refused to accept a government offer of compensation by rents from the estates, because he said this failed to fulfill the mortgage stipulations of land compensation. He complained that when government had relinquished

¹Ibid., par. 20.

the estates, his rights had been ignored and full compensation had not been made. He had gone to court to recover the debts from one of the estates, but the case was decided against him on a technicality and he had received less than half the value of his loan.¹ Gokuldas petitioned the Chief Commissioner to specially intervene for recovering his loans as the government had made mistakes concerning these loans and because of his loyalty, service, and cooperation with the government. The petition was accompanied by thirty-five documents including the financial arrangements for the loans, and reminders of the firm's help at the time of the Mutiny and his record of public services.

The Chief Commissioner replied to each point in the petition. He expressed sympathy that Gokuldas had not recovered his investment. He was aware there had been some mistakes, for which he expressed regret. However, he was somewhat perplexed that such an efficient business firm could be misinformed of the actual value of the estates. The decision of the government, to offer rents of compensation, was an attempt to reach a just settlement since he had not found evidence the mortgages clearly stipulated rights to home-farm lands. Nor could the government resume the management of the estates. In essence, the Chief Commissioner rejected the petition saying he was "sorry that it is now impossible for him to afford the memorialists any remedy for the loss which they have suffered," and that he was

¹"Copy of judgment in Case No. 33 of 1902 in the Court of Civil Judge, Hoshangabad, 16 September 1903," on the Rasulpur Court to Wards Estate, App. R of the petition of 13 October 1903, in CPRAP, March 1904, Revenue # 25-29.

"unable to admit that the memorialists themselves have been free from blame or that they have any legal claim against the local Government."¹

In the second and third petitions of the firm in late 1903, Gokuldas tried to recover the debts owed by two other estates. Similar to the Hoshangabad cases, both the Khirni and the Bhaironghat estates of Jabalpur district had been under the Court of Wards when he had lent them money, and they had recently been relinquished by the Court of Wards. Unlike the Hoshangabad estates, however, the Khirni and Bhaironghat estates were maufi or revenue-free villages. The petitions, therefore, were not requests for the resumption of the estates under government management, but for the continuation of the estates as revenue-free, even under the new owners, the Raja Gokuldas Firm. The petition contended that the Jabalpur estates' mortgages stipulated the transfer of all rights and values of the estates and that if the government ended the revenue-free status (i.e. redeemed the maufi grants), it would be acting illegally, and at the same time prevent the firm from recovering the entire amount of the loans. If, as now, the government claimed the estates would have to pay revenue, the annual income from them would be reduced by half. In the Khirni petition, the firm went to extreme lengths to show that the original orders on the revenue-free grant and the laws of the North-West Provinces and the Central Provinces (which applied to the case) allowed the estate to be transferred while still retaining its

¹Chief Commissioner's resolution on Gokuldas' petition on the Hoshangabad estates, 30 May 1904, CPRAP, June 1904, Revenue, pp. 135-142.

revenue-free status. In both the Khirni and the Bahironghat cases, Gokuldas requested that the estates not be redeemed, at least until the firm had recovered most of the loans.¹

¹CPRAP, July 1904, Revenue Khirni estate proceedings, # 1-4; and CPRSP, April 1906 # 1-8. Original Petition, n. d.; First District Commissioner's letter 6 August 1903. Bahironghat estate--CPRAP, July 1904, pp. 65-72, Original Petition, n. d.; First District Commissioner's letter, 9 November 1903.

Two officers in Jabalpur district seem to be closely involved with these cases--Benjamin Robertson and M. W. Fox-Strangways. Both were District Commissioners in Jabalpur in the mid and late 1890s, served for periods as Jabalpur Division Commissioners and eventually had turns as Chief Commissioner. Fox-Strangways was always a little behind Robertson in career advancement, but also spent considerably more time in Jabalpur. Fox-Strangways comments on the 1903 petitions imply a strong distaste for Gokuldas firm and especially its dealings with land issues.

It is almost an unbelievable coincidence of Robertson's involvement with the Khirni case. He was the District Commissioner which originally asked the firm to make the loan in 1896; in 1904 he was Chief Secretary to the Chief Commissioner dealing with the Khirni petition, and held the same position in January 1906 when final details about the estate were being straightened out; and finally in March of 1906 a certain L. Robertson was undersecretary to the GOI, Revenue Department when the GPI gave final sanction for the Khirni estate arrangements.

B. Fuller is another officer with a career that involved Gokuldas and the Jabalpur Landholders and Tenants Association at several points. In charge of the Revenue and Settlements Department in the late 1880s and early 1890s he was responsible for establishing land revenue percentages and assessment methods, which aroused so much debate in the 1890s and early twentieth century. After serving in Allahabad in the late 1890s he returned to the Central Provinces, and served as Jabalpur Division Commissioner in the early twentieth century. He is responsible for the conciliation idea and first proceedings in Saugor and Damoh districts, and even tried (though failed) to establish cooperatives in Jabalpur prior to the Commission on Cooperative Societies (1902-3?). He was also Curzon's right-hand man who dealt with R. C. Dutt's criticism of the government's land revenue policy, and in his reply dealt specifically with Dutt's charges about land revenue policy in the province. Fuller does not seem to have had a healthy regard for Gokuldas' land relationships either, as at one point he prohibited him to pay his respects at his Sunday morning audience with Jabalpur's elite. This, Fuller contended, made Gokuldas immediately change some of his harsher activities with respect to land revenue. (See Fuller, Experiences.)

In reply the Chief Commissioner admitted that the government owed the firm some compensation for its willingness to undertake loans to the Jabalpur estates. Specifically in the Khirni case, the Chief Commissioner ordered that the estate be allowed to continue its revenue-free status for twenty years (i.e., until the loan was repaid). But he added two caveats. First, he asserted that the government had a right to redeem the revenue-free status of an estate anytime when the grantee's heirs did not fulfill the condition of good behavior. In this case the heirs had not continued to fulfill that condition as they had sold the estate. Second, he recognized Gokuldas' wish to save this old Jabalpur family and accepted his offer to provide the family with a small parcel of rent-free land for their maintenance.¹

The government's replies to all of the 1903 petitions exhibited a mixed response--an unwillingness to grant the firm all its contentions. As earlier indicated, the government in the Khurai petition about abatements completely ignored Gokuldas' charges of discriminatory action against the firm. In the Hoshangabad cases, the government attempted to place the blame for past mistakes equally on the shoulders of Gokuldas and the officers of the Court of Wards. In the Jabalpur cases the government ignored the possible illegality of redeeming the revenue-free estates.

Viewed from the perspective of the Raja Gokuldas firm each of

¹CPRAP, July 1904, Revenue, # 1-4. The 1906 proceedings further finalized this agreement and ensured Gokuldas' rent-free status.

the cases encompassed both economic and status questions. Though the famines possibly caused financial hardship, reducing the firm's income from its estates, that income was only part of the firm's economic activities. In other spheres of finance, the firm may have actually increased its income, as for example from the sale of food-grains at high famine prices.

In whatever way the firm balanced its income, it was obviously also concerned over its relationship with the government and its status in society. The petitions had attempted to re-establish its favorable position in the eyes of the government, and to acquire the types of land which provided the highest recognition of landlord status--sir (home-farm) land and especially maufi (revenue-free) land. Almost thirty years after Gokuldas had forwarded his first petition, asking for revenue free land to endow a temple, he was said in the District Gazetteer (1909) to have "arrived" as a land-owning family in Central Provinces society. "The family now possesses 158 villages in Jabalpur District, some of these being rent free."¹

Changes in the Relationship to the British Government

One can see three successive stages in the development of the relationship of Gokuldas to the government over land policy. Agricultural conditions, the nature of administrative functions and

¹Jabalpur District Gazetteer (1909), p. 144.

personnel, and the firm's role changed in these stages. During the first stage, before and in the 1880s and early 1890s, both sides appeared fairly satisfied with their relative positions. These were agriculturally prosperous years. Land values continued to rise as did the amount and security of land mortgages. The Raja Gokuldas firm continued its expansion in land management to establish itself as a large landlord. The firm received requests from the administration for loans to the Court of Wards and because these were arranged, the firm enjoyed a period of favoritism. Part of this was also a result of officials remaining conscious of the Mutiny scare and their showing considerable respect for those who had helped the British at that time. Khushalchand, Gokuldas' father, had been extremely helpful. Officials' relationships and correspondence with Indians were also more informal and personal; some of this was lost later as bureaucratization and rigidity of legal structures replaced the earlier atmosphere. In this same stage the government started to be aware that the growing financial empire of Gokuldas posed problems especially in the area of conflicting interests over land policies, and that Gokuldas did not fit their concept of a malguzar. Already in this first period, the groundwork of the second period of relationships was being prepared.

The second stage that emphasized their changing relationships included the famine years at the turn of the century. During the agricultural crisis, officials were caught between the pressures from above to prevent disaster without over-reacting, and from below to handle immediate demands for relief measures. Normal procedures of

administration at the time were not always followed and created problems, such as those experienced by Gokuldas mentioned in his petition in the Hoshangabad case. The conflict of interests between Gokuldas and the government came to the surface in the issues raised by the various petitions, particularly debt conciliation and the rent-free land that would enhance his status both in society and with the government. These differences were more than just a disagreement over goals and ideas. The government was unable to force the firm into complete cooperation, and the firm's action hampered the government as it attempted to pursue its land policy in some parts of the Central Provinces. The firm's refusal to cooperate, confirmed and hardened the government's view that the firm was functioning in a manner which ran against its land policy. It expressed its displeasure in several ways, such as prohibiting abatements to the firm, discontinuing invitations to attend weekly audiences with local officials, and, at one point, asking for a formal apology to the Chief Commissioner.

In the third period, during the more relaxed atmosphere of agricultural recovery, economic and administrative pressures were considerably relieved. The firm found itself functioning in a new official and economic environment. The government could give closer attention to "petition politics," such as had been forwarded by the Raja Gokuldas firm. Senior officials could never completely forget those times when Gokuldas had not freely cooperated during the second period, but toward the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, the firm again started to experience a renewed respect for its landlord position in the Central Provinces. When Jiwandas approved debt conciliation in

1910, this turn-about in the firm's attitude did much to remove differences that had caused friction between the firm and the government over land policy. The junior administrator who conducted the debt conciliation proceedings was much impressed by Jiwandas. H. R. Crosthwaite reported, "I anticipate the best development of the large estate . . . and the establishment of Seth Jiwandas' position and reputation as a humane and progressive landlord."¹

The petition process marked the changing relationship between Gokuldas and the government, and it draws attention to a form of interchange that was much more significant than sometimes appears on the surface. Petitions not only dealt with simple grievances, but often provided opportunities to give voice to ideas and attitudes based on assumptions and implications different than the administration's. In an era before the establishment of mass communication such as the press or of representative legislatures, petitions provided one of the main media for expression, criticism, and debate. Petition politics, defined as the attempt by individuals and groups to express viewpoints in order to influence government policy, provided one of the most significant indications of ideological differences between the rulers and the ruled in a period before 1920 in British India. Several cases have been examined in Chapter V. The ones concerning land policy include petitions from the Jabalpur Landholders and Tenants Association. The Gokuldas firm was closely

¹Letter to the Jabalpur Commissioner, 14 July 1910, CPAFP, August 1910, p. 2.

tied to this Association as Gokuldas' nephew, Ballabhdas, was one of its main members and another member, S. R. Chaudhri, served as legal adviser to Gokuldas and also probably wrote the petitions for both the Association and Gokuldas.

In the petitions, Gokuldas and the Association expressed many criticisms of the land administration. Some of these were complaints about the details or administrative actions and procedures which they felt were unjust, discriminatory, and even illegal. The petitions on revenue enhancement in the 1890s and later petitions on abatement, debt reduction, and mortgage cases indicate this. More broadly, however, the petitions and replies represent divergent views on several larger issues. Two of these were agricultural conditions and agrarian relations which determined the way the land revenue system functioned in the Central Provinces.

The administration based the enhancement of land revenue on the increased value of land which they often calculated from indications of the rises in prices of crops and in rents. The petitioners as large landlords were always interested in minimizing or de-emphasizing agricultural development and disassociating government from any conceded increase in agricultural production and value. Thus while the petitioners agreed conditions had improved up to the late 1890s, they said government had over-valued it and optimistically anticipated steady improvement. So too they considered famines as more severe and disagreed that recovery had soon followed the bad seasons. They rather said deterioration continued. The government did not accept these views; in their 1890 reply to Gokuldas' petition

they emphasized the recent agricultural development as a legitimate basis for revenue enhancement; and in 1904 an official discussed the recovery of the Khaurai tahsil saying the petition's view that "there is no prospect of the tract improving within the period of the present settlement is not in accordance with facts. Recovery has already begun."¹ In 1905 the Association complained, however, that landlords had "suffered from a shrinkage of cultivation and of income by 30, 40, or 50 percent, and yet we have been assessed with a Government Land Revenue calculated on the basis of our incomes 11 years ago."² The Chief Commissioner discounted the petitions figures as "obviously erroneous calculations," and while admitting the prosperity had declined and the "landlords must have suffered in consequence," he emphasized the government had remitted nearly one-quarter of the land revenue in the last eleven years and thought no other tract had "been treated with similar liberality."³ Both the government and the petitioners had a vested interest in how trends in agriculture were interpreted and often expressed very different opinions through the petition discussions and debates.

Gokuldas and others also viewed agrarian relations from a different perspective. While the government relied on a few clear categories to define agrarian participants and their income and payments, landlords viewed the situation as much more complicated and diffuse. The

¹ CPRAP, March 1904, p. 195,

² CPRAP, Oct. 1905, p. 40, par. 8. ³ Ibid., pp. 46-47.

government distinguished between several categories of landlords such as absentee and resident, commercial and agricultural, and of tenants in the Central Provinces as absolute, occupancy, and ordinary tenants. Government viewed and justified rent and revenue as two very distinct types of income. But the way society functioned under the land revenue system tended to confuse and partially obscure these clear categories. The government based its land revenue on a percentage of the landlords' assets, which mainly consisted of a percentage of the tenants' rent. After 1900 not only land revenue, but most of the tenants' rents were legally fixed by the government. By then the landlord's actual income included fees not listed in his assets subject to revenue payment. In the petitions the words rent and revenue were sometimes used almost interchangeably, and the government's relation to the landlords was often viewed as similar to the landlords' relation to their tenants. Government at times regarded itself a superior landlord to a group of its "tenants" (the landlords). Landlords controlled various types of tenants and acquired a share from them in the form of rent. Some tenants, such as "absolute tenants," held land on almost an equal legal basis as the landlords, and sub-let to sub-tenants. A single individual could hold some land as a landlord, rent some as an absolute tenant, and cultivate some as a tenant-at-will. There existed even further layers or strata of intermediaries to which the government's categories did not apply such as the landlords' agents and permanent laborers. These also received a share of the produce in commissions or wages. The government's share did not

stop at land revenue but included "cesses" (for such items as public roads and education) and a tax on non-agricultural produce. Similarly rent was not the only income of the landlords from his tenants, which also included repayment of loans for such expenses as seed, marriage, and rental arrears, and payment of premiums (nazarana) for the privilege to lease and cultivate some land. Gokuldas eventually agreed to some tenant debt reduction, and Jiwandas later permitted extensive debt conciliation in Jabalpur. In neither case were debts totally cleared, and it is probable tenants soon acquired further debts, whether from rental arrears, failure to pay interest and installments, or other debts. (See discussion of conciliation at the end of Chapter VII.)

Differences in methods of accounting and trying to superimpose a British agrarian ideal into an Indian society, gave further room for conflicting use of words in petitions and answers given. The government complained that Gokuldas failed to keep separate accounts of the numerous kinds of debts which his tenants owed him. This prevented them from exactly determining whether he had remitted for rental arrears when they were received. It was hard to get the figures supplied by Gokuldas to agree with government figures. And Gokuldas complained that he had not received official assessment figures or disapproving comments made by the Settlement Officer when he had petitioned for them.¹

¹CPRAP, May 1890, # 24 and March 1890, BII Land Revenue, Settlement and Takavi #83.

The landlords' petitions and the government's replies indicate a divergence of viewpoints between the landlords and the government over agricultural conditions, relationships, and policy. Government generally viewed the fluctuations of agricultural productivity and conditions far more optimistically than the landlords. In agrarian relationships each side viewed basic concepts (such as landlords paying revenue and tenants paying rent), their assumptions, and implications in far different perspectives. Usually the government's concepts appeared to reduce the intricate and complex world of agricultural activity to a few highly differentiated and stratified categories. Many of these ideas, values and perspectives arose out of the separate intellectual and cultural traditions of the British government officials and the Indian landlords. So too they held different positions in the structure of control over agricultural affairs. Gokaldas and the Association, by their participation in "petition politics", criticized and debated various aspects of government policy, and in doing so they expressed an alternative ideology to the government.

Community Involvement

The members of the Raja Gokuldas firm did not confine their "political" activity and expression to petitions on land policy. For many years they participated in local governmental institutions and joined in different voluntary organizations. Both Gokuldas and Ballabhdas served on the Jabalpur Municipal Committee and the Jabalpur

District Board at various times.¹ For the seventeen years between 1897 and 1914 Ballabhdas was chairman of the Jabalpur Municipal Committee.² Gokuldas was elected as one of the four persons in 1893 from the Division of the Central Provinces as a possible nominee for the position of Additional Member to the Imperial Legislative Council from the Central Provinces. In 1912 the Jabalpur District electoral roll listed Jiwandas and Ballabhdas at the head of the roll, as they paid the largest amounts of land revenue of any in the District.³ Soon afterwards Jiwandas was elected as a delegate to the Imperial Legislative Council.⁴ As leading members of the local elite, none of these activities or positions was very unusual. Yet they indicate a willingness, if not a concern, to be involved and even provide leadership in formal constitutional institutions of the district and the province.

As already indicated Ballabhdas also presided over the local voluntary Landlords' and Tenants Association. He was also an early member of the Congress Party.⁵ Though Gokuldas may not have been

¹Central Provinces Gazette, sections on Municipal Committees for 1883, 1889, 1901, 1904. Gokuldas and Ballabhdas are included in most lists.

²Peter Mayer, "Mofussil" (1971), p. 133.

³Central Provinces Gazette, 1912, Part I, p. 921. Jiwandas and Ballabhdas' land revenues are listed each around Rs. 40,000 per year. The next closest amount paid by anyone of the 52 persons on the roll is Rs. 14,625. Most persons on the roll paid between Rs. 5,000 and Rs. 6,000.

⁴CPPAP, May 1912, Appointments # 20.

⁵Mayer, "Mofussil" (1971); I have the feeling Mayer may mean Ballabhdas joined "early" around 1905; when Provincial Congress Committees were just being organized in northern Central Provinces.

directly involved in these two associations, he was noted for his leadership in the Maheshwari caste association. When the Maheshwari Sabha held its first meeting in 1907 at Amraoti, he was elected its president. Over ten thousand visitors and delegates attended the conference.¹ Even after Gokuldas' death in 1909, the Maheshwari newspaper, the "Maheshwari Patrika" of Aligarh, carried articles and items recalling his activities and incidents from his life as moral examples.² These activities by the members of the family indicate the family's participation in a variety of official and voluntary associations.

Jabalpur and the British and Indian Domains

In the first years of the nineteenth century Jabalpur served as a small market and administrative center. As a trade depot on the road to Mirzapur, wheat and forest produce poured into Jabalpur from the surrounding countryside for transport by bullock pack and cart across the Vindhya hills to the Ganges plain. Local administrative officials received directives from the Maratha Pundits in Saugor who in turn came under the jurisdiction of the Nagpur Bhonsla rulers, members of the Maratha Confederacy. By the end of the first quarter of the century, local administrative control had shifted from Saugor to Jabalpur and from Maratha to British hands. The Governor-General's

¹RGDB, p. 57; Timberg, "Marwari" (1972) mentions an even larger association was founded in 1912, the Maha Maheshwari Sabha, p. 104.

²RGDB, pp. 30, 47, and 56.

Agent for the Saugor and Nerbudda Territories and his staff received directives from Calcutta transmitted through Allahabad. A small garrison of troops was stationed on the outskirts of the town. By then also a recently immigrant Marwari family had become active participants in Jabalpur's banking and trading life. Sevaram bought some property next to the burning ghats of Jabalpur's Hanuman Tal and established the family's residence there.

In the early 1860s Jabalpur was combined with other British territories in central India to form the Central Provinces. The town was selected as one of the four Divisional headquarters. Even before the railway reached Jabalpur from Allahabad to the northeast and from Bombay to the southwest in the late 1860s, Jabalpur's trade had begun to move in a reverse direction.¹ Instead of flowing mainly toward the Ganges plain in the northeast, it now fed the territories of Nagpur and Berar to the southwest, where farmers had increasingly turned to specializing in cotton production to meet the upsurge of a foreign demand.

By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, Jabalpur was well established as the largest commercial and administrative town in northern Central Provinces. The road to the provincial capital, Nagpur, had been improved, and a recently constructed narrow-gauge

¹J. H. Morris, in the C. P., Ad. Rept. 1866-67, p. ix, analyzes this reversal as well as commenting on other changes occurring in the Central Provinces' trade traffic. Elizabeth Whitcombe also notes this in two rare references to Jabalpur in her study of Agrarian Conditions in Northern India (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), pp. 12 and 182.

railway from the forest hills of the Satpura range to the south, also converged on Jabalpur and conveyed trade to and from the town. The local administration and the municipal committee had fostered and constructed public buildings to house officials and departments, and public works to provide a moderate amount of public services. Gokuldas had financed a small beginning in industry by establishing a gun-carriage factory, cotton and flour mills, and a tile manufacturing plant. Throughout the century, Sevaram's descendants played a prominent role in the expansion of Jabalpur's economic and administrative life through their diverse financial activities and their support of public institutions.

The history of Jabalpur during the nineteenth century was closely tied to the expansion both of British administration and the Gokuldas commercial dynasty. Both became established as new factors in the area early in the century, and grew in power and prestige during the following decades. For the British, Jabalpur district was merely one more small tract of territory which was conquered and incorporated into the Indian Empire. But for the Raja Gokuldas dynasty, Jabalpur became its base, its center for economic conquest into other parts of the Central Provinces and soon into other parts of India and beyond. Neither the British nor Gokuldas ever obtained complete, exclusive and totalitarian control in their respective spheres of domination over economic and social resources. Other persons, institutions and forces set limits on the opportunities for administrative and economic expansion. Even in the relationship between the government and Gokuldas, though they usually found it

mutually beneficial to collaborate in overlapping spheres of activity, there were times when they differed and came into conflict over goals and policies; and at other times it was best to keep out of each other's way and pursue independent activities. Nonetheless, by the late nineteenth century, each had developed such powerful positions in the area that it was not possible to ignore each other for long or in any important sphere of activity.

The founding father of the Gokuldas dynasty, Sevaram, migrated to Jabalpur from Jaisalmer (Rajasthan) during the first years of the nineteenth century.¹ As a Maheshwari of the Malpani clan, he evidently brought with him the business skills and techniques for which his broader caste, the Marwaris, had a traditional reputation. By the time of his death in 1834 he had established a sound base for the expansion of the family's fortunes and influence. The first rooms for the family's residence had been built on the banks of Hannuman Tal, near Jabalpur's market center. Several shops providing trade and banking services had been organized, some in alliance with other local traders such as the ancestors of Kanhaiyalal and Punamchand. With the purchase of a dozen villages, Sevaram began the family custom of investment in land. The first steps to erect the family's worship center, the Shri Gopal Lal Temple, had been completed and Sevaram's two sons had become initiated into membership of the Vallabha Hindu

¹The brief look at the family which introduces this study in the first pages of this chapter supplies pertinent information useful in the intervening text. While the general outline is repeated here, each of the two sections has its particular purpose and a related selection of information.

sect under the guidance of a guru at Benares. Sevaram had made some of the first contributions to Jabalpur's public life by having a tank and a garden built in the town. A local British officer had recognized Sevaram as one of the leading bankers and traders of the town. Almost all of these activities established traditions which Sevaram's successors continued in later years.

Because of coincidental circumstances, the dynasty had few succession problems. Each generation subsequently found only one successor in command. Khushalchand succeeded Sevaram even though he was the younger of two surviving sons. The older son, Ramkrishnadas, devoted himself almost exclusively to religious activities; later his widow died before a judgment on a suit, that threatened to break up the succession pattern, came to trial in 1847. So, too, Rhusalchand's son, Gokuldas, became the sole inheritor of the reins of the family's wealth and power in 1869 when his younger brother (Gopaldas) died, four years after Khusalchand's death. Although both a son and a nephew of Gokuldas, Jiwandas and Ballabhdas, equally divided the inheritance when Gokuldas died in 1909, within 4 or 5 years the dynasty lay in almost complete financial ruin. It took several years of energetic efforts by Govindas, Gokuldas' grandson, to revive the prestige, wealth and power of the dynasty before it could regain and then exceed its previous stature.

The history of the Das dynasty over the five generations from Sevaram to Govindas presents a varied picture of expansion and consolidation of wealth and power. Sevaram provided the base for later expansion--not only did he found the headquarters of the "kingdom,"

but he established lasting traditions of spheres of activity and patterns of alliances. Khushalchand maintained these and expanded them. The number of shops and the control of capital for investment, lending, and trade increased during his reign. Marital and religious alliances brought the dynasty into contact with areas outside the province. Most important, his assistance to the British during 1857-58 placed the dynasty in a favored position. For some years the fund of British indebtedness to the dynasty paid off handsomely, not just in monetary terms of the award of government contracts and loans, but also in prestige and trust. After weathering a family crisis of the late 1860s and the early 1870s, Gokuldas turned in earnest to make the most of the wider contacts and increased prestige inherited from his father. In the 1880s he consolidated the dynasty's commercial and prestige position in the province. In the 1890s he turned his concentration to areas beyond the confines of the province, Especially in Rajasthan, his caste and family homeland, he received an honorary recognition of his high position, and went on to make advantageous financial commitments. In the same decade, he expanded into a new activity--industry--thus combining his control over markets and raw materials such as wheat and cotton with the processing of them. In the fourth generation, power was shared by two cousins. Both rejected Gokuldas' advice for moderation. Jiwandas gained the reputation as an extravagant spender. Ballabhdas exhausted considerable of his wealth in market speculation. The decline of the dynasty during their time, however, was more than checked during the reign of the fifth generation. The details of the revival in wealth and

especially in power is recounted in Govindas' autobiographies, and analyzed in its local Jabalpur setting in a dissertation.¹ Our main interest centers on the middle reign of the Das dynasty, the Gokuldas period.

Gokuldas's firm and its activities and position as a Baja or "king" may be viewed as "kingdom" or domain. Although his kingdom might not exactly correspond to some definitions of kingdoms, it nevertheless functioned as a power, ruling over its own "territory," with its own regulations and structure of supervision, its own particular ideology, and surrounded by symbols of royalty. It is more than coincidence that Gokuldas eventually received recognition as a Raja within the British Raj, or that his residence in Jabalpur became known as the Raja Gokuldas Palace. Unlike administrative and military rulers, who have dominion over contiguous land areas, the kingdom of the Das dynasty included administrative control over widely scattered landed estates, as well as control over money, markets, products, and people. The exact extent of his "territory" is difficult to define, not only because it changed in time, but also because it goes beyond our usual concepts of "territoriality" and "sovereignty."² Nevertheless some definition of the minimal extent of the territory can be presented. The "territory" of his kingdom consisted of more than 200 village lands; the capital involved in

¹Peter Mayer, "Muffsil" (1971).

²See especially Walter Neale's concept that "land is to rule," Walter C. Neale, "Land is to Rule," in Robert Eric Frykenberg, ed., Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), pp. 3-15.

numerous loans, each exceeding Rs. 25,000, and totaling almost Rs. 4.5 million; and hundreds of smaller loans of an unknown sum; many hundred shops financing and conducting trade in various products; and several processing plants and factories. Though these were concentrated in the Central Provinces, especially in or near Jabalpur district, others were dispersed in Bombay, Rajasthan, Central India, the Punjab, the United Provinces, Calcutta, and Rangoon.

The extent of Gokuldas' economic control and his monopoly varied with location, the product, and the period of time. For some products such as wheat and cotton, he sought to control a corner of the production of the raw materials, to profit from their sale and trade, to transport a portion to his factories for processing or manufacture, and to return the finished products for sale in his shops or in return for more raw materials. By at least 1880 he was well aware that ownership of village lands not only symbolized traditional status and power, but also provided direct and immediate access to its food, forest and dairy production. Through various economic control methods (mainly loans) in many of his villages he was able to acquire much of his tenants' produce from their fields.¹ It is not surprising, therefore, that he raised strong objections in 1894 when the government initiated a policy for the recovery of rent payments in cash and prohibited their recovery in kind. He eventually abandoned a suit against government over this issue, however, when the government

¹Jab SR (1896), p. 23. The Settlement Officer described commercial landlords, of whom he considers Gokuldas the prime example.

explained that he could recover rents in kind, but only if the produce was calculated at rates equal to current market prices or even more favorable to the tenant.¹

Gokuldas' position in some trade markets was as complete as in his access to land produce. One such market was Gadarwara, one of the largest speculative wheat markets in the Nerbudda valley. Among the 200-300 brokers at the market the Gokuldas firm was considered the largest. In 1884 other brokers began making contracts for large quantities of grain with the firm. As demand far exceeded the normal supply, it appeared that a large number of brokers would benefit by selling at higher prices at the expense of Gokuldas. Instead he met the demand by purchasing and supplying grain to the market from various other localities. The local Gadarwara brokers, who would have lost considerably had Gokuldas not intervened, were spared serious loss. A similar incident occurred at the cotton market at Amraoti. Gokuldas' biographer reported the comment, "In the same way anybody who took it into his head to compete with the Raja Sahib, had to eat humble pie."² The circle of Gokuldas' conglomerate control was completed with his establishment and ownership of numerous wheat mills, and plants to press cotton and manufacture cloth.

¹CPRAP, May 1894, Part BII, Settlement #29-32, and CPRAP, July 1894, Part BII, Settlement #10-11. The government's primary goal was to end the practice of previous years whereby the landlords took payments in kind at prices favorable to themselves. That is, the government wanted to end de facto rent enhancements by landlords at the time of collecting rent payments in kind.

²RGDB, p. 46.

Gokuldas could buy or obtain grain and cotton from a tenant, sell him food and flour, loan him seed when he needed it, and provide him some cloth--all "to the mere profit of the middlemen"-- that is Gokuldas and his agents.¹ As a landlord, trader, banker, and industrialist, Gokuldas had access to a certain amount of products and control over its supply, processing, manufacture, and sale. As such he also controlled a certain number of producers, suppliers, and consumers.²

Gokuldas' "territorial" expansion and consolidation in land, lending, trade and industry, and his intensification of that control were accomplished through a management structure, which resembled the structure of the government in many ways. He was at the head, surrounded by a "council of ministers," under whom agents conducted the affairs of the kingdom's subjects. At each of the three levels of his administration, the personnel had particular characteristics or qualifications that led to their selection, training, and functions. He, like other members of the family dynasty, received a privileged education and special training. Particularly under the guidance of the family's rulers, he learned the basic business skills, and

¹Quote from Gokuldas, Appeal to the Viceroy, 19 August 1879, in IHRAP, February 1880, Revenue #19-21.

²His prominent position in the establishment and ownership of industry in Jabalpur allowed him to acquire cheap workers during the famines. The large number of orphans created by the famine caused a problem for the government. They preferred to place them under Hindu care, even though Christian Missions were always willing to accept the orphans. In 1896, with government approval, if not gratitude, Gokuldas took over the care of all the orphans in the town, many of them were employed in his mills. See RGDE, pp. 83-84.

accounting methods, and was proficient in the Marwari language in which he transacted his business. He also acquired certain social and religious attitudes as he grew up in the "court" at the family's Jabalpur residence, later to be known as the "Raja Gokuldas Palace." When he inherited the headship of the administration, he continued the tradition of close, personal supervision of the firm's management and activities. Usually each year, he spent nine months on tour inspecting his shops, estates, and other establishments and giving advice to his personnel.

At the headquarters at Jabalpur, he conducted business in consultation with members of the second level of his administration--treasurers, head-clerks, managers, advisors, and lawyers. Most of his "council" had specialized training, and performed specific functions for the firm. Punamchand's family had served the firm for three generations mainly as treasurers. S. R. Chaudhri came to Jabalpur after legal training at Calcutta and handled technical aspects of drawing-up contracts, petitions, and law-suits for the firm. The Russell brothers managed various affairs, after retiring from many years of service in the British administration.

Unlike the diverse social and cultural background among the personnel of the second level, almost all those on the third level were selected from a single social category--Marwaris--and were selected because of their educational and linguistic qualifications as much as because they were Marwaris. (Similarly the British government justified its selection of Englishmen for administrative positions in India.) As Marwaris, the munims or agents usually had

acquired a training in basic accounting methods, certain business attitudes, and a knowledge of the Marwari language and script from their families before they were selected. Gokuldas controlled his agents by means of several requirements. They had to pass through a probationary period at Jabalpur so he could assess their character and skills. They were then posted to some shop or position where he could examine and reassess their work when on tour. Like members of the British administration, most agents were transferred from one post to another at intervals of 3 to 4 years, often without any notice. No relatives or members of the same jati of the agent were appointed to the same locality.¹ Gokuldas communicated with his agents in Marwari--and his handwriting and style made it difficult for anyone except his own agents to decipher his messages.

His methods of accounting and conduct of business, though accepted and understood by other Indians, especially other Marwaris, appeared unusual, unsystematic, and unbusiness-like to the British who had been trained in and were accustomed to other procedures. One British official, visiting Gokuldas at his residence to ask him to transfer a large amount of money to another location, described the simplicity and off-handed manner in which Gokuldas conducted the exchange. After arriving at the "palace" he was shown into Gokuldas' "garden, a large lawn surrounded with blossoming shrubs, a fountain playing in the middle, and a peafowl lazily strutting about." A

¹The British evidently felt these standards of appointment and transfer were necessary for efficient bureaucracy, but not for business management, especially village estate management. See CPRAP, May 1890, Revenue #24.

superior "henchman" entertained the official until the "great man" appeared and seated himself.

It would be untactful to start away on business as the chief motive of the visit, though the motive is tacitly understood. So we exchange the usual elaborate greetings in the hyperbole of Hindustani--for the great man knows no English. Then general topics, such as the weather, crop prospects, the probability of epidemic disease in the city; and I make inquiry about the Raja's stables, a favorite subject . . . Meanwhile the fountain plays . . . and time slips away. Then at last the question comes--Is there any service which the Sahib wishes done? I reply that there is a trifling matter, a little money to be remitted. The great man beckons an attendant, who removes the sack without counting coin or notes. That doesn't matter; I know it will be all right. More compliments and talk. The attendant reappears with the sack, now empty. We ignore him and continue the leisurely talk, till the Raja asks in feigned surprise, as though he had forgotten all about it, whether we hadn't some small business to do. Ah yes; here it is. He takes a tiny scrap of paper from the attendant and hands it to me. All it contains are a few hieroglyphics in the obscure Marwari script. This I pocket with ostentatious negligence, well knowing that in a few days I shall receive an acknowledgment from the British bank in the capital of a neighboring province.¹

Several of the British laws, regulations, and concepts of business, no doubt, appeared as strange to Gokuldas as his business procedures appeared to the British. Most of his petitions ended with an apology for his inadequate understanding of British laws and occasional incorrect use of the English language.

As the Gokuldas kingdom developed into a large and wealthy power in the nineteenth century, he turned to establishing "diplomatic" relations with two types of other powers. One had dominion and control over religious affairs. On his pilgrimages he paid tribute to the

¹Henry Sharp, Good-Bye India (London, 1946), pp. 18-19.

local Brahmin priests through gifts and feasts in return for religious recognition and merit. The second grew out of his association with various "Princely States," especially in Rajasthan. He made ceremonial visits to these rulers and in return, in Rajasthan in particular, he received honorary recognition of his position and privileged concessions for any business established there. Such "treaty" concessions often stipulated not only that he would be awarded financial preference in economic activities, but that his shops and books would be free from investigation and his employees would be exempt from criminal prosecution.¹

The major political power Gokuldas had to deal with was the British Raj. During the prosperous decades of the late nineteenth century, he aided the British and collaborated in several activities such as loans to previously important families of the Central Provinces (through the Court of Wards), and the financing of railway construction and municipal waterworks. The British honored him with titles which admitted him to the category of a privileged person, exempt from personal appearances in the low court, and from the prohibitions of the Arms Act. On one occasion he took advantage of this privileged status when he prohibited local police from entering and searching the house of his trusted treasurer, Punamchand, when it was discovered a deposit was missing from his treasury.²

¹RGDB includes a copy of a concessionary treaty offered to Gokuldas by the Jaisalmir Maharaja, pp. 93-94. Timberg in "Marwari" also remarks on the concessions Marwaris received from several Rajasthan rulers.

²RGDB, p. 50.

This privileged relationship with the British became modified in the last years of the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth. As long as Gokuldas' domains remained mainly within financial and commercial areas, British interference remained at a minimum. Because of their original experience as a trading company in India and because of their intellectual inheritance of concepts of laissez-faire economics, the British remained reluctant to interfere drastically and decisively in trade, banking and business. On the other hand, land policy remained a paramount concern of the British. Gokuldas' increasing involvement and ownership of land and his membership in a commercial caste, brought his landlord role to the attention of the local administration and caused major disagreements between the two. The revision of the thirty-year land revenue settlement and the decline in agricultural prosperity late in the late nineteenth century compelled the British to reconsider their land policies. The British became involved in the equitable fixation of rents; in the retention of subsistence land for landlords who were indebted, and who would otherwise have to sell their land; in the remission and abatement of land revenue, and finally in debt conciliation. Each of these policy developments impinged on Gokuldas' land domain in some way. His approach to them differed from the government's new policies. (See Chapter VII on Land.) As soon as the attention of Gokuldas' relationship with the British shifted to his landlord activities rather than his commercial and banking activities, differences between the two mounted. In addition, the shift of politics from one of prosperity, where all parties benefited

in some way from economic growth, to a politics of scarcity because of the famines further aggravated the relationship. His petitions are evidences of the discussions and debates he had with the government.

The establishment of British control successively over various territories in India during the late eighteenth and in the nineteenth century changed the rules and the nature of the political game of dominance and control. They were able to define the broad limits within which Indians could function and participate. But these limits were both exclusive and inclusive of various kinds of activity. The dominance was never intended to cover all activities of all Indians. In the internal commercial domain the British followed a policy generally to free the flow of trade, abolishing the taxes and tariffs of previous governments. In the domain of land control, the British also intended to limit their direct interference only to a certain local level. Below that level the taxed producer or landholder was to have his own domain, the freedom to improve agricultural production on his own profits and initiative. Under the British rules of the political game, the British at times succeeded in attracting Indians to collaborate with them in their inclusive spheres of dominance. To such participants and supporters, the government awarded symbolic titles and recognized privileged status. However, in the spheres freed from British dominance, many Indians maintained their position and practices or even expanded their control. Under the British rules they learned how to play the game and set up their own spheres of dominance, excluded from British control or at least

from constant interference.

In the Central Provinces, several Indians played the new political game. The Gokuldas family was an exceptional example of the establishment, expansion and consolidation of a commercial kingdom. As we have seen, they cooperated with the British in certain enterprises and institutions. Jabalpur became the second largest town in the province after only a century, primarily through the combined efforts of the British and the prominent contribution of the Gokuldas family to the economic and public life of the town.

During the same period, other families in the Central Provinces developed and expanded their own spheres of dominance, built their own structure of control, and legitimized their position by various symbols. At Nagpur, the Chitnavis family was one of several families who utilized their recent position under the Bhonslas and their landed estates to expand into commerce, industry, and participation in British constitutional reforms. Also at Nagpur, the Maheshwari family of Abhirchand typified a commercial and banking expansion similar to the Gokuldas family but without the extensive investment in landownership. The Kanhayalal family of Raipur Agarwals and the Bhaiyalal Chaudhri family of Jabalpur Jains also represent expansion of commercial domains with a moderate interest in land investment. The Bhuskutte family of Hoshangabad Maratha Brahmins more closely approximated the Chitnavis type of expansion. These are just a few families in the Central Provinces during this period who successfully played the game of power and prestige under the British definitions of inclusive and exclusive spheres of dominance. Like the Gokuldas

family they formulated their own policy, devised their own management structure, and utilized particular categories of resource personnel within their "kingdoms." The personnel incorporated within their management structures often consisted of highly trained "foreigners" (migrants into the Central Provinces) at the top, and fellow-caste personnel in the middle and lower ranks. By their activities these families simultaneously expanded their own type of control in spheres of domain outside British interest and interference, and accepted their limited role in the spheres of domain that were included under direct British control.

In these pages, we have surveyed a part of the history of nineteenth century Central Provinces when there were new factors and participants in the political and economic activity of the area. Because of their cultural and intellectual inclinations, the British excluded particular domains from their predominant and pervasive control such as private business, trade, and local landed estates. In these some Indian families, from diverse areas and backgrounds, were quick to establish their control. Throughout the nineteenth century both the new British and Indian participants expanded and intensified their control over their own separate domains. Yet there was a degree of interaction represented by such activities as the government's taxation of landed estates, a few cooperative economic enterprises, inclusion of Indians in subordinate positions in administration, and symbolic awards for support. As long as the Central Provinces faced no severe economic decline and government policy remained fairly consistent, these collaborative efforts worked

to the mutual benefit of the new co-existing domains. But, late in the nineteenth century, the government began to reconsider the degree of its involvement in the domain of local landholders, and at the same time famines brought new economic conditions. Consequently disagreements arose between the British and Indians over the changed economic conditions and land policy.

The history of the Gokuldas dynasty provides one of the most successful examples of these types of economic, political, and social developments in the Central Provinces. Though beginning as a small trading and banking enterprise based in Jabalpur, the family expanded into a conglomerate enterprise in the domains outside of direct British government interest and control; they increased their wealth, intensified their control, diversified their activities and extended them into several areas of India, and received symbolic recognition of their position from both the British rulers and Indian princes. By the time of his death in 1909, Gokuldas had clearly shown that his title as "Raja" was more than honorific.

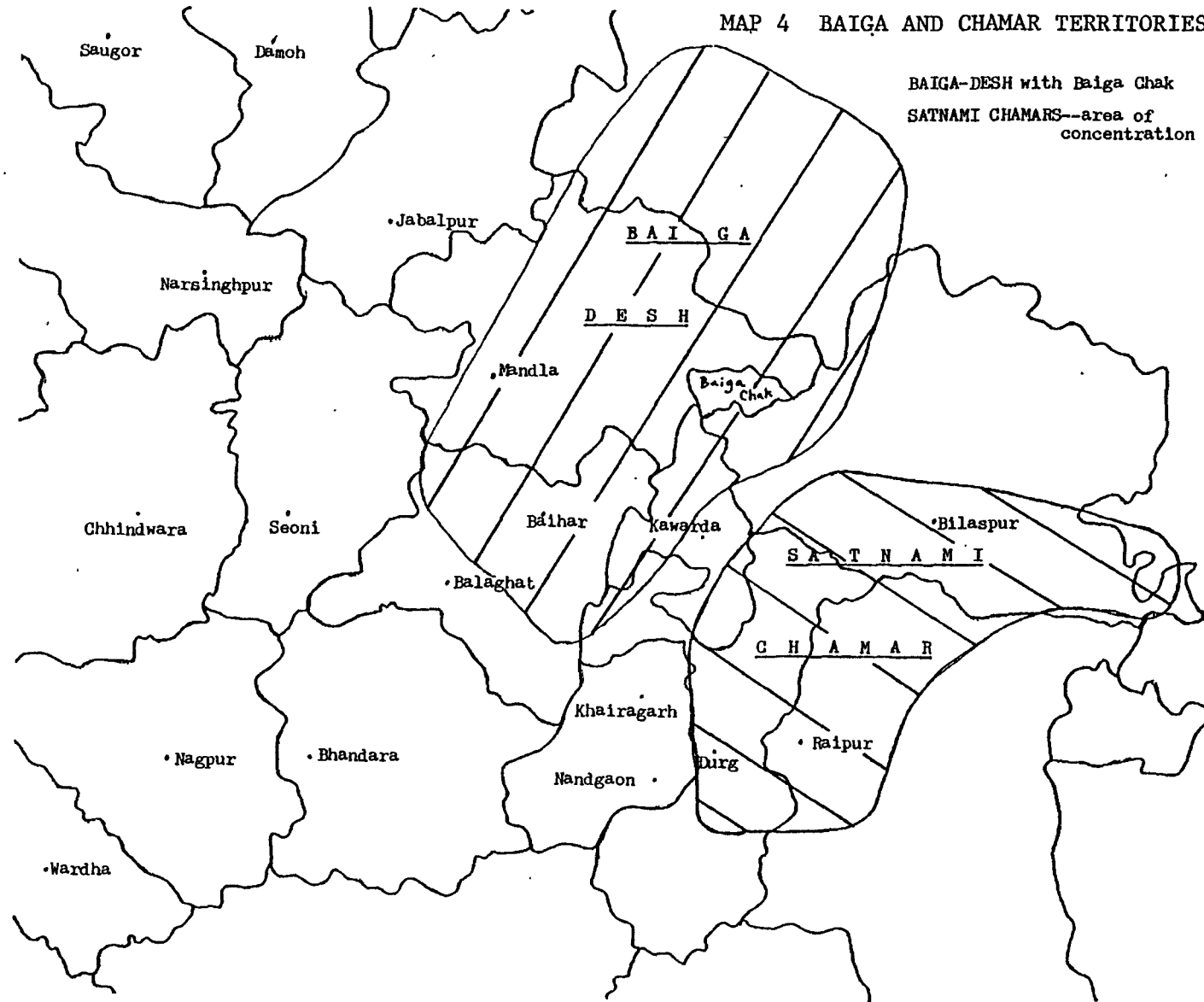
CHAPTER IX

THE THREATENED TRIBALS: THE BAIGAS

The Baigas were one of several tribal people in the Central Provinces. In the first provincial census (1866), aboriginal and hill tribes formed one-fifth of the population of nine million. Gonds accounted for almost three-fourths of these tribal people, while the remainder included Baigas, Korkus, Bhils, Kols, and others. Most lived on the middle spine of the Satpura hills, with its plateaus and valleys, which divided the province between the northern, southern, and southeastern plains. Baigas, along with some of the Gonds, occupied the Maikal range of the eastern Satpura hills. The heavily forested and sparsely populated range gave rise to streams and rivers that flowed in all directions. The Narbudda and its tributaries flowed west; and tributaries of the Wainganga emerged to join that river as it flowed south into the Godavari. In these highlands were the boundaries of three administrative districts of the Central Provinces as well as the boundary between the province and Rewa State. At times the area was referred to as Baigadesh, Baiga-country.

As described by several British administrators in the 1860s, the Baigas were viewed as the wildest and most isolated tribal people. The Satpura hills with its forests and sparse population was of major interest to the British because of their policies of taxation on forest and agricultural produce, forest conservation, and possible colonization by European and Indian settlers. British officers explored the area in the

MAP 4 BAIGA AND CHAMAR TERRITORIES



1860s to gather information and to introduce some of the area's first government institutions and programs.

The Baiga Tribe: Ideology and Activities

The provincial census of 1866 enumerated about 16,000 Baigas, while an estimate in 1869 of 18,000 Baigas closely approximated the census statistics. Most lived in the eastern part of the Mandla and Seoni districts (10,388 and 3,907 respectively).¹ About the same number of Baigas lived outside the Central Provinces in adjacent Rewa State. Enumerations of Baigas in the 1860s or since should be considered as approximations for several reasons. Not all Baigas accepted that designation; other tribes and people had similar names. Baigas could consider themselves as Narotrias, Barotrias, Binjhvars, or Bhumias--all endogamous Baiga group names. Bhumia had other meanings. Baiga considered themselves Bhumia or "lords of the soil." In addition, Bhumia and Baiga were both occupational titles of non-Hindu village priests in the area, even when the priests belonged to another tribe or caste. Binjhar and other names might also refer to other tribes, separate from the Baiga.²

¹Central Provinces, Report on the Census of the Central Provinces for 1866 (Nagpur: M. Lawlor at the Chief Commissioner's Office Press, 1967), "Statement B"; and James Forsyth, The Highlands of Central India: Notes on their Forests and Wild Tribes, Natural History, and Sports (London: Chapman and Hall, 1871), p. 359. The census was taken the evening of November 5, 1866 and is reported in the letter of the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces to the Government of India, 2 April 1867. Abbreviations of Central Provinces is C.P., of the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces is CCCP, and Government of India is GOI. See also table on Baiga population.

²See especially R. V. Russell, The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India, 4 vols. (London: Macmillan and Company, 1916), 2:77-92; and Verrier Elwin, The Baiga (London: John Murray, 1939), pp. 2-9.

British observers felt the Baigas had migrated into Baigadesh from the east many centuries before, probably much before the more numerous Gonds who established political control over the highlands around the fourteenth century. Hindu villagers viewed the Baigas as the original inhabitants and accepted their decisions in boundary disputes.¹

Baiga myths also support their claim to long residence in the upland forests. Baiga ideology is revealed especially in two myths--one on creation and another on their role in the world.

Bhagwan (God) first created a man and a woman in his upper world. They were formed from the dirt which had settled on his body during a twelve year fast. Their names were Naga Baiga and Naga Baigin. They went to live in the middle world where there was only water and rock. In order to bring fertile earth to the middle world, four animal-god companions were ordered to go to the underworld and bring back Dhartia Mata or fertile soil. After many difficulties they found their way to the underworld, and met Dhartia Mata, who agreed to be swallowed by the companions if they would worship her. But the serpent king of the underworld discovered them as they stole away, and had Dhartia Mata squeezed out of them, ordering them to return to the middle world. By chance, a small speck of Dhartia Mata remained lodged in the teeth of one of the companions, and this was taken and churned with the drops of nectar or liquor from the mahua tree in a large caldron. The soil expanded, spilling over and starting to cover the middle earth, but she slipped and rocked and it was feared she would escape back to the underworld. To steady her, Naga

¹Russell, Tribes and Castes, 2:78.

Baiga was called, but as he was naked he would not come out of the water. He was offered a large cloth which he wrapped around his huge body, but it barely covered his loins. Dhartia Mata liked Naga Baiga and agreed to serve him and remain in the middle world, if he would worship and sacrifice to her. He agreed. "Nails" were placed in the soil, and they and the guardianship and worship of Dhartia Mata by the Baiga have since then kept fertile earth steady to grow crops and trees.¹

Naga Baiga and Naga Baigin had two sons who married their sisters; from their children the world was populated. The elder son's children were the Baigas; the younger son's were the Gonds and others.

Bhagwan also decided how the Baigas would live. When Bhagwan "called all the tribes of the world together to make a king" over middle earth, he

first chose the Baiga. But Naga Baiga begged that the Gond, his brother, might be king in his place. Bhagavan was pleased at this request, and, as a mark of his favour took Naga Baiga by the hand and placed him on his throne by his side. He granted his prayer to make the Gond king, but he gave the Baiga an even greater blessing.

"All the kingdoms of the world," he said, "may fall to pieces, but he who is made of earth and is Bhumiaraja, lord of the earth, shall never forsake it. You will make your living from the earth. You will dig roots and eat them. You will cut wood and carry it on your shoulders. Your wife will pick leaves and sell them. You must not tear the breasts of your Mother the Earth with the plough like the Gond and Hindu. You will cut down trees and burn them and sow your seed in the ashes. But you will never become rich, for if you did you would forsake the earth, and then there would be no one to guard it and keep its nails in place." Then Bhagavan showed Naga Baiga how to cut bewar and sow seed in the ashes of burnt trees; and

¹These myths are reported in several places including Russell, Tribes and Castes, and Elwin, Baiga. This version is from Musra, a Dewar of Bijora near Dindor, as recorded in Stephen Fuchs, The Gond and Bhumia of Eastern Mandla, 2d. ed. (Bombay: New Literature Publishing Company, 1968), pp. 414-427. Naga (snake) Baiga is often called Nanga (naked) Baiga. Some of the earliest mention of these myths are in A. Bloomfield, Notes on the Baigas of Central India [Nagpur: 1885], p. 2.

when he had taught him everything, he called him to receive gifts of seed.¹

The ideology represented in these myths formed the basis for many Baiga beliefs, attitudes, and practices. It defined their role in the world--as guardians of the forest and the soil. They would enjoy the produce of the forest and grow crops by shifting cultivation in the forest (cutting bewar) but would never be rich. While related to the Gonds, the Baiga considered Gonds "inferior," as kisans or farmers making use of the plough to "tear" Mother Earth outside the forest. The "nails" perhaps represent trees, which the Baiga would guard to keep the soil in place. Because they did not use a plow on the slopes of hills, and permitted forest re-growth, they would prevent denudation and erosion of the land.

Between the 1860s and the mid-1880s, British administrators observed and described most of the basic customs and practices of the Baiga.

A. Bloomfield, who was the District Commissioner of Balāghat for several years, presented the fullest account in his Notes on the Baigas, published in 1885. One of his reports listed several ways the Baiga obtained their living:

1. By cutting bewar and growing crops.
2. By hunting and fishing.
3. By collecting forest roots and fruits.
4. By labor for others.
5. By collecting and selling forest produce such as honey and harra (myrabaloms).
6. By making and selling bamboo mats and baskets.
7. By serving as village priests, practicing exorcism and herbalism.²

¹Elwin, Baiga, pp. 106-07.

²Report of the Tahsildar of Baihar, 1878, in Elwin, Baiga, p. 80.

The most important of these was growing grain and vegetables on plots i.e. bewars, cleared in the forest, supplemented by food gathering and hunting. Each activity had seasonal importance rather than being full-time activity. Only some Baigas obtained their living through the last four methods.

In cutting bewar, the axe was the most important implement. The Baigas annual cycle of activity began in the months of January and February. The Baiga, sometimes accompanied by village elders, would select a site, called a bewar, for clearing the forest. The best sites contained a thick growth of trees and brush on the slope of a hill above the frost line. Such a site would provide sufficient ash fertilizer, drainage, and prevent frost damage to late maturing crops. Some Baigas made offerings of mahua or other materials to honor the forest spirits and Dhartia Mata, before they began to cut the bewar and later before sowing the seeds. A Baiga male could cut and clear three to eight acres in two months.¹

Between February and May the wood was left to dry. During this time, the Baiga supplemented his grain diet through other activities. Baigas, especially the sub-tribe of Barotrias of eastern Balaghat, were famous for their skill in hunting, tracking, and trapping. They used bows and poisoned arrows made of bamboo, and various types of traps, to hunt and kill small animals such as the smaller deer, wild pigs, porcupines, rabbits and birds.² Women and children collected roots, such as the wild

¹The bewar method of cultivation was described by many writers, but see especially Bloomfield, Notes, pp. 14-16, and Daya Shankar Nag, Tribal Economy: An Economic Study of the Baiga (Delhi: Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sang, 1958), pp. 62-75. Nag suggests the annual cycle of bewar.

²Bloomfield, Notes, pp. 16-20.

arrowroot, until the ground was too dry and hard for digging. In late March and April the forest mahua tree (Bassia latifolia) blossomed and the fruit was gathered to be boiled or dried as food. Pressed mahua seeds produced oil; and the petals were used to ferment liquor. The mahua was thus an important source of food during the hottest and driest months of the year; it was also a source for oil used both for cooking and for lamps, and liquor made from petals was essential for rituals and relaxation.

By late May the Baiga fired the dry wood of the bewar. The fire was lit where the first tree had been cut, and started from the friction of bamboo sticks and tinder. After the ashes cooled, the Baiga spread them evenly over the bewar and planted the seeds. Kutki, a millet, was the main grain crop along with some mandi. Cucumber, gourd, beans and other seeds were planted around the tree stumps.

From the beginning of the rains in June through September, the crops were protected and weeded. The Baiga built a fence around the bewar and a small, open thatched hut (machan) near the bewar. For the fence, trees and brush were closely interwoven, leaving only a few small openings where traps were laid. The machan provided shelter for the Baiga and perhaps his wife. A fire kept animals away at night. During the day the crops were weeded. Some food gathering, and fishing in pools formed by dams up-stream, also occupied the Baigas at intervals during the monsoon months.¹

September to December were months of harvest, threshing and storage.

¹Fuchs, Bhamia, pp. 82 and 131-134.

The grain was cut near the top leaving the stalks for next season's burning. It was threshed under foot, winnowed, and carried back to the village for storage.

In January and February the annual cycle began again. The same plot produced less the second year and further declined the third year. The old bewar was then allowed to lie fallow for tree regrowth during the next ten to fifteen years, before being cut again.

While Baigas practiced bewar, Gonds practiced another form of cultivation called dhya. Unlike bewar, Gonds cut wood and shrubs from the forest nearby, brought it to dry on the plot and later burned it; then they plowed the ashes into the soil. Baigas said they never practiced dhya as it permanently destroyed the forest areas on the more level ground below the frost line. One estimate of Gond cultivators in 1869 indicates about half of the Gonds practiced plow cultivation, one-fourth dhya and one-fourth a combination of the two.¹

The only estimates of bewar productivity were made by A. Bloomfield--once in 1869 and again in 1885. Bloomfield indicated a bewar (ranging from three to eight acres) was extremely productive, yet not enough to feed a whole Baiga family. (See table.) The major crop of kutki, produced about 10 khandis from one kuro (1/20th of a khandi) of seed sown. This 200-fold productivity fell to 160-180-fold in the second year and dropped to 40-60-fold in the third year. A male adult consumed about six

¹A. Bloomfield, "Progress Report on Balaghat District, 1868-1869," 30 June 1869, in India, Foreign Department, Proceedings, December 1869, #84, p. 105, par. 80. Hereafter, Bloomfield, "Progress"; and India, Foreign Department, Proceedings hereafter IFP.

TABLE 20

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BEWAR PRODUCTIVITY

<u>Items</u>	<u>pounds</u>	
Amount of grain sown	19	
		Indicated productivity-- 200 to 300 fold
Amount of grain produced	3,800- 5,700	
Amount of grain consumed by one male per year	2,311	
Remaining amount	1,488	Equivalent to feeding another male for 2/3rds of a year or 235 days.
Depreciation cost of axe	16	
Rent per axe, Rs. 1 or	380	
Labor	???	
Reserve for seed	19	
Total remaining	1,073	Equivalent to feeding another male for under 1/2 of a year or 169 days.

Productivity over three years

	<u>pounds</u>	
First year		
Amount sown -kutki	9	Productivity--267 fold
Amount produced	2,500	
Amount sown -mandia	21	Productivity--59 to 83 fold
Amount produced	1,250-1,750	
Amount sown -total	30	
Amount produced	3,750-4,250	
Second year		
Amount sown	12-13	Productivity 167-173 fold
Amount produced	2,000-2250	
Third year		
Amount sown	12-13	Productivity 42-58 fold
Amount produced	500-750	

SOURCE: Table on Bewar Productivity, Descriptions by A. Bloomfield.

khandis in a year, so the remaining four khandis was insufficient for another male or for his wife and children and other relatives. Besides its use as food, there were other costs. About one khandi would be needed to pay the administration a tax of one rupee on each axe, and for the depreciation of the axe. (Axes cost one-quarter rupee and lasted about six years). In addition one kuro of it was kept as seed for the next year's crop. Clearly while the bewar provided a major source of grain food for the family, the hunting and food gathering activities and garden crops were essential to sustain Baigas.

Besides these sources of food the early accounts mention the sacrifice and consumption of several domestic animals--chickens, goats, and pigs. A few of these evidently were raised in the village for eggs, milk and meat. They were killed and eaten only on rare or special occasions. Cattle were too expensive for Baigas to keep because they easily succumbed to diseases, or to tiger and panther attacks. Later accounts also mention small gardens (baris), behind houses, specially attended and fertilized with dung, and growing small amounts of vegetables, spices, maize (corn), and tobacco.¹

Some Baiga worked in other activities either to supplement their income or to obtain a living. Some Baiga, especially women, worked as agricultural laborers, particularly to help harvest wheat and autumn crops as they ripened during the Baigas slack season of February and March. Others contracted to cut timber or to collect forest produce such as harra. At times Baigas also collected honey and sold it. One survey

¹Fuchs, Bhumia, pp. 88-89.

in 1888 investigated the earnings of a Baiga family in Balaghat District, who made bamboo baskets to earn money to buy food. The family consisted of the Baiga, his wife and two small children. They made twelve baskets a week, selling each for two pounds of rice or millet. The earnings of 100 pounds of unhusked grain, or less than one rupee per month was supplemented by the collection of forest roots and fruits. They saved about one rupee each year for clothing.¹

Finally, a few Baigas earned a living as herb specialists and priests. They conducted ceremonies for villagers, exorcised spirits, and prescribed herbal remedies. One or two Baiga priests became famous and received windfall earnings. A Baiga was paid Rs. 80 in 1867 to exorcise cholera from the town of Mandla.² Ranjar Pujari of Khandapar village (Balaghat) was famous for his powers, and wealthy landlords of the plains sent "elephants and various kinds of vehicles" to fetch him, if he pleaded some excuse such as "attending to his bewar fields."³

Most Baiga, however, were not famous or wealthy; nor skilled specialists--except in their practice of bewar cutting, hunting, and food getting. They generally lived on the forested hills in small villages of up to ten houses, mostly built in a tight rectangle facing inward except

¹"Abstract of the District Reports on the condition of the lower classes in the Central Provinces," Balaghat, p. 21, in India, Revenue and Agriculture Department, Famine, Proceedings, December 1888.

²H. C. E. Ward, Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of Mandla District [1867], quoted in Bloomfield, Notes, p. 25. Hereafter Ward, Mandla.

³Bloomfield, Notes, p. 24.

for an entrance on one side.¹ The whole village might migrate to a new location every three years to be closer to new bewars. Evidently each "village" changed sites within a recognized broad area which was mutually accepted by surrounding villages.²

Although British descriptions of the 1860s stressed the Baigas' self-sufficiency, Baigas had some contact and exchange with the outside world. Peddlers visited villages and some Baigas went to local markets or bazaars. The Baigas would buy salt, poison, cloth, and axes in exchange for forest produce. Some salt, however, was available as deposit in a type of bamboo and in clay.³ They obtained axes either in the bazaars or from the Agaria tribe of blacksmiths who were closely related to and lived in Gond villages.⁴ In the early twentieth century J. Lampard described a Baiga in a market.

A Baiga is speedily discerned in a forest village bazar, and is the most interesting object in it. His almost nude figure, . . . lithe wiry limbs and jungly and uncivilized appearance, mark him out at once. He generally brings a few mats or baskets which he has made, or fruit, collected, for sale, and with the sum (a few pice or annas at the most) he proceeds to make his weekly purchases, changing his pice into cowrie shells, of which he receives eighty for each one. He buys tobacco, salt, chillies and other sundries, besides as much

¹G. F. Pearson, quoted in W. B. Thomson, "Report on Mandla," in India, Supplement to the Gazette of India, 30 March 1864, p. 129, par. 27. Hereafter Pearson, "Bhoomeahs"; Thomson, "Report"; and India, Gazette--1864. Thomson's original letter on the Bichia-Raigarh tract is dated 14 July 1863 to the Jabalpur Commissioner.

²Bloomfield, Notes, p. 24.

³Thomson, "Report," p. 131, par. 38.

⁴Bloomfield, Notes, p. 6.

kodon, kutki, or perhaps rice as he can afford, always leaving a trifle to be expended at the liquor shop before departing for home.¹

As already described, Baiga religious practices included sacrifices to Dhartia Mata, the forest and other spirits. Group ceremonies included songs and dances on special occasions. The Karma dance was particularly popular. Women linked arms in one line facing a similar line of men, and in between a drum beat out the rhythm. Each group alternately sang out the song's witty and romantic verses which were answered by the other. In turn, the group singing approached the other, retreating at the end of the verse. Each group swayed to the rhythm and approached the other as they sang. The rhythm slowly increased until there was rapid dancing at the end of the song.²

In 1883 several hundred Baigas performed the Karma at Baihar, when the Lord Bishop of Calcutta visited them. Bloomfield felt this dance originally was performed only on the occasion when a Baiga had been possessed by Ganshiam, but now was performed on any occasion. Only two cases of possession had occurred in recent years--Lashkar Barotia of Jagla village, and Ganshiam Narotria of Karwahi village in 1868.³

Three sub-tribes were distinguished in Balaghat district, each

¹Balaghat DG (1907), pp. 98-99. Mr. Lampard was a missionary in Balaghat in the late nineteenth century.

²Bloomfield, Notes, pp. 21-22; and G. N. Tiwari, Amwar, A Village Survey, Census of India, 1961, vol. viii, Madhya Pradesh, Number II, Amwar, Tahsil and District Mandla (Bhopal, Superintendent of Census Operations, 1976), pp. 141-42. Hereafter Tiwari, Amwar.

³Bloomfield, Notes, p. 22; and Bloomfield to Commissioner of Nagpur Division, 16 December 1882, in Bloomfield, Notes, Appendix, p. 23, par. 15. The Appendix to Bloomfield's Notes contains several letters; hereafter, Bloomfield, Notes--App.

occupying its own area and with shades of different attitudes and practices. In the west, in the upper Wainganga valley, some Binjhwar Baigas practiced settled agriculture, and appeared to have less belief in the Baiga bewar legend. In contrast almost all the Barotria Baigas of the eastern forests practiced bewar on the hills and had pride in their hunting skills with the bow and arrow. Narotrias of the middle area believed in most of the distinctive Baiga myths and practiced bewar in the hills overlooking the valleys of the upper Nahar, Oskal and Banjar rivers.¹ In Mandla district, to the north of Balaghat, most Baigas were Binjhvars in the west, and Barotrias or Bhumia Baigas in the forests of Ramgarh (or Dindori) tahsil. Estimates of these sub-groups varied even more than the total Baiga population. Bloomfield, in 1881, reported that of 611 Baiga families in Balaghat district almost one-fourth were Barotrias (25 percent, 147 families), over one-fourth Binjhvars (28 percent, 180 families), and just under one-half Narotrias (46 percent, 284 families).² An enumeration five years later (1886) listed 454 families of Baigas in fifty-nine villages of Balaghat district: one-sixth Bharotrias (79 families), one-third Binjhvars (140 families) and one-half Narotrias (235 families). British officers considered the Binjhvars the most civilized; but felt the Barotrias of the hills were the "true"

¹Bloomfield, Notes, pp. 2, 4, 6, 16; and Notes--App., p. 12.

²A. Bloomfield to Commissioner of Nagpur Division, 10 May 1881, in Notes--App., p. 10, par. 2. Abbreviations: Commissioner--Cr. and Division--Dn.

Baiga.¹

Based on observations and descriptions of the Baigas in the middle of the nineteenth century, the Baiga tribe had developed a close relationship with the highland forest environment of central India in which they lived. Their ideology, represented in their myths, gave them a proud and separate identity. It provided the basis for living in an often dangerous, hostile, and precarious forest environment through the cultivation of bevar, hunting and food gathering. It reinforced their reliance on the forest; that they would not become wealthy, but could survive if they maintained, conserved, and revived the forest, and honored the fertile soil or Dhartia Mata who gave them life.

British rule in Baigadesh

British rule threatened to change or even destroy many practices of the Baigas and other forest tribes. British administrators expressed both an admiration and strong disapproval of the Baiga and other forest cultivators. Baiga practices, customs and beliefs contrasted sharply with dominant Western and Indian cultures. Between 1861 and 1921 the relationship between the British and the Baigas became a struggle of the British on the one hand, trying to change the Baigas from forest cultivators to settled farmers, and the Baigas, on the other hand, trying to retain their culture and searching for ways to survive under new administrative and economic conditions.

¹Bryce Thomas, Balaghat District Commissioner to Cr. of Nagpur Dn., 28 October 1886, in Central Provinces, Revenue and Agriculture Department, Proceedings, Takavi, December 1886, p. 15. Hereafter Thomas, Report of 1886. See also Forsyth, Highlands, p. 360.

The British felt their policy to transform the Baiga way of living would have several benefits. First, valuable forests would be preserved under British management. Second, land could be brought under cultivation and improved. Third, the Baigas themselves would be taught a more suitable and productive way of living. While British policy remained broadly consistent during the six decades, their programs and methods were varied and sporadic. At times prohibitions alternated with incentives; several times British administrators became more involved in other activities which meant ignoring or disregarding Baiga interests. This is especially exemplified in the formation of the new district of Balaghat in 1867.

In the 1860s British administrators were actively involved in establishing British rule all over the Central Provinces but mainly in the densely populated and agriculturally productive areas. In the more sparsely-populated and forested areas, such as the area where the Baigas lived, the British concentrated on introducing basic and minimal forms of administration and promoting programs of forest management and colonization. The creation of Balghat district in 1867 exemplified some of the goals and actions undertaken by the British in the area.

Balaghat district was created specifically for three purposes: to manage and collect revenue, including that from the forests; to construct and improve roads between the plains and the uplands; and to promote "the establishment in the uphill tracts of well-to-do settlers from the low lying tracts."¹ Another purpose was added later--"the civilizing and

¹CCCP to GOI, 9 August 1867 in IFP, August 1867, #2, p. 43, par. 2.

weaning from their nomad habits the wilder tribes of the montane tracts."¹

The formation of this district in 1867 was a culmination of earlier British policies and activities in the area. In 1862 Chief Commissioner Temple had thought the hills of the Central Provinces possessed great potentials for colonization and forest production. Sal trees grew "in greatest abundance in the Districts of the Satpura Range." There were many sal forests "of great richness and still untouched," which would "now be preserved."² On the topic of European colonization in unoccupied or sparsely populated lands, Temple said it was "difficult . . . to do justice to this topic, so full of interest and hope for the future." He wanted to acquire government ownership of "eligible localities without delay or trouble" and begin construction of roads into the isolated areas.³

First, the "eligible localities" had to be discovered. In 1863, W. B. Thomson reported on a large area of the uplands called the Bichia-Raigarh tract of eastern Seoni district. As the Land Revenue Settlement Officer of Seoni district, Thomson had recently toured and explored the area in order to gather information on its geography, population, and economic potentials. He thought tea and coffee plantations could be established in some of the area and cattle ranches in other places. The

¹ Bloomfield, "Progress," p. 87, par. 2.

² Central Provinces, Report on the Administration of the Central Provinces up to August 1862, by Richard Temple (1862; reprint ed., Nagpur: Government Press, 1923), p. 93, par. 455.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 92, par. 451.

main obstacles to European colonization might be its isolation, lack of communications, and scarcity of labor. To solve these problems he recommended road construction and the immigration of labor. His detailed report along with a short summary by Temple was published in the Government Gazette of March 1864 with the hope of informing and attracting European settlers.¹

Second, the government needed to acquire title to land suitable for colonization and forest improvements. Like other districts of the Central Provinces, Mandla and Seoni districts were being surveyed, assessed, and a land revenue determined in the 1860s. By 1865 Thomson had classified land as either agricultural and non-agricultural, also called "waste" land, in the Bichia-Raigarh tract. In an area of 1356.5 square miles with 589 inhabited and uninhabited villages, he thought only 186 square miles of 68 villages could be considered agricultural land. He classified over 86 percent of the area (1170.6 square miles) with 521 villages as "waste" or government land.² In recommending Thomson's proposals, the Settlement Commissioner, John Morris, emphasized that "the tract to be reserved as excluded Government waste will be very large." Since most of the land consisted "of very superior land, with first-rate soil and excellent pasturage, covered in portions with very valuable forests and admirably adapted in other ways, from situation and climate for European settlers, the question of the measures necessary

¹Thomas, "Report," and India, Gazette--1864, pp. 127-137.

²W. B. Thomson, "Statement showing details of cultivation and waste, etc. in the Raigarh Tract," in IFP, March 1866, General #30, pp. 48-49.

for reclaiming the same becomes one of considerable importance."¹ Morris recommended that the explored tract along with some adjacent plains of Bhandara district be formed under a separate administration to ensure its improvement.

Morris, like Thomson before him and other British officials later, expressed two reasons why tribal forest cultivators should not be allowed to occupy or have land rights in the reserved government waste land. First, he thought they destroyed valuable forests, and second, they did not cultivate and settle in what Morris considered the best land. He described the tract as a "howling wilderness" in spite of "the extreme fertility of the soil and its great natural capabilities." He said

For miles not a habitation is to be seen whilst its only regular inhabitants are the wild Gonds and Baigas, who make no effort to reclaim the fertile virgin soil, and destroy the valuable sal forests by dhya cultivation."²

Thomson, in his final report on the land revenue settlement of Seoni, again described how and why he had decided to classify so large an area as reserved government waste and so small an area as agricultural land. He left instructions that the tribal population in the reserved government waste lands should be notified and moved into the agricultural villages.³ In Mandla district, just north of the

¹John Morris to CCCCPC, 24 January 1866, in IFP, March 1866, General #29, p. 42, par. 4.

²Ibid., p. 43, par. 6.

³W. B. Thomson, [Report on the Land Revenue Settlement in Seoni District, 1868], pars. 360-364, in Bloomfield, "Progress," pp. 100-01. Hereafter Thomson, Seoni.

Bichia-Raigarh tract, the Land Revenue Settlement Officer, H. C. E. Ward, generally followed the same procedures as Thomson, classifying most of the area as government waste land. However in twelve Baiga villages, he allowed them to continue bewars.¹

As a result of the land revenue proceedings in Bichia-Raigarh and Mandla district, about 7491 square miles were classified as government waste. All of this or 5010 square miles in Mandla district was made available for sale or lease, though only 860 square miles or 17.2 percent were considered cultivatable. In Balaghat 13 percent of the waste land was made available for allotment.² These figures applied to the new areas of the two districts after the founding of Balaghat district. Bichia was added to Mandla district, and the larger Raigarh tract formed the northern part of Balaghat. Southern Balaghat consisted of the northern plains of Bhandara district.

As created in the late 1860s, Balaghat district included two very different sub-units: the densely-populated plains called Balaghat tahsil, and the sparsely-populated uplands or Baihar tahsil. British administrators had decided to unite these two areas under one district administration to facilitate the immigration of farmers from the plains to the uplands.

In 1869, the Deputy Commissioner of Balaghat, A. Bloomfield, reported on the progress of programs. Three roads had been built through the

¹Ward, Mandla, quoted in Elwin, Baiga, pp. 112-13.

²C. P., Report on the Administration, 1866-67, ed. John Morris (Nagpur: M. Lawlor at the Chief Commissioner's Press, 1867), "Statistical Tables," A. 1.

hill passes from the lowlands. Indian farmers had been encouraged to lease plots of land and villages in the uplands, and government revenues had risen considerably. Forest revenues, for instance, had risen from Rs. 2,106 in 1865-66 to Rs. 9,634 in 1866-67 and up to Rs. 18,411 in 1868-69. Excise revenue (taxation on liquor and drugs) had risen from Rs. 4000 to over Rs. 13,000 in three years.¹ Bloomfield was encouraged by road construction and the increased revenue but he was disappointed by the small number of immigrant farmers and the lack of success among forest cultivators. Only fifty-nine cultivator colonists had "been induced to leave the plains and take up lands in area about 60,000 acres."² Also little had been "accomplished in bringing the wild Gonds and Bygahs down from the hills." He defended, however, the lack of success among the forest cultivators in the last two years, saying, "these people," had "followed for ages their present wild pursuits," and could not "be entirely weaned therefrom and introduced into . . . an entirely different sphere of life," in a short time.³

The activities of the British administrators in the Balaghat-Mandla area during the 1860s indicates they concentrated more on the promotion of programs such as colonization and increasing forest revenues than on tribal welfare. When faced with decisions, British administrators almost always chose and justified their own special programs which meant they ignored, disregarded or failed to promote tribal

¹Bloomfield, "Progress," p. 110, par. 103.

²Ibid., p. 109, par. 99.

³Ibid., p. 110, par. 101.

interests. The main feature of British administration in this area during the 1860s was the seizure of tribal land for government property, especially to promote colonization by non-tribal settlers. By 1870, this colonization program showed small progress among Indian settlers. Among Europeans, it was a failure. Only one European, a Frenchman, M. Michia, had bought land in Mandla district, but he did not fulfill his promise to colonize the land. A British administrator, J. Forsyth, characterized him as "speculating on the value of the forest produce," and "land-jobbing."¹

British attitudes toward the Baiga

While British laws, procedures, and programs of the 1860s deprived forest tribes of their legal rights to occupy and cultivate in the new government land, British administrators remained divided in their attitudes and goals about forest tribes. They admired some aspects of Baiga culture and disapproved others. They sought to change the Baigas, but were unable to discover and decide on which methods to use.

The British admired the Baigas for their independence, courage, and skill to live in a hostile forest environment. In the early 1860s, forest officer Pearson thought the "Bhoomeahs or Bygars" were "in some respects . . . superior to the Gonds." They showed "considerable energy in cutting down very large tracts of jungle on the hill sides, where they invariably farm their fields." Their "villages had an

¹Forsyth, Highlands, p. 380. The Frenchman is named in Bloomfield, "Progress," p. 9ln.

exceedingly compact and neat appearance."¹ Thomson added that the Baigas were "the most expert sportsmen, though armed with the bow and arrow." They knew "every inch of the contry" and were "thoroughly acquainted with the habits of all the beasts of the forest."² Ward, in Mandla, remarked on their courage even "to attack tigers, if it is to save a comrade." He was even more impressed by their "truth and free bearing"; and "a power of combination and independent organization very rare among savage tribes."³ They had a system of village tribunals to hear and decide disputes and manage "the internal affairs of their communities." This "patriarcal form of self-government" also impressed James Forsyth, though he remarked it, "of course," had, "under our alien system, . . . no legal authority."⁴ Bloomfield had considerable contact with the Baiga as District Commissioner of Balaghat district from 1868 to 1872, and 1879 to 1884. Instead of being shy as other Englishmen had described them, Bloomfield had "always found the Bygahs quite friendly."⁵ He thought them as "perhaps the least known and most interesting of the aborigines."⁶ His Notes on the Baigas of the Central Provinces, published in 1885, fully described Baiga culture and ended with a plea for a Christian mission among the Baiga to ensure their

¹Pearson, "Bhoomeahs," in Thomson, "Report," p. 129, par. 27.

²Thomson, "Report," p. 129, par. 28.

³Ward, quoted in Central Provinces Gazetteer (1870), p. cxvi.

⁴Forsyth, Highlands, p. 361.

⁵Bloomfield, "Progress," p. 106, par. 86.

⁶Bloomfield, Notes, p. 1.

continued improvement.¹

While British administrators admired the Baiga for several reasons, they were unanimous in their disapproval of forest cultivation and were convinced it destroyed valuable forests. British administrators generally agreed with Forsyth's remark that "the Baigas were the most terrible enemy to the forests we have anywhere in these hills."² Yet the British, in the 1860s, never seemed conscious of a contradiction in their observations and descriptions, nor answered it. The same area where Baigas had lived for centuries contained extensive sal and bamboo forests. For example, three paragraphs after Forsyth characterized the Baiga as "the most terrible enemy to the forests," he described "the area," which the sal forests "already cover with good timber and that which may with conservation be recovered for production of timber, is very great."³ British administrators already had the answer in the 1860s, but they did not make the connection: the rotation of bewar sites over twelve to fifteen year periods permitted forest regeneration. In the 1860s, however, the British remained convinced that forest cultivators destroyed the forests. This justified the occupation of lands by the government for conservation, taxation, and colonization.

The British disapproved of the Baigas for several other reasons, besides their supposed destruction of the forests. Baigas were criticized for being lazy, nomadic, poor, isolated, not contributing to the

¹Ibid., pp. 31-34.

²Forsyth, Highlands, p. 364.

³Ibid., p. 366.

market economy or government revenue, and for being less civilized than others. As early as 1863, Thomson had talked with a local Indian who traded in grain with the Baigas; and he hoped the trader could "succeed in civilizing them [the Baigas] so far as to make them settle down, cultivate the soil like other people, and leave off destroying the forests."¹ Later Thomson said he had grouped agricultural villages in clusters to provide "large continuous blocks" of government waste land and to

check the wandering of the squatter people, the dhya cultivators, who, having unlimited areas no longer at their disposal (which has virtually been the case, hitherto), must settle down as agricultur-
alists, and cultivate after a more civilized fashion, paying a
jamma [rent] which though light, will still be something appreciable,
not as they do at present, two or three annas a year per axe.²

While Thomson criticized them for their nomadic way of life and because they paid little for the use of land, Morris was similarly annoyed by their isolation from the market economy.

So long as these people do nothing but grow kodo or koatkee on dhya patches for their own food; so long as they produce nothing at all for sale or barter to other people, and so long as they actually consume nothing except a few grains of salt from the outer world, they can never improve, they can never rise in the human scale, but must continue to be wild men of the woods as they are now.³

Ward predicted the Baiga would not "drop the axe and take to the plough," until the British had convinced the Baiga of the "benefit it is to them," and had "created wants which their present practices and habits

¹Thomson, "Report," p. 130, par. 28.

²Thomson, Seoni, par. 361, in Bloomfield, "Progress," pp. 100-101.

³John Morris as quoted in Elwin, Baiga, p. 111.

will not enable them to provide for."¹

It is clear from British attitudes that they favored a single social and economic framework--settled farmers, practicing plough cultivation and using intensive methods such as irrigation to produce food and cash crops for exchange in a market economy, and paying a legitimate rent or revenue to the government. A local group which the British officials highly praised and contrasted with the Baiga, was the Powar "agricultural caste." The Powars practiced intensive rice cultivation in settled villages in the plains south of the uplands and in the valleys of the uplands. In the 1820s a retired Maratha officer, Lachman Niak, had carried out a colonization scheme by building a road and attracting Powars to settle some villages in the valleys.² The British colonization efforts in the late 1860s were mainly directed to attract more Powar settlers. In 1869 Bloomfield reported the majority (42 of 59) of the new settlers were Powars. He considered them "the most reliable and successful," as they had "set to work in earnest in enbanking their fields and constructing tanks."³ Not one of the new settlers was a Baiga, though nine Gonds were included.

British activities among tribals in the 1860s

British mixed attitudes of approval and disapproval toward the Baigas contributed toward uncertain and varied suggestions on how to

¹Ward, Mandla, quoted in Elwin, Baiga, p. 113.

²Thomson, "Report," pp. 134-34, pars. 63-68, and C. P. Gazetteer (1870), p. 23.

³Bloomfield, "Progress," p. 99, par. 56.

deal with forest cultivators. Almost all agreed the Baigas should eventually cease forest or axe cultivation and become settled or plough cultivators, but they could not agree on specific measures. In the late 1860s, though Baiga claims of land ownership were rejected, they were allowed the use of the land in some places. The administration declared that "according to all positive law, according to the [land revenue] Settlement Code, and according to the custom of the country," Baigas had "no title to proprietary [landlord] right or to occupancy [tenant] right in the tract over which they roamed."¹ In Mandla, Ward found it "quite impractical as well as hard and impolitic, to force the Baygars to give up their dhya cultivation and take to the plough." Instead he tried "to confine their destructive propensities within a ring fence." He found the Baigas of twelve villages "claimed" an area of 30 thousand acres, though they cultivated only 1,432 acres at the time. Ward allotted them over five times this area or 7,794 acres and said the Baigas were "quite satisfied with the arrangement made for them."² The Chief Commissioner criticized Thomson for not giving "sufficient consideration to the claims of aboriginal tribes" who had brought some forest lands under cultivation in the Raigarh tract. He hoped "the wild tribes" would eventually "settle down permanently" and "adopt more civilized ways." Meanwhile he thought "beware-cutting tribes [villages?] should be assigned tracts of land averaging a square mile or so."³ Later British

¹Quoted in Elwin, Baiga, p. 111.

²Ward, Mandla, quoted in Elwin, pp. 112-13.

³Quoted in Elwin, Baiga, p. 112, and in Bloomfield, Notes, p. 27n.

reports indicate this was not done.

Chief Commissioner Temple recognized the absolute prohibition of bevar might "improve these poor people off the face of the earth," and stopping dhya might lead "to despair" or to "distress." It might even mean "armed resistance by Gonds," or "plunder" or "cattle-stealing." He wanted to keep the forest tribes in the forests to prevent the "wild beasts" becoming "masters of the forests."¹ More than saving the forests from destruction, he wanted "to civilize these people and make them useful members of the Commonwealth."²

Local British administrators found these idealistic goals difficult to implement. Thomson learned from a "young kind of Chief" of a Baiga village that he did not cultivate "the good land" because "they had no bullocks," and "their fathers had" cultivated the hillsides "before them." Thomson tried to arrange for him to get bullocks.³ In Mandla, Ward had several discussions with Baigas to convince them that plough cultivation was better than bevar. But he found it difficult "to reply to some of the pertinent questions of the shrewd old men," and "one grey-beard" eventually shut him up. They made him a flattering offer of four wives if he would teach them plough cultivation. Seventy years later, an anthropologist remarked, if only Ward had "been a little more

¹C.P., Administration Report for 1863, Temple quoting himself in Stephen Hislop, Papers Relating to the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces, ed. and Preface by Richard Temple (Nagpur: 1866), p. vi.

²Richard Temple, quoted in Elwin, Baiga, p. 111.

³Thomson, "Report," p. 130, par. 28.

adventurous."¹

Bloomfield found some Baigas, probably Binjhwar's, had begun to "use the plough" in five villages located mostly in the northwest corner of Balaghat.² He thought the main reason other forest cultivating Gonds and Baigas did not adopt plough cultivation was because their life was "the least laborious that can be imagined."³ It would be difficult to induce forest cultivators "to follow a different mode of life." Compulsory measures would only drive them into adjacent areas such as the Feudatory States of Chhattisgarh, where they could "carry on the old practices without any form of interruption." Bloomfield advised conciliation, and he especially hoped the Baigas would begin "to look to the district authorities as their protectors." He told of one example of how he had "protected" the Baigas when they complained that private contractors had illegally fined them; he had made the contractors refund the money. Even more important, he permitted the Baigas to use forest land by paying an annual tax of Rs. 1 per axe.⁴

The writer of the Provincial Gazetteer was concerned about the tribals--so far contact with "civilization" had reduced "the semi-savage aboriginal" to the "condition of a mere besotted animal." The writer suggested alternative occupations which would shield forest tribes from

¹Ward, Mandla, p. 39 in Elwin, Baiga, p. 113.

²Bloomfield, "Progress," p. 108. The five villages were Kinara Merpa, Mau; Cowerja, Raigarh; Gowara, Sareka; and a "nameless tola near the Teepagurh hill."

³Ibid., p. 107, par. 90.

⁴Ibid., p. 109, par. 96.

"deteriorating influences." They might become policemen in the malarious forest areas or work as "watchers and woodmen in the Government forests."¹

Forsyth also questioned the effects of British laws on tribal people in the 1860s and for the future. He saw that one of the "flaws" in the sale and leasing of waste lands was that only "capitalists" could secure "legal property title; and the aboriginal never had such capital as would enable him to do so." More generally he realized the British legal system was "too sharp and swift" for the aboriginal. It was "death to the honest, timid, and unsettled aboriginal."² Even after a decade of British administration in the Central Provinces, Forsyth confessed "a grave problem remains unsolved in the question of our duty towards these races as a Government."³

During the 1860s British administrators made several suggestions and attempts to deal with the forest tribes. Like their attitudes of approval and disapproval, their methods alternated between conciliation and compulsion. They legally reserved large lands for the government and informed forest cultivators they must move out of those lands into agricultural villages. They considered the prohibition of bevar and the end to the axe tax in order to force forest cultivators to begin plough cultivation and pay rents and taxes. But generally British administrators found proposals for these compulsory measures hard to enforce. In

¹C. P. Gazetteer (1870), pp. cxix-cxx.

²Forsyth, Highlands, pp. 163, 165.

³Ibid., p. 24.

trying conciliatory measures, they permitted a continuance of some axe cultivation in specially designated areas and tried to "wean" forest tribes from the axe through discussions, suggestions, and protection. Most Baigas were too poor to buy or rent land, cattle, and farm implements. They lacked the training and skills for plough cultivation; nor were they convinced of its comparative benefits.

Baiga Aid Program, 1870-1890

British activities to settle Baigas and prevent bewar cultivation in the 1870s and 1880s occurred in four stages. In the first stage, during the early 1870s, Bloomfield continued to encourage Baigas to adopt plough cultivation. In the second stage, in the late 1870s, the British decided finally to prohibit bewar; the new District Commissioner Repton attempted to enforce the prohibition while offering financial assistance to willing Baiga settlers. In the early 1880s, when Bloomfield returned to the district as Deputy Commissioner, he expanded aid programs. In the last stage, British administrators decided to reduce aid and limit it to a few villages. By 1888 the British diverted their attention to other administrative problems, considering the aid program a success.

During Bloomfield's first administration (1868-1872), he was able to encourage and assist Baigas of three villages to begin plough cultivation under their leaders. Before 1868 some Binjhar Baigas of northwestern Balaghat district, in the Mau valley, had already begun plough cultivation. Among the Narotrias of the central highlands, the Baigas of Gohara village also began plough cultivation under Garur's leadership.

Bloomfield convinced a second Narotria chief, Matna Pujari of Jaldidhar, to try plough cultivation, but Matna Pujari warned Bloomfield he would also continue some bewar, even if Bloomfield "cut his throat for it."¹ The capture of a rogue elephant led to the settlement of a third Narotria village. The elephant, having escaped from Ellichpur in 1851, eventually wandered into the Balaghat highlands. In 1871 the "man eating" elephant ran amok, killing 41 persons, before he was captured and killed. Bloomfield and Mr. Naylor were helped by the Baigas of Khandapur who used their "charms and incantations" to blind the elephant.² With the Rs. 200 reward money and Bloomfield's encouragement, the villagers under Ranjur Pujari's leadership bought bullocks and implements to settle on the "waste lands" of Karwahi village, granted to them revenue free by the government.³ Bloomfield's departure in 1872 marked the end of this first stage.

The second stage began in 1875 with the prohibition of bewar in Government forests and culminated with Major H. M. Repton's rule of the district in 1878. After bewar prohibition there was a very extensive emigration of Baigas from Government to Zamindari forests where they continued bewar.⁴ Repton arrived in March 1878. He appears to have been the type of "young man" a later administrator described and dreaded,

¹Bloomfield to Cr. of Nagpur Dn., 10 May 1881, in Bloomfield, Notes--App., p. 12, par. 6. Hereafter Bloomfield, May 1881.

²Bloomfield, Notes, p. 24; and Balaghat DG (1907), pp. 38-41 as quoted from the C.P. Gazette of 16 December 1871.

³Bloomfield, Notes, p. 24; and May 1881, p. 12, par. 6.

⁴Bloomfield, Notes, p. 27.

who was "in a hurry to build up a standardized brave new world" by stopping bewar, a practice "so often misrepresented as an unmitigated evil."¹ Repton saw the contradiction behind bewar prohibition and continued taxation of bewar axes. In 1877, 282 axes had been taxed. Repton wrote, "the Baigas have noticed that the prohibition was nominal and have therefore not obeyed the law."² Bewar was prohibited in Zamindari forests also; Repton ended the axe tax, and destroyed bewar crops. However, he recommended aid to Baigas willing to try plough cultivation. The Chief Commissioner rebuked Repton--he would not "sanction so harsh a measure as the destruction of crops," and recommended somewhat less stringent measures of axe confiscation, arrests, and penalties for bewar. This "vigorous system of prevention" should be "accompanied by offers of land and grants of bullocks and seed." Rs. 1000 was sanctioned for this.³ The reaction to Repton's "harsh" measures initiated a ten year period of aid programs to "induce Baigas to settle."⁴

In the third stage aid programs for the Baigas dramatically expanded as Bloomfield returned as District Commissioner of Balaghat from August 1880 to February 1885. Bloomfield attempted to encourage any and

¹W. V. Grigson, The Aboriginal Problem in Balaghat District (Nagpur: 1941), p. 33.

²Repton, quoted in CCCP to Cr. of Nagpur Dn., letter of late 1878, in CCCP to GOI, 1 September 1881, par. 4, in Bloomfield, Notes--App., p. 2.

³CCCP to Cr. of Nagpur Dn. late 1878, in Bloomfield, Notes--App., p. 2.

⁴CCCP to GOI, 1 September 1881, par. 4, in Bloomfield, Notes--App., p. 2.

all Baigas who wanted to try cultivation, and to introduce closer contact between Baigas and Europeans. In June 1881, he obtained the sanction of a Rs. 10,000 grant for Baiga assistance. From a small beginning in 1878 of Rs. 400 to assist 19 Baiga families, the aid program reached a peak in 1882 when about 190 Baiga families were assisted with Rs. 2,280 spent on bullocks, grain and implements.¹

British administrators justified this conciliatory aid program mainly as a means to save the forests from bewar and dhya cultivators. In Mandla district, where there was also an aid program in the early 1880s, the District Commissioner remarked that if the "bulk" of the Baigas would settle down, "the result must be most beneficial to our forests and to the people themselves."² Lindsay Neill also thought it would "be profitable."³ He wanted to "wean the Baigas of Balaghat from the destructive habits of their forefathers and to turn them into regular cultivators."⁴ Though he had "no intention to deal harshly with the Baigas," he emphasized "the abstinence of these people from destruction of the forests is worth many thousands of rupees."⁵ John W. Neill went further, saying "these people have a claim on the public and on the Government for assistance" since "their ways of life are being interfered

¹Bloomfield, Notes, pp. 28-29.

²Letter, 10 June 1881, in Bloomfield, Notes--App., p. 6.

³Letter, 1 September 1881, par. 14, in Bloomfield, Notes--App., p. 6.

⁴Lindsay Neill to CCCP, 27 December 1882, par. 1, in Ibid., p. 26.

⁵Ibid., par. 10, in Ibid., p. 27.

TABLE 21

BAIGA ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Year	Amount (in Rupees)		Families		Villages	
	Total to date	Current year	Total to date	Current year	Total to date	Current year
1878 (end)	400	400	19	19	1	1
1879 March	c.2,000 or (1,430)	. . .	c.33	. . .	. . .	. . .
1880 June	1,830	. . .	44	. . .	. . .	. . .
1881 May	2,730 or c.3,000	900	c.75	. . .	. . .	. . .
1881 (end)	(4,983)	2,163	c.173	. . .	8	. . .
1882 (end)	(7,173)	2,280	(224)	c.190	20	18
1883 (end)	7,500 or 6,250	1,626	(274) c.300	84	23	. . .
1884 1885	(n o r e p o r t s )			. . .	. . .	. . .
1886 Sept.	8,261	397 or 565	(276)	69	30	6
1887	c.9,500	632	. . .	94	. . .	10

SOURCES: Bloomfield, Notes, and Notes-App.; "1884 Report;" Thomas, "1866 Report;" and "1888 Report."

Amounts of assistance and number of families assisted vary according to source even within the same year. Numbers in parenthesis are my own calculations.

with, and unaided" they would "not be able to adapt."¹

In a plea to the administration, Bloomfield fully stated the case for assistance even more strongly. The need to end the "very great" damage Baigas did to the forests was only one reason they were "worthy and deserving" of assistance. While some officers might

naturally feel indignant on seeing these devastations, and vow vengeance and reprisals in the way of burning crops, summary evictions, and so forth, . . . they entirely forget, if indeed are not ignorant, of the rights the Baigas might claim. For generations untold . . . the ancestors of these Baigas have lived, died and been buried on the slopes of these hills and in the fastness of these jungles. They have supported themselves, their families and their aged parents without the aid or interference of the State, or poor laws, or anything else

Surely then these Baigas might fairly claim absolute occupancy [tenant] rights of the land they have held so long They have not, however, . . . put forward any claim whatever They have quietly bowed to whatever authority has been set up over them They have hardly so much as grumbled; they have given no trouble at all . . . [and] earned a hard though earnest livelihood in their own quiet way.²

It would have been difficult with other tribes such as Sonthals and Bhils or Assamese tribes--"bloodshed and jungle fighting would have been the order of the day."³ Bloomfield wanted to use "steady continuous pressure coupled with unchanging kindness and an annual expenditure." He hoped Baigas would "bring all their troubles direct to the head of the district," so they would soon be "confident in him" and "more ready to follow his advice."⁴

¹John W. Neill, Cr. of Nagpur Dn., 6 June 1881, in Ibid., p. 8.

²Bloomfield, 10 May 1881, pars. 12 and 13, in Bloomfield, Notes-- App., pp. 13-14.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., par. 15, in Ibid., p. 15.

While John Neill rejected Bloomfield's idea of giving Baigas rights in the land "as extravagant and based on an erroneous theory of property," he approved of spending "every year something. . . on settling these uncivilized men."¹

By mid-1881 Bloomfield reported Rs. 2730 had been spent to settle about 75 Baiga families in eight villages. Over the next three years he spent about Rs. 2,000 annually, so that by the end of 1883 he estimated about half (300 families) of the Baiga population (600 families) in the district had been assisted to settle down in twenty-three villages.² The majority of these were Narotrias in the four villages of Ghondi, Karwahi, Budhutoli, and Sarekha, located south of Baihar town. (See map.) Some Binjhvars also were assisted in northeastern Balaghat district, where they took "more readily to the plough" than other Biagas. The most difficult and "wildest of all" were the Barotrias of eastern Baihar tahsil.³ At first they refused "to have anything to do with Government bullocks on any terms," because they feared "the Government was endeavoring . . . to get them well into their power."⁴ After Bloomfield assured them it "was for their benefit," five families accepted assistance in 1882, and the next year 20 families accepted grain assistance

¹Letter, 6 June 1881, In Ibid., p. 8.

²Bloomfield, Notes, pp. 28-30; and Bloomfield to Cr. of Nagpur Dn., 4 September 1833, in Bloomfield, Notes--App., pp. 24-25.

³Bloomfield, 10 May 1881, p. 12.

⁴Bloomfield to Cr. of Nagpur Dn., 16 December 1882, par. 11, in Bloomfield, Notes--App., p. 22. Hereafter Bloomfield, Dec. 1882.

while eleven accepted bullocks.¹ Several Barotriás, however, were not "assured." The Barotriás of Kinarda and other villages, totaling 57 families along with 24 Gond families, fled south to the "remote parts of the Saletekri Zamidar" to continue bewar.² Bloomfield felt generally the aid program had at least begun and made "fairly good" progress while admitting "the resuscitation of bewar in the Zamindaris" was a "serious check" on the program.³

Baigas protested against the prohibition of bewar in other ways than fleeing the area. When John W. Neill, Commissioner of Nagpur Division, visited Baihar in March 1881 he met almost all the adult male Baigas at Karwahi, Baihar and other places. They asked that the prohibition "be withdrawn and prayed and besought me not to deprive them of their only means of livelihood," or to permit it one more year, pleading "their inability to take to regular cultivation." Neill recognized that forbidding all bewar and not assisting Baigas would result in one of two unfortunate alternatives--either the Baigas would "cut bewar at all risks," or "emigrate en mass to enjoy in Kawardha and elsewhere the liberty they no longer possess with us."⁴ Another report recognized that "however will the forests might be watched surreptitious dhya clearing would occur," unless Baigas were offered and learned "other means of

¹Bloomfield, 4 September 1883, in Bloomfield, Notes--App., p. 24.

²Ibid., par. 9, p. 25.

³Bloomfield, Notes, p. 30n.

⁴John W. Neill, 6 June 1881, in Bloomfield, Notes--App., p. 8.

livelihood."¹ Though some Baigas in the early 1880s were able to become plough cultivators with government assistance, they continued to protest the Government's prohibition; other Baigas probably continued to live in remote areas or fled to areas where British pressures were less.

Bloomfield's efforts to help the Baigas went beyond administrative assistance programs. He tried to give some Baigas "an idea of a more civilized state of society," by showing them the "wonders" of contemporary India.² In 1869 he convinced a Pujari (headman) to visit Balaghat town. However, the night after he arrived he disappeared without telling anyone.³ In 1877 two Baigas walked with Bloomfield the 100 miles to Nagpur to see the town, and in February 1882 two others accompanied Bloomfield to Nagpur, traveling part of the way by train. Bloomfield showed them the cotton mills, museum, the fort with its large guns, the electric light, "and everything else of interest." In Balaghat, he later showed Baigas "the scenery, etc. of other lands" by a "Magic Lantern."⁴

At the same time Bloomfield was trying to interest Baigas in contemporary British and Indian culture, he felt Europeans should know more about the Baigas. When the Lord Bishop of Calcutta visited Baihar in

¹CCCP to GOI, 1 Sept. 1881, par. 14, in Bloomfield, Notes--App., p. 10.

²Bloomfield, Dec. 1882, par. 14, in Notes--App., p. 23.

³Bloomfield, "Progress," pp. 108-09, par. 95.

⁴Bloomfield, Notes, p. 32; Notes--App., p. 24.

1882, Bloomfield invited Baigas to perform their Karma dance. About 250 Narotrias and ten Binjhvars, including no less than eighty women came to "honor" the visitors.¹ Bloomfield hoped his Notes on the Baigas would attract European attention, donations, and perhaps a missionary. He feared the Baigas would revert to bevar cultivation or sink to "the level of the lowest classes" in agricultural villages unless "a Christian Mission" was established in the Baigas "midst." He thought this was the "only one means" to ensure "the Baigas continuing a steady advance in the direction in which they have been started."² Though a mission was established several years later in Balaghat town with branches in Baihar, it did not work mainly among Baigas nor convert them.

Proposals for reorganizing the aid program to Baigas in 1884 initiated the fourth stage. The proposals came from F. Venning, Commissioner of Nagpur Division. His ideas implied a criticism of Bloomfield's efforts, seen as too "unsystematic."

Venning wanted to concentrate government assistance in two ways-- (1) "to grant substantial aid to deserving cases," instead of small sums to a large number of Baigas, and (2) to reduce the number of assisted villages so that Baigas could be "properly supervised."³ In 1885-86 District Commissioner Bryce Thomas implemented this revised program.

¹Bloomfield, Notes, pp. 22,32; and Notes--App., p. 23.

²Bloomfield, Notes, p. 31.

³CCCP to Cr. of Nagpur Dn., 21 February 1888, in CPRAP, February 1888, Settlement #10, p. 76, par. 2. Hereafter 1888 Review.

Whereas 30 villages had been assisted before 1885, Thomas offered assistance to Baigas in only six of the largest Baiga villages. The amount of aid and the number of families assisted also declined. While as many as 190 families had received Rs. 2,280 assistance in 1882, Thomas concentrated the program among 69 Narotria families using Rs. 397. Most of these received only grain and tools, while 11 families received "substantial" aid of bullocks, grain and tools. One of them was Natti of Sarekha village. The administration supplied his family with two bullocks, one khandi food grain and one and a half khandis seed grain, one pickaxe (dholi), and one plough, a total value of Rs. 31 1/2.¹

By the mid 1880s, British administrators had begun to question the effectiveness of the aid program. Even Bloomfield, while thinking the settled Baigas were "more happy and contented" than before, admitted they were "like all wild branches of the human race . . . only too ready and willing to be spoilt by being allowed to sit at home at ease and do nothing."² The Chief Commissioner also remarked the program was "not intended to pauperize the Baigas but to aid them to tide over the difficulties" of abandoning "their hereditary means of livelihood" and adopting "a new and to them a somewhat irksome occupation."³ Thomas

¹Thomas, Report of 1886, in CPRAP, Dec. 1886, Statement A., pp. 10-11.

²Bloomfield, 4 September 1883, in Notes--App., p. 25.

³CCCP, "Review of the Measures Taken for Reclaiming Baigas in the Districts of Balaghat and Mandla," 21 April 1884, in CPRAP, April 1884, Land Revenue #10, p. 39. Hereafter 1884 Review.

characterized the Baigas as "excessively lazy and opposed to any work"; they built "wretched field bunds" (embankments). He suspected the Baigas of digging up and eating the Government seed grain, and "that more than one Government bullock, reportedly destroyed by tigers," had "furnished a meal for these people."¹ Whether these suspicions were true or not, later British writers accepted and repeated them, and Thomas decided Baigas had to be more closely supervised. He chose and designated a local resident in the six villages as "Madatgar" or assistant. Each received some "land rent-free" as payment to teach the Baigas how to "prepare their fields" and sow the seed, and take "care of the produce of all Baigas after the harvest"; then the grain was measured and "accounts . . . made up." Two or three of the six madatgars were non-Baigas. Only by the arrangement of madatgars, Thomas felt, could the administration hope "to gradually reclaim these people from their wild life and forest-destroying proclivities."²

The last year Baigas were assisted appears to be 1887. The administration granted Rs. 732 to 94 families in 10 villages. 81 families were assisted in the five villages which had been assisted the previous year and 34 families were assisted in five new villages. Over the past six years, Rs. 9,500 had been spent on the Baigas.³

Already in late 1886 Venning felt "the main object" of the aid program "in training the Baiga to settle" had "been attained." He thought

¹Thomas, Report of 1886, p. 5, par. 3.

²Ibid., pp. 5-7.

³1888 Review, par. 3.

"bewar had really been put an end to in the Government forests," though some of the Zamindars still allowed "it in their own forests." Thus he found it "unnecessary to apply to Government for any further grant."¹

Over a twenty year period from 1868 to 1888 British administrators had used "compulsory and conciliatory" methods to end bewar and settle Baigas. While at first conciliation brought Baigas of only three villages to settle down, the compulsory methods later brought as little success, resulting in difficulties and an exodus of the Baigas. The intensified assistance program of the early 1880s provided some Baigas with the necessary land, bullocks, grain and tools to begin plough cultivation. In the mid-1880s administrators reduced and limited assistance and became convinced the program had generally succeeded.

As administrators considered the Baiga program a success, they once again turned their attention away from tribal improvement to reorganizing the management of forests and promoting agricultural settlement of the upland valleys. In the late 1880s the provincial administration reassessed forest and colonization policies. In each district Government forests were divided between "A" and "B" lands. In the next decade, forest officers made detailed examinations of forest lands and formed "working plans" for "A" forests to ensure conservation through rotated cuttings. More lands were classified as "B" or less valuable forest; "survey plots" of about ten acres each were clearly mapped and

¹F. Venning, Cr. of Nagpur Dn. to CCCP, 26 November, in CPRAP, December 1886, Takavi #2, p. 4.

made available for agricultural settlers. The administration decided on two changes--(1) in order to provide forest workers with lands, "Forest Villages" were established within the "A" forests; (2) agricultural settlers on government and "B" forest lands would be taxed through the ryotwari system.¹

In the Forest Villages, families were permitted to live and cultivate some nearby land as long as one adult male of each family worked for the forest department. In Balaghat and Mandla districts, most of these families were Gonds and Baigas. Later investigations indicated life was not easy in the forest villages, unless families had an additional adult male who could supplement the family income of wages from forest work through garden cultivation or other activities. Nonetheless, the existence of forest villages generally supplied the forest department with local labor while they allowed tribals to remain within a forest environment.

By classifying some of the forest lands as "B" areas, more lands were made available for cultivators. One of the main reasons for the creation of Balaghat district in 1867 had been to encourage colonization. A report of the 1890s reviewed this goal over the years.

After the first wild hope of European colonization and tea and coffee plantations had died away, it remained only to carry through the more modest ambition of making the tract a well cultivated one according to native standards.

¹See CCCP, Resolution, 8 November 1888, on "Forest Cultivation and Excise of Culturable Land," in CPRAP, November 1888, #20, pp. 65-70. The ryotwari system contrasted to the malguzari or landlord system of tenants paying rent to the landlord and the landlord paying revenue to the Government. Under the ryotwari system cultivators (or ryots) paid rent to the Government collected by a local agent, the patel.

As the local Gond was "a migratory, thriftless fellow," it was necessary to attract "cultivators of industrious castes . . . from the plains." Bloomfield made "some progress . . . towards settling the large expanses of fertile land with sturdy Powar peasantry."¹ By 1869, 37 villages, and by 1870, 55 villages had been leased out for ten years with the prospects of either renewing the leases, or obtaining landlord rights over the village if fifty percent of the area was brought under cultivation.² By 1872, 71 other villages had been leased out on somewhat similar terms. Other batches of villages were leased in 1876, 1877 and 1884 for a total of about 300 villages. The new settlers found many hardships of disease, fatigue, and wild animals.³ When Venning visited the leased villages in 1886, he reported few settlers had fulfilled the terms of the leases. Consistent with the general shift of administrative policy from landlord to cultivator ownership of the land, all villages except eleven became ryotwari villages. Five men were awarded landlord rights and six awarded the post of hereditary headmen (patel). After the late 1880s the administration managed and taxed the majority of the leased villages and any new villages under this ryotwari land tenure.

The Baiga Chak in Mandla, 1890s

While administrative activity among the Baigas languished after the

¹A. Mayne, "Preliminary Reports on the re-assessment of Balaghat and Baihar tahsils," quoted in J. R. Scott, Land Revenue Settlement Report of Balaghat District, 1895-1898 [1901], p. 4, par. 12.

²Bloomfield, "Progress," p. 98, par. 54; and Balaghat DG (1907), p. 267.

³Balaghat DG (1907), pp. 60-62.

1880s in Balaghat district, a new program was initiated in Mandla in the early 1890s. Like Balaghat, forest administration was being reorganized in Mandla and the administration began to consider how to effectively prevent bewar in that district. At the same time, the administration considered Baigas and others as valuable forest workers and wished to establish some areas especially for the Baigas to live.

In the 1860s Ward had permitted Baigas of twelve villages in eastern Mandla district to continue bewar. In the late 1870s and early 1880s, the administration offered assistance to Baigas to settle down, simultaneous to the program in Balaghat district. In Mandla between June 1879 and 1884 a total of Rs. 2806 was spent on 127 families to settle in six villages. The money bought cattle, seed-grain, and farm implements, plus a small amount used in 1879 to settle petty debts. One of the villages was Silpur (later probably called Silpura). Lap Singh, the leader of Baigas from Kisli and Lalijharia villages, had been convinced in an interview with the District Commissioner in 1881 to bring twenty families to settle in Silpur village near Bichia.¹ In that same year, however, "as soon as it was made clear" that "fire and axe cultivation" would be prohibited, "most of the [Mandla] Baigas fled into Kawardha State."²

Mandla district consisted of two distinctly different tahsils--in the west (Mandla tahsil) around Mandla town, much of the valley was well

¹Mandla District Commissioner, letter mid-1881, in Bloomfield, Notes--App., p. 5; see also 1884 Review, p. 39.

²Mandla DC, mid-1881, p. 6.

cultivated though surrounded by forests. In the east, in Ramgarh (later Dindori) tahsil, the geography was the opposite--mostly forested hills surrounding small cultivated valleys. Correspondingly, malguzari villages predominated in Mandla tahsil, while government villages (ryotwari) and forest villages predominated in Dindori tahsil. While the assistance programs of the early 1880s dealt mainly with Baigas of Mandla tahsil, the program of the 1890s concentrated on bewar prevention in Ramgarh tahsil.

It was here that the administration wanted to re-establish an area for Baigas, like Ward's "ring-fence" of the 1860s. M. Mattanah (Divisional Forest Officer of Mandla) indicated the value of Baigas to the forest department.

We are entirely dependent for our labour supply on these Baigas who are by far the best wood-cutters of the district. Indeed it appears to me we can scarcely get on with our work, should we loose this valuable source of labor supply. Collection of harra and minor products, and line cuttings, would be impossible without them.¹

In May 1890 the administration selected an area of 23,920 acres in southeast Ramgarh tahsil, to be called the "Baiga reserve," or the Baiga Chak, for all bewar-cutting Baiga. Baigas were to move into the Chak as bewar would be strictly prohibited outside the area. Only Baiga "must be allowed to settle in the Reserve."² Forest officers would show Baigas

¹Muttanah quoted in Elwin, Baiga, p. 116.

²CCCP to Cr. of Jabalpur Dn., 13 May 1890, in CPRAP, May 1890, Land Revenue, #17, p. 43, par. 5. Hereafter "Baiga Chak." Under this Resolution, the British dealt with four types of lands--the Chak or reservation, Forest Department land, ryotwari or Government land mainly in Dindori tahsil, and malguzari land mainly in Mandla tahsil. Baigas at times migrated to a fifth type of land--Zamindari estates where British administrators had less direct authority.

the areas where bewar was permitted, in order to prevent bewar and denudation of the forest on the ridges. The administration made it clear, however, that even in the Chak they disapproved "this form of cultivation," and would tax each axe Rs. 1 per year. Baigas were offered two alternatives to bewar--(1) to settle down as plough cultivators, and (2) to work for the forest department. The incentives for plough cultivation included no rent on leased plots for the first three years and one-quarter rupee for the next seven years; in addition the administration would advance interest-free loans "for the purchase of plough cattle and seed-grain." The Forest Department would find work "for all who may agree to work in the forest under the orders of Forest Officers." These Baiga would be helped to build houses and provided with "plots for home cultivation" in Forest Villages. They would be "preferentially employed" by the Department; all private contracts for collecting forest produce "must stipulate this preferential employment." The Baigas who refused to migrate into the Chak, were offered the same two alternatives on the same conditions--to become plough cultivators on Government plots, or be hired as workmen for the forest Department. For Baigas living in or near malguzari villages, the administration encouraged the landlords to settle Baigas. If a landlord brought Baigas to cultivate land for five years, the fields would be taxed at only one-half the normal rate; landlords "who really interest themselves" to settle Baigas, would be given an honorary headdress (purgri) in a public ceremony (the District Durbar).¹

¹Ibid., p. 44, pars. 8-10.

The administration discouraged Baigas who lived in Mandla tahsil from migrating to the Reserve, though the administration said there was "room enough in the Reserve for the Baigas" of both tahsils. Rather, efforts "shall be made to induce" the Mandla tahsil Baigas "to settle down" under the previous described "attraction of terms" on Government or malguzari land. In order to stop any further bewar cultivation in malguzari villages, the administration would enforce the terms of the village administration papers (wajib-ul-arz) which prohibited the cutting of valuable trees.¹

The administration's orders of May 1890 establishing the Baiga Chak contained a mixture of confusing, or even contradictory, ideas. Rather than the original purpose of the Chak--to provide an area for all bewar-cutting Baiga--in essence the administration wished to convert or reform their residents into plough cultivators. The administration also preferred, in the end, for Mandla tahsil Baigas to remain in their villages, not to move, but settle to plough cultivation.

The next few years became some of the most difficult for Mandla District Baigas; many of the provisions of the May 1890 orders were not consistently enforced or fulfilled. Within the Chak, forest officers selected areas for bewar which the Baigas found unsatisfactory or insufficient. The administration was also slow to offer the promised financial assistance both within and outside the Chak. In 1895 the administration decided Baigas were not settling rapidly enough and thus allowed Gonds and other plough cultivators to migrate into the Chak to help

¹Ibid., p. 45, par. 11.

bring land under cultivation.¹ In 1903, the Forest Department wanted the Baigas of Rajni Sarai village in the Chak to move to the Banjar Forest Reserve to cut timber for railway sleepers (ties). Instead the entire population of about 100 escaped to Kawardha. Gonds repopulated the village. In ten years (1891 to 1901) the population of the Chak fell from 1,551 Baigas of 362 families to 700 Baigas of 132 families. The exodus of the Ragni Sarai Baigas further reduced the Baiga population to 600.² The Mandla District Gazetteer of 1912 reported that only four of the original seven villages remained in the Chak. The writer seemed somewhat puzzled that "in spite of the many inducements offered by the Government" for Baigas to "abandon their old style of cultivation," seventy-one families (or about 200 people) still cut bevar at the enhanced rate of Rs. 2 per axe.³ By 1912 the Chak's forests were "altogether barren of game, both large and small"; the Baigas evidently exhausted this supplementary food source during the last twenty-two years.⁴ In these years the Chak Baigas had not received sufficient bevar lands or adequate financial assistance; non-Baigas had been permitted to enter the area; the administration's attempt to requisition Baiga labor had caused some to leave the Chak.

Baigas in forest villages just outside the Chak refused to migrate into the Chak, and the strict prohibition of bevar, inadequate assistance

¹Elwin, Baiga, p. 122.

²Ibid.

³Mandla DG (1912), p. 233.

⁴Ibid.

for agriculture, and the lack of employment in the forests meant the Baigas faced near starvation. Later Baigas remembered the early 1890s-- "There was no food, there were no bullocks, there was no money."¹ A local Forest Ranger, Mohan Lal, reported to his superiors,

the poor Baigas is . . . living from hand to mouth . . . having even no sufficient cloth to cover their loins. They could not be allowed to make new bewars nor have they been supplied with other means of support. So death is staring these poor helpless people in their faces . . . and these innocent loyal creatures are at the mercy of district authorities.²

He asked that bewar be permitted for at least one more year but his request was unsuccessful.

Baigas, themselves, petitioned the Government. Dholi Baiga of Udhor village pleaded in 1892, that since bewar prohibition

we daily starve, having had no food grain in our possession. The only wealth we possess is our axe. We have no clothes to cover our body with, but we pass cold nights by the fire-side. We are now dying for want of food . . . We cannot go elsewhere, as the British Government is everywhere. What fault have we done that the Government does not take care of us? Prisoners are supplied with ample food in jail. A cultivator of the grass is not deprived of his holding, but the Government does not give us our right who have lived here generations past.³

The provincial officer in charge of the Agriculture Department, J. B. Fuller, toured the Mandla and adjacent Bilaspur areas in 1893 and wrote,

The recent orders of Government have really brought the bewar-cutting Baigas of Mandla and Bilaspur to a state of destitution. Their cultivation with the axe and mattock is of an entirely different type to plough cultivation, and they cannot more reasonably be forced to

¹Elwin, Baiga, p. 118.

²Mohan Lal, in Elwin, Baiga, p. 119.

³Dholi Baiga, in Elwin, Baiga, p. 130.

a plough than a weaver can be forced to service in a cotton mill.

The Bhumias of Bilaspur complained bitterly to me of the hardships they were put to for bare subsistence The Bhumias of Lormi obliged me by an exhibition of dancing, but they refused for some time my presents of money, eagerly asking instead for their lost bewars.¹

He questioned whether there were sufficient reasons for the Government

calling on its subjects to reform or perish. But the reform must be supported by very strong reasons, and the more numerous the people affected the stronger must be the case against them. With these people there are . . . sentimental reasons for kind treatment. They are relics of old time; they live in places which no others would dare to inhabit; and it seems hard to deny them their customary food in order to lengthen the life of valueless jungle.²

Sixty-four Baiga families in four forest villages began cutting bewar again at the end of 1892. Government severely reprimanded them but did not take criminal action. The District Commissioner remarked that the Baiga "clung like a spoilt child to their axes."³ Finally in 1894, Rs. 800 and fifty-six bullocks were supplied to Baigas. It was the intention to lend two bullocks and seed grain to each Baiga family who wished it.⁴ By 1912 however, about 450 Baiga families had migrated to the Pandaria Zamindari of Bilaspur district where they continued bewar.⁵

In the Mandla tahsil, at least one large landlord, the owner of the

¹J. B. Fuller, in Elwin, Baiga, p. 128.

²Ibid., p. 129.

³Ibid., p. 119.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Mandla DG (1912), p. 233. Concerning the 450 families who refused to move into the Chak, the writer is unclear if all or a portion of them migrated.

Ghurgi estate, allowed bewar from 1894 to 1898, until it was detected or reported to the administration. Then the prohibition of cutting valuable trees in malguzari areas was enforced. The landlord had allowed 1,153 bewars to be cut on 6,172 acres at an axe rate of one and a half rupee.¹ This probably was the last time Baigas were allowed or detected practicing bewar on a large scale in Mandla tahsil or even in Mandla district. Baigas continued to petition against the bewar prohibition, especially during the famine of the late 1890s. In 1897 Guhra and Ramsingh, Baigas of Kukrapani village, begged the administration to permit bewar in the forest near their village, at a time when the administration was "helping everyone." They said, "We are dying of starvation. Besides bewar we have no other profession."² Like other petitions it was rejected as being contrary to the administration's policy.

The pleas of the Baigas in the 1890s and the administration's investigation of forests began to stimulate a re-assessment of administration policy toward Baigas in the twentieth century. Fuller had already felt Baigas might be allowed to bewar in remote forests. C. M. McCrie, the Divisional Forest Officer of Mandla, examined the effects of bewar in the Ghurgi estate. He found "the figures clearly show that bewar-cutting does not entail the permanent extinction of forest growth on the areas on which it is practiced." Bewars did "little harm or permanent damage" when old bewars were allowed "sufficient rest" and when the forest was protected from fires spreading beyond the bewars. Bewars

¹Elwin, Baiga, p. 122.

²Guhra and Ramsingh, in Elwin, Baiga, p. 130.

"did not have any real effect of denudation or ruining the water-supply."¹ In the early twentieth century (about 1901) J. B. Fuller again restated his doubts about "the past rather exaggerated ideas . . . of the injurious effects of bewar." Bewar might change the types of trees which grew in bewar areas, but he thought it "much more important that a tribe of people should live in peace and comfort."² A. P. Percival, a forest officer, who had worked several years in both Balaghat and Mandla districts, re-affirmed McCrie's and Fuller's ideas in 1909. He thought "the importance of the whole matter [of bewar destroying forests] had been exaggerated," and there was "a general want of perspective" when "urgent questions such as the fire protection and the working of several hundred square miles of pure sal forests" were "ignored or passed by without comment" while so much was "talked and written about the Baiga Chak."³ Percival emphasized that Baigas only practiced bewar above the frost zone permitting "the extraordinary regrowth that springs up within a few years." Gonds and others might damage the forest below the frost line causing "the ruined aspect of many low-lying frost-bitten areas." Percival asked, if bewar caused permanent damage, how could one explain "the often wonderful regrowth of sal" that stretched "in an almost unbroken line of forest from the Baiga Chak to Karadih towards Amarkantak, say twenty square miles," or the sal forests of Balaghat where "the majority are old bewar areas?" He thought that if the forests

¹McCrie, in Ibid., p. 126.

²Fuller, in Ibid., p. 128.

³Percival, in Ibid., p. 125.

were near railways and had obvious commercial value, "no one would say anything about damage or denudation" and the forest department would "not professionally hesitate for a moment in constituting felling series."¹

McCrie, Fuller, Percival and other officers expressed opinions on forest conservation which coincided with the Baiga ideas and practices for controlled bewar cultivation and forest conservation. Unfortunately these ideas began to predominate administration policy only in the last twenty years of the period between 1861 and 1921. During the first forty years British administrators had remained convinced bewar cutting ruined forests and they used a variety of methods to prohibit bewar and "wean" the Baiga from forest cultivation to plough cultivation.

In 1916 the administration finally passed a law permitting controlled bewar in selected villages. The village administration paper for Ganjaisarra (in south-central Baihar tahsil) for example, stipulated

In this village, in accordance with Secretariate letter . . . 16th October 1916, and with the Deputy Commissioner's . . . bewar or siddam is permitted in the entire forest area on condition that any plot on which bewar has been done in one year and siddam the next, shall not again be cultivated in bewar or siddam till after 10 years.²

B. N. De (Land Revenue Settlement Officer for Balaghat, 1914-1917) had found the prohibition of bewar in the 1890s had been "openly disregarded and bewar cultivation was extensively in vogue in these wild areas" of southern Baihar tahsil. The permission of bewar cultivation "in well defined areas" in 1916 was "to the great satisfaction of the

¹ Ibid., pp. 125-126.

² Quoted in Grigson, Balaghat, p. 29.

proprietors and Baigas alike."¹

Baiga Resistance and Survival

In the 1860s Baigas learned that the new rulers wanted them to follow another way of living and working. Previously most Baigas lived and worked in the upland forests of Central India by bevar cultivation, hunting, and gathering forest food and produce. They used axes, bows, spears, and digging tools. The new White Sahebs of the 1860s and later told the Baigas they must move to the valleys and learn plough cultivation like their Gond brothers. The White Sahebs brought new laws by which they took possession of the land. The laws allowed the rulers to sell or lease the cultivatable land to anyone such as other white men and Powars. Even Gonds and Baigas could lease or buy back the land. The rulers took the forest lands to manage and tax as they chose. Between 1861 and 1921 the Baigas struggled to live and work under the new rules of the British. A few adapted plough cultivation; most found other ways to live and work.

Balaghat district provides a specific example of British activity in the highlands of central India. The British had created Balaghat district in the 1860s with three main goals in mind--(1) to manage the forests, (2) to attract colonists, and (3) to convert forest cultivators into plough cultivators. They were more successful with the first two goals than the third. The government's management and sale of forest produce brought increased forest revenue. From Rs. 2000 in 1866 it rose

¹B. N. De, [Final Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of Balaghat District, 1914-1917 (1920)], par. 209, in Grigson, Balaghat, p. 29.

to Rs. 18,000 in 1869; by the early 1890s it had jumped to between Rs. 70,000 and 80,000. With railway construction in the western valley during the first year of the twentieth century, the forest revenue exceeded Rs. 200,000; it then declined in the remaining years before 1921 to around Rs. 100,000.¹ The colonization program failed to attract European settlers, but Indians began to settle in the valleys, though the early pioneers found life extremely difficult.² By the 1890s, 4,199 tenants occupied 46,000 acres in the Baihar uplands. The next twenty years saw rapid growth--by 1920 almost three times as many tenants (12,008) occupied about four times as much land (160,877 acres). Their rent had quadrupled (from 15,000 to 63,000).³ Few of these tenants were Baigas. The Balaghat District Gazetteer of 1907 admitted "the attempt to teach this wild tribe to cultivate has failed." Only a few Baiga families settled in six villages which the government had "reserved for the dispossessed Baigas."⁴ The British acquisition and development of land in Baihar had brought considerable revenue; they had transformed the "howling wildness" of the 1860s, but not reformed the Baiga.

The Baigas used three methods to resist British pressure and

¹Central Provinces, District Gazetteer, Balaghat District, B. Volume, Statistical Tables (Nagpur: Government Press, 1927), pp. 32-35 and 70-71.

²Balaghat DG (1907), pp. 60-62.

³Grigson, Balaghat, p. 64. In the next twenty years growth was not as rapid--tenants rose to 15,242, area to 191,351 acres, and rent to Rs. 76,867; they were respectively percentage increases of only 27, 19 and 21 1/2.

⁴Balaghat DG (1907), pp. 97-98.

survive--(1) nominal cooperation or superficial reform, (2) occupational adjustments, and (3) protest by petition or migration. At the same time, though the main thrust of British policy was (as J. B. Fuller said) for Baigas to "reform or perish," British administrators expressed mixed attitudes toward the Baiga of sympathy and disapproval which also resulted in a variety of methods including conciliation and compulsion.

Bloomfield told about the Baigas' nominal cooperation when he explained the difficulties of settling Baigas in 1869. It was hard to make them understand "that orders must be obeyed"; they promised "not to cut any . . . prohibited kinds of timber," but then "cut all kinds of trees . . . in spite of all promises repeatedly made." A "common saying among . . . the officials" was that every official who becomes "much annoyed" by the "mischief done in the forests by the Bygahs, and declares they must be expelled," when he goes to "interview" them, "he relents and does all he can to protect them."¹

The Baiga Chak represents an example of superficial reform or conversion of Baigas to plough cultivation. While the Mandla District Gazetteer of 1912 said it was "highly satisfactory" that "the plough has supplemented the axe in most of the fields owned by Baigas," it remarked

in actual fact, however, the Baiga has not been reclaimed; he has learnt enough wisdom to know that Government prefers a ploughed field to a bewar, and has sub-let his land to men who will plough it for him--a method which is gratifying to both the authorities and to himself, but is no indication of his own agricultural regeneration.²

By the 20th century only a few Baigas in the valley villages had taken

¹Bloomfield, "Progress,": p. 108, par. 94.

²Mandla DG (1912), pp. 175-76.

to plough cultivation; most could not or did not because of poverty, lack of training, or personal belief against the use of the plough. Others earned a living by relying on particular skills and knowledge. Most of the Baiga who made these occupational adjustments, if prevented from practicing bewar cultivation, lived in villages adjacent to forests, or in the "Forest Villages," which the administration had established after the late 1880s. They worked mainly as woodmen, forest guards or hunting guides (shikaris). Some sold forest and bamboo produce. A few also worked as field laborers, the men uprooting the plants and the women planting them.¹ The Balaghat District Gazetteer commented that Baigas made "excellent forest villagers," where their "axes" earned them "a good livelihood."² Most Baigas had to combine some of these activities or supplement their earnings through collecting forest food or growing crops on hidden and remote bewars. One officer reported he discovered "some unauthorized bewar" in the Forest Village of Dhiri in northeast Baihar tahsil.³

A third way Baigas earned a living was by continuing to practice bewar cultivation. Though bewar was legally prohibited, Baigas found they could practice it in Zamindari areas or on remote hills where British administrators rarely went. The Balaghat District Gazetteer described eastern Baihar as "a wild tangle of hill and jungle," where Baigas and Gonds practiced "the only method of cultivation possible

¹Central Provinces Gazetteer (1908), p. 129.

²Balaghat DG (1907), p. 98.

³Grigson, Balaghat, p. 32.

among these precipitous hills, that of axe and fire, known as bewar."¹

Ever since the arrival of the British in the 1860s, Baigas protested against the administration's efforts to end bewar and "wean" them from the axe. These protests took the form of verbal or written petitions as well as migrations to escape British domination. Both types of protests have already been described, in the 1860s by Ward and Bloomfield, and later by Neill, Fuller and others.

While these protests did not change the anti-bewar attitudes among most British administrators, they stimulated a sympathetic awareness among some of them of Baiga complaints and conditions, and attained some small concessions. Ward allowed villages to continue bewar. The financial assistance program of the 1880s and the establishment of Forest Villages were perhaps influenced by Baiga protests. Certainly their protests had some influence on the British re-assessment of bewar prohibition policies in the twentieth century. A legal change in 1916, allowing controlled bewar in a few villages, evidently was not enough for the Baigas, and, like other orders, was not enforced or publicized. One Zamindar continued to collect a high axe tax of Rs. 9; his justification was that he was trying to stop illegal bewar.² In the 1930s Ketu Baiga complained of the continued bewar prohibition by the British government. He commented on the current Indian political demand for swaraj or independence and freedom from the British--"The English are

¹Balaghat DG (1907), p. 299; see also "Kinhi Zamindari," p. 320.

²Grigson, Balaghat, p. 31, the Saletekri Zamindari. As late as the early 1940s one officer, Mr. Gupta, suggested bewar should be permitted in the Saletekri Zamindari, evidently unaware of the 1916 orders. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

giving swaraj to everyone but the Baiga; why can't they give us bewar swaraj?"¹

Baigas adopted three methods to survive under British pressures to "reform or perish." Though only some Baigas "reformed," and though at times others faced near starvation, the Baiga and their culture did not "perish." Their growth in numbers at a minimum suggests survival and there is some indication of cultural survival and continuity. The Baiga population (in the three districts of Balaghat, Mandla and Bilaspur) grew from about fifteen thousand in the 1860s to eighteen thousand in the 1890s, twenty-eight thousand in the 1930s, and forty-three thousand in the 1960s.² The work of G. N. Tiwari (1976) surveys a predominately Baiga village, Amwar, in southeastern Mandla district. As with other studies about the Baiga such as Verrier Elwin (1930), W. V. Grigson (1940s), Stephen Fuchs (1950s), and D. N. Nag (1960s), Tiwari examines the survival strategies of the Baigas and their cultural activities. Even at this late date, half the Baigas of the village practiced bewar, though it was illegal and mostly undetected by the local officials. He also records several of their witty songs which accompany the Karma and other dances.³

Conclusion

Two very different cultures came into closer contact with the

¹Ketu, in Elwin, Baiga, p. 107.

²See table on Baiga population.

³Tiwari, Amwar, pp. 84, 90-92, 141-146.

TABLE 22

BAIGA POPULATION

Year	Balaghat District	Mandla District	Bilaspur District	Three Districts	Central Provinces	Other areas
1866	(3,907)	10,388	. . .	14,295	16,698	. . .
1881	7,737	11,493	8,433	26,533	38,883	. . .
1891	3,863	13,935	794	17,798	21,336	. . .
1901	3,442	13,875	2,716	17,317	23,471	. . .
1911	5,070	18,684	157	23,911	27,274	. . .
1921	5,051	16,302	405	21,758	25,073	Rewa
1931	5,640	19,938	2,404	27,982	32,002	35,813
1941	5,919	20,628	1,705	28,252	32,158	. . .
1961	8,738	31,769	2,916	43,423	44,519	Shadol-Sidhi 91,685

SOURCES: Census 1866, Statement B; C. P., Census of 1931, Part II, Table XVIII, Part A, Variation of Selected Tribes, pp. 408-455; Central India Agency, Census of 1931 (Delhi: 1933), pp. 217, 224; Fuchs, Bhumia, pp. 3-4 for 1941 statistics; Nag, Economy, pp. 25-26; and Tiwari, Amwar, pp. 174-75 for 1961 statistics.

arrival of the British in the highlands of central India in the 1860s. The relationship of the Baigas with the British between 1861 and 1921 was essentially a struggle of the people of each culture to maintain or impose their culture on the other. The Baiga adopted methods to survive British domination, mainly by adjustments in their occupations and locations. British policy generally sought to convert the Baiga, in the early years, but because of inconsistent implementation and Baiga resistance they achieved little success. In the end, they, too, had to adopt methods, such as Forest Villages, in an effort to accommodate to the completely different culture of the Baiga.

CHAPTER X

THE REVITALIZING PEASANT: THE STANAMI CHAMARS

Tenants and agricultural laborers, as the largest segment of the population in the Central Provinces between 1861 and 1921, faced continued challenges to their economic, social, and political position in society. The new provincial administration of the British redefined and tried to reorganize agricultural relations by rigidly distinguishing land tenures, periodically increasing the tax on agricultural produce, and creating a bureaucratic structure for the systematic collection of the land revenue. Simultaneously, communications were improved, especially with the construction of a rail network which connected parts of the province and linked them with the seaports of Bombay and Calcutta. Climate fluctuations contributed to this uncertain and changing environment, producing cycles ranging anywhere from bumper crops to severe famines.

In eastern Central Provinces, the Chamars formed an important segment of the agricultural population. The Chamars were as distinctive and unique as the area in which they lived--the Chhattisgarh plain. The land of thirty-six (chhattis) forts (garhs) had been comparatively isolated from the main currents of the rest of India, though selectively influenced by them over the centuries before the 1860s. Its political, social, and cultural institutions differed considerably even from the surrounding areas. The status and occupation of Chamars in Chhattisgarh reflected this. According to classical Hindu social concepts, the Chamars

ranked as "outcastes;" their touch was considered polluting, because traditionally they worked with hides (chamra) as tanners, and thus came into contact with dead cattle. In Chhattisgarh, the Chamars formed the single most numerous social division of the population; they worked not as tanners but as cultivators and agricultural laborers. Even by the 1860s, most Chamars had already attempted to change their status by converting to the reformist Satnami religion. They rejected their out-caste status and adopted stricter social observances. Under the changing conditions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Satnami Chamars continued to seek ways to maintain and improve their position.

This chapter on the Chamars differs in several ways from the two previous chapters on the Gokuldas family and the Baigas. It is less detailed, since less specific information is available on the Satnami Chamars. The main informants, the British administrators, were less clear and had few strong opinions about the Satnami Chamars. Their policies more directly affected landlords (as the revenue payers and rent collectors) than tenants and agricultural laborers. Also distinctions between Satnami Chamars and non-Satnami Chamars were rarely made. Nor is it clear from their accounts of landlords landlord-tenant relations what the tenant's social status was, and whether they were of lower castes or Chamars. In spite of this element of vagueness in the sources, it is nonetheless possible and important to reconstruct the role which Chamars played in the changing environment of Chhattisgarh during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They formed not only a large section of the agricultural population in Chhattisgarh but exemplify many characteristics of changing social and economic relationships and

tensions between landlords, tenants, and agricultural laborers in the villages both within Chhattisgarh and other parts of the Central Provinces.

The census of 1866 indicated about 20 percent of the population (362,032 of 2,103,165) in the Raipur and Bilaspur districts were Chamars. While the census underenumerated the agricultural population, it still listed about 85 percent of the Raipur population and 90 percent of the Bilaspur population as working in agriculture. In both districts tenants formed between one-half to two-thirds of the population, while farm servants, laborers, and others in agriculture, contributed an additional one-fifth. Landlords in both districts were less than four percent of the population. The census classified Chamars as "among the agricultural classes, and located them as "confined to the country of Chhattisgarh." It said they were not related to the "leather-workers and drudges of Northern India," as they had "thrown off Brahmanical influences," and adopted "a new creed" with their own "priests and priesthood." They owned "much of the land" and were considered "the best subjects which the Government has in these parts." Since the new land revenue system secured "their position," and as prices had risen and markets were more accessible, the writer thought

these people are becoming rich and comfortable, and are learning to have enlarged wants and new aspirations.¹

The Land Revenue Settlement Officer of Raipur, J. F. K. Hewitt, estimated that in 1868-69 only one-seventh of the surplus agricultural

1. Central Provinces, Report on the Census of the Central Provinces for 1866 (Nagpur: M. Lawlor at the Chief Commissioner's Press, 1867), "Statement C." Hereafter C.P., Census 1866. pp. 15-16.

TABLE 23
OCCUPATIONS IN 1866

Occupation	Raipur District		Bilaspur District		Central Provinces	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
Tenants	561,890	59.0	429,629	61.4	3,541,913	44.2
Farm Servants	4,252	0.4	31,027	4.4	794,159	9.9
Other Agriculturalists	34,639	3.9	28,074	4.0	160,688	2.0
Laborers	76,781	8.1	110,834	15.8	888,508	11.1
Servants	100,438	10.5	16,670	2.4	485,633	6.1
Landholders	37,350	3.9	12,657	1.8	151,167	1.9
Others	95,303	10.0	70,577	10.0	1,988,801	24.8
Total	952,754	100.0	699,468	100.0	8,010,869	100.0

SOURCE: C. P., Census 1866, "Statement C."

produce was exported, and that prices had risen in recent decades by about twelve times, while cultivated land had expanded three times.¹

In order to understand the origin of the Chamar population, their function in society, and the birth of the Satnami movement, it is necessary to review the general history of Chhattisgarh.

History of Chhattisgarh--Institutional and Dynastic Changes

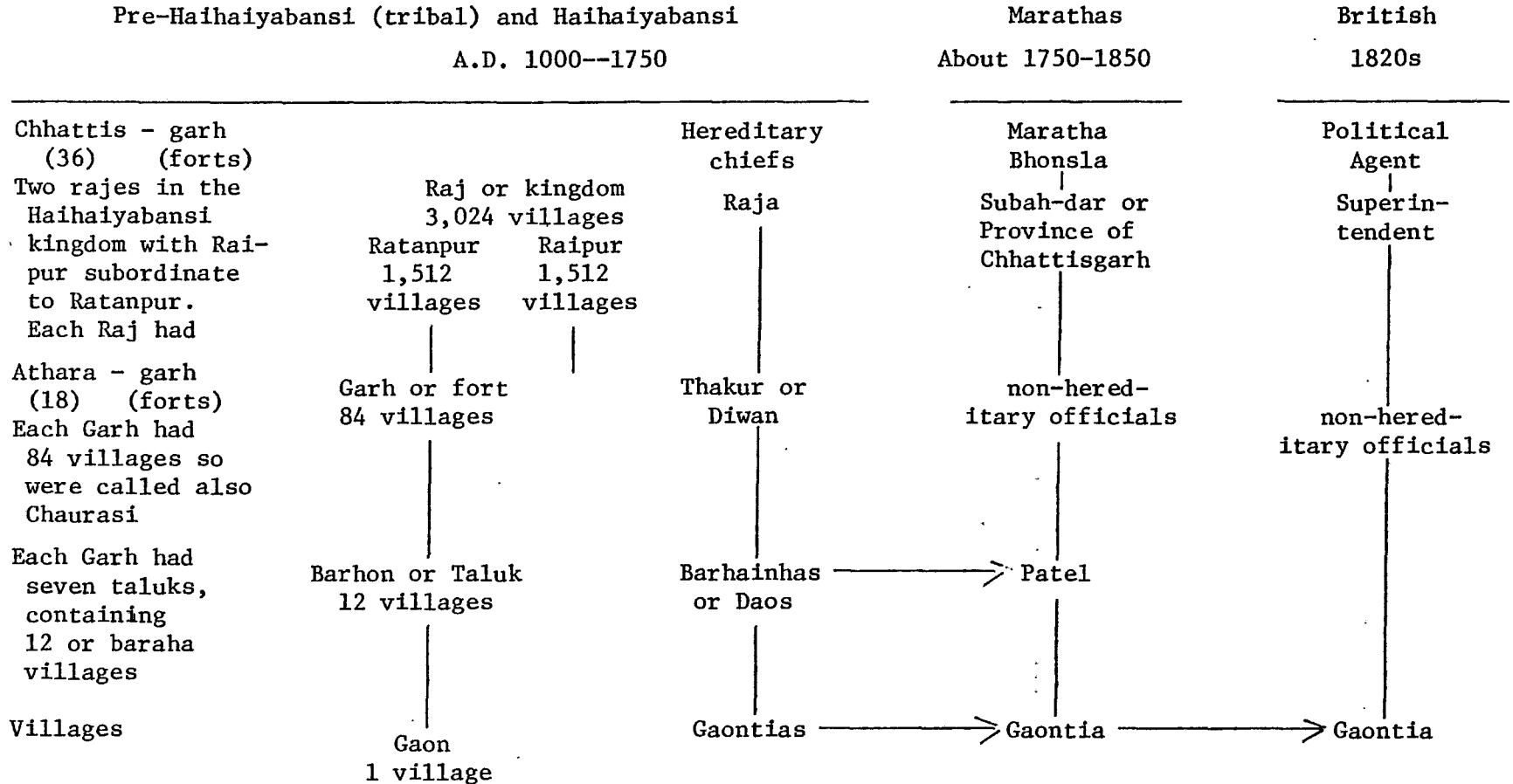
In the centuries before 1800, Chhattisgarh had been one of the most geographically and politically isolated and independent rice producing areas of India, influenced only occasionally by the social, religious, and cultural developments of northern India. These centuries may be divided into four periods: (1) a period before A.D. 1000 which C.U. Wills has characterized as having "tribal" institutions; (2) a long period from then to the mid-18th century, dominated by the rule of the Rajput clan of the Haihaiyabansis, and characterized as mixed tribal and feudal; (3) a period from about 1750 to 1850, under the centralizing Maratha Bhonslas; and (4) a British "bureaucratic" period which began during the decade of the 1820s and became fully established after 1854.²

During the tribal period a hierarchical political structure emerged based on related clans controlling their own small kingdoms, composed of units increasing in size from the village of Gaon to the Barhon or Taluk to the Garh and finally the Raj. Each chief had direct control over only

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1. J. F. K. Hewitt, Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of Raepore District, Chuteesgurh Division, Central Provinces (Nagpur: Albert Printing Press, 1896), pp. 51, 52, 85. Hereafter Raipur S.R. (1869).
 2. Cecil Upton Wills, "The Territorial System of the Rajput Kingdoms of Mediaeval Chhattisgarh," Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, n.s., 15 (1919): 197-262. Hereafter Wills, "Chhattisgarh."

FIGURE 4

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS OF CHHATTISGARH



SOURCE: Wills, "Chhattisgarh."

part of his immediate territory and allowed his clan members to control the remainder. This loose type of clan federation with its four-tiered hierarchy is thought to have existed before A.D. 1000 in Chhattisgarh.

Chhattisgarh was probably included in the Gupta kingdom of the Gangetic plain as early as the fourth century A.D. and was apparently known as Dakshin (South) Kosala or Mahakosala. Between then and A.D. 1000 rulers of a kingdom in Chanda (south of Chhattisgarh) transferred their capital to Sirpur in Raipur district and possibly it was this kingdom that the Chinese traveller Hsien Tsiang described in the eighth century. He had travelled from the southeast kingdom of Kalinga (Orissa) to reach "Kosala."

This country, more than 6000 li in circuit, was surrounded by mountains and was a succession of woods and marshes, its capital being above 40 li in circuit. The soil of the country was rich and fertile, the towns and villages close together; the people were prosperous, tall of stature and black in color; the king was Kshatriya by birth, a Buddhist in religion, and noted for benevolence. There were above 100 Buddhist monasteries, and about 10,000 Brethren, all Mahayanists. Near the south of the city . . . was an old monastery with an Ashokan tope.¹

Several Buddhist temple and monastery remains have been found near Sirpur, as well as a Chinese coin thought to belong to the eighth century.² Whatever happened to the large Buddhist population remains a mystery, for in the later centuries Shaivite Hinduism became dominant. The Raipur District Gazetteer (1909) mentions the village of Turturiya, which is a sacred place or tirth since the famous Hindu sage, Valmiki, had his hermitage there and the two sons of Rama (of the Ramayana epic), Lava and Kusa, were born at Turturiya. There are remains of both Hindu linga and Buddhist figures

1. Thomas Watters, On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India, A.D. 629-645, 2 vols. in 1 (London: Royal Asiatic Society; 1st Indian ed., Delhi: Munshi Ram Manohar Lal, 1962), 2: 200. A li was about one-fifth mile.

2. Raipur DG (1973), p. 53.

and inscriptions. The pujaris or custodians of the place in the early twentieth century were only women, and the Gazetteer writer remarked

They appear to be the modern Hinduized representatives of an ancient institution of nuns that existed here in the flourishing days of Buddhism.¹

The clearest description of the second period of Chhattisgarh history occurred during the reign of Kalyan Singh in the middle of the sixteenth century. One of Kalyan Singh's ancestors was the youngest son of the Kalachuri or Chedi dynasty which had established itself in Tirpura (in Jabalpur district). This ancestor established the Chedi or Haihaiya bansi rule in Chhattisgarh. Eventually the capital was built at Ratanpur (Bilaspur district) and by the middle of the fourteenth century a younger branch had established semi-independent rule at Raipur. Kalyan Singh became famous for his journey to Delhi where he visited the Moghul court and remained for twelve years, returning with immigrant Brahmins and others whom he encouraged to settle in Chhattisgarh.

The Haihaiyabansis appear to have retained most of the features of the tribal institutions making no changes in the structure, though replacing some of the Garh and Taluk chiefs with North Indian immigrants. It is perhaps during this time or even before that two other institutions emerged. One was the panches or panchyats-counselors or advisory assemblies-which existed at all levels and ensured the proper conduct and administration of the chiefs or administrators. The other institution was lakhabata or the distribution of land. It was a method to ensure an equitable redistribution of land among an expanding population, or to attract and accommodate new settlers. When villagers wished redistribution they asked

1. Raipur DG (1909), pp. 350-51.

the Gaontia or headman to manage the process. The variety of lands were formed into equally valued chaks (plots) and sub-divided into six to eight units. The Gaontia received one or two while the rest were distributed among the different village groups so that each group received a portion of both good and poor land and allotted it among the cultivators. The aim was to provide each cultivator with different types of land equivalent to other cultivators. There is no definite link between lakhabata and the Chamars, but it probably was an institution which they favored, being the largest community of cultivators. Even in the late nineteenth century, the Land Revenue Settlement Officer of Raipur commented about the northwest area of the district.

Simga tahsil is the hotbed of lakhabata. The Satnami Chamar is found in much greater numbers in that tahsil than elsewhere and this is the caste which apparently is most in favor of redistribution.¹

Haihaiyabansi rule accepted local institutions and may have encouraged the emergence of others that furthered the participation and interest of groups within the population. Their rule evidently reached its peak at the time of Kalyan Singh who is said to have collected a revenue of Rs. 6-700,000, built temples, and defended his country with a force of 14,200 men.²

The political isolation of Chhattisgarh began to end in the middle of the eighteenth century when the Marathas from the west marched to attack the Orissankkingdoms, passing through Chhattisgarh in 1741. The Haihaiyabansi kingdom fell almost without resistance, though the Ratampur king was permitted to rule for the Marathas for several more years until he was replaced and pensioned off with some villages.

1. Raipur SR (1869), p.101; see also p. 34, pars. 51-52.

2. Raipur DG (1909), p. 53.

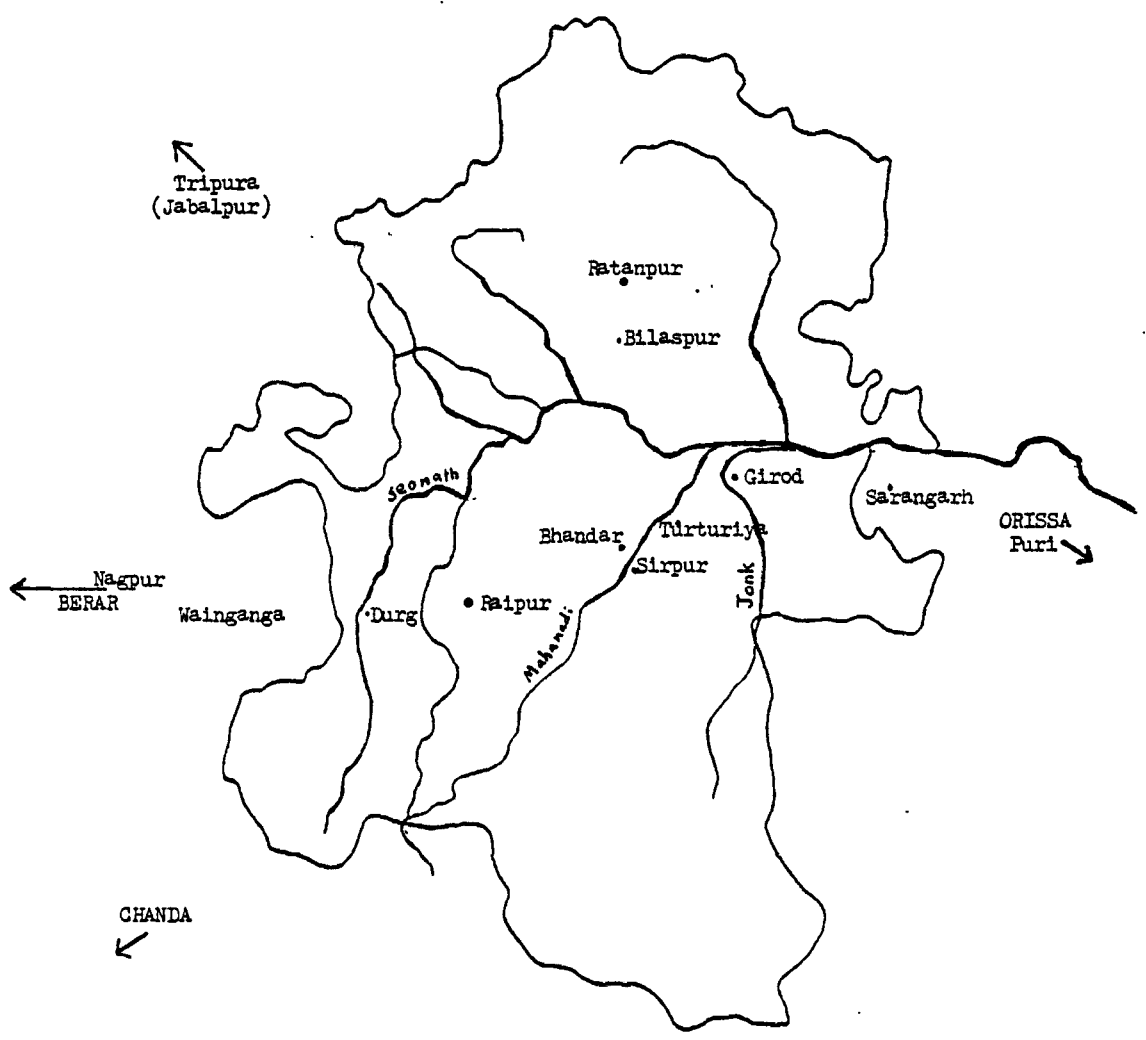
Gradually the Marathas brought in their own officers and their own more centralized revenue system. Several of the Barhon chiefs were replaced by Patels, who were "needy Brahmins," Marathas and other upper-castes.¹ The four-tier structure was reduced to three tiers by the elimination of the Diwans or Thakur position. A military force was maintained to serve the Patels in the collection of revenue.² The Bhonslas of Berar or Nagpur established Chhattisgarh as a Subha (province), demanding a certain sum over a stipulated period from the Subahdar. He in turn divided this among the Patels, who then collected it from the headmen and villagers. Currency was scarce so there was a "vast accumulation" of produce. In a year of plenty 100,000 bullocks were employed to export the produce.³

The introduction of the more centralized rule of the Marathas was accompanied by the arrival of more orthodox upper castes. The north Indian Brahmins and others who had migrated to Chhattisgarh many years

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1. Patrick Vans Agnew, A Report on the Subah or Province of Chhattisgarh written in 1820 A.D. (Nagpur: The Government Press, 1915), p. 32. Hereafter Vans Agnew, Chhattishgarh. British use of caste categories are often unclear and confusing. The migrants who accompanied the Bhonslas were broadly categorized as "Maratha Brahmins" meaning Brahmins from Maharashtra and "Marathas" meaning the Kashatriya or Rajput varna groups from the same area.
 2. J. T. Blunt, "Narrative of a Route from Chunarghur to Yertnagoodum in the Ellore Circar," in 1795, Asiatic Researcher, 7, in Wills, "Chhattisgarh," pp. 252-53.
 3. *Ibid.*, pp. 251-53.

MAP 6

MAHAKOSALA OR OLD CHHATTISGARH



before the Maratha invasion became localized with their own sub-castes of Chhattisgarhi Brahmins. The new Maratha Brahmins considered the Chhattisgarhis lower in status and purity. Perhaps for the first times, too, discrimination and prejudice against lower castes became more enforced. The British officer at Raipur in the 1820s, Patrick Vans Agnew, commented on the unequal and lighter punishments for upper casts; all Brahmins and specific artisan castes were exempted from the new Pandhri or house tax on non-agriculturalists.¹ Chamars did not appear on the list of those receiving lighter punishment, though in one place they were considered agriculturalists and in another classified as village servants.² The exemption of Brahmins and certain other castes from death penalties and certain taxes was similar to practices in other Hindu states, but probably not an intergral part of the Haihaiyabansi state.

The British defeated the Marathas in 1818 and in the next decade, during the minority of the Bhonsla prince, the British conducted the administration of the kingdom. In Chhattisgarh, Vans Agnew tried to eliminate one more tier of the original tribal structure. He restricted the powers of the Patels, replacing them with paid, non-hereditary administrators.³ He thus hoped to deal directly with the Gaontias; the original four-tiered structure thus in theory was reduced to two. With greater direct control, the British raised the revenue of Chhattisgarh to about Rs. 300,000.

Vans Agnew not only supported the Gaontias but recognized and tried to revive the panchyat institution and the position of panches which had barely survived Maratha rule. He gave official support to these institutions

1. Vans Agnew, "Chhattisgarh," pp. 35-36, 38. 2. Ibid., p. 5, 33.

3. Ibid., p. 32.

hoping they would provide better civil and criminal justice than had existed under the Marathas.¹ He tried to reduce the number and amount of tolls collected on transported goods and ended the tax (Toinga Patti) on Banjaras, the pack-bullock traders. With these measures communications and trade expanded; Agnew estimated the value of produce had recently doubled.²

The Social Transformation of the Satnami Movement

British administration in Chhattisgarh in the 1820s created several conditions which perhaps favored the beginning of a new religious and social movement among the Chamars of Chhattisgarh. The British had revived the panchyats, supported the position of village headmen (Gaontias), challenged the position of the Patels (who were often recent immigrants and orthodox Hindus), and had opened up the country for trade expansion. Agnew's census of Chhattisgarh in 1820 listed 12,306 Chamar families among a total of 100,603 families. One type of cultivator he described were the farm servants or Saonjias, who received one-fourth of the produce for their labor.³

In the late eighteenth century, Ghasi Das was born into a Chamar family or farm servants in the village of Girod in northeastern Raipur district. As a young man he was known to be a silent, sensitive person, "given to visions." He and his brother once started on a pilgrimage to Puri, but only went as far as Sarangarh. They returned exclaiming "Satnam! Satnam!" (literally True Name, or "there is one true god").

1. Ibid., pp. 34-37.

2. Ibid., p. 24

3. Ibid., p. 30.

Ghasi Das became an ascetic, wandering around Chhattisgarh as well as retiring into the forests for meditation. He gained followers and a reputation for healing powers. In his forties, he declared he would retire to the forest for sixty days to fast and meditate, and would return with a message for his followers. After he left, his followers spread the word around Chhattisgarh and by the sixtieth day a multitude had gathered awaiting his return. He emerged from the forest and proclaimed a new religion. He announced there was one True God or Satnam, and forbade idolatry. All castes were equal and should be treated as such. He also encouraged abstinence from liquor, tobacco, and meat as well as vegetables which appeared red like blood or resembled flesh. Many people, Chamars and others (the Ahir or shepherd caste is mentioned), became followers of Ghasi Das, calling themselves Satnamis. Ghasi Das established his family as the hereditary gurus of the new religion. He lived until he was seventy or eighty and died in 1850. Satnamis twice annually went to visit him, offering gifts and receiving his blessing.¹

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1. This version of Ghasi Das relies on J. W. Chisholm's account contained in his Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of Belaspore District (1869), pars. 96-106, as quoted in K.C. Dubey, Kosa: A Village Survey, Census of India, 1961, Vol. VIII, Madhya Pradesh, Part VI, Village Survey Monographs, No. 9, Kosa, Tahsil and District Durg (Bhopal: Superintendent of Census Operations, Madhya Pradesh, 1967), pp. vii-ix. Chisholm evidently wrote a slightly different version of the Satnamis in a pamphlet titled Once in a Way, probably published in Nagpur around 1867, titled "Hindu Dissenters," pp. 64-70. Robert Vane Russell repeats much of Chisholm's account in his article titled "Satnamis" in The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India, 4 vols. (London: Macmillan and Company, 1916), 1: 307-136. B. L. Pargania mentions the specific year for the founding of the Satnami movement as being 1832 in his "The Satnami Movement," Journal of Social Research (Ranchi), 10, no. 1 (March 1967), p. 1. Hereafter Chsiholm's report is Bilaspur SR (1869), Dubey's Survey is Kosa, and Russell is Tribes and Castes. Alternate spellings - Drug for older British sources; and Durg for more recent Indian sources, which has generally been used in this chapter.

A British officer of the 1860s speculated that Ghasi Das had "deeply" resented "the harsh treatment of his brotherhood by the Hindus," and was inspired "doubtless to raise them in the social scale." Through the Satnami religion Chasi Das had succeeded "to a great extent" to lead "a social and religious revolution,"¹

Ghasi Das' eldest son, Balak Das, succeeded to the leadership as guru of the Satnamis. The British in 1854 regained possession of Chhattisgarh on the death of the Bhonsla king. "Under cover of the general security against violence afforded by British rule," Balak Das "outraged" Hindu feelings by assuming the sacred thread which was reserved by high caste Hindus as a symbol of initiation. In 1860, while traveling to Raipur on business, he remained at the rest house at Amabandha village. A group of men, "supposedly Rajputs," attacked and killed him. The murderers were never discovered. The Satnami community was shocked and "a deeper animosity" than ever "developed between the Satnamis and the Hindus."²

Three difficulties in studying the Chamars of Chhattisgarh, as already mentioned, are their origin, the distinction between Satnamis and Chamars, and the place of Chamars in rural society. Each of these are briefly examined here.

Origin of the Chamars in Chhattisgarh

Hewitt said the Chamars claimed "a very high antiquity among the inhabitants of the District," but he doubted "their assertions," even

1. Bilaspur SR (1869), par. 96, in Kosa, p. vii. 2. Ibid., par. 103.

if they had "never heard when they came to the country," and "in spite of their large numbers."¹ He thought they may have come from Oudh or Rewa because a reformer (Ramananda) of the fifteenth century had preached a creed similar to the Satnami religion. The Chamars also lived mainly in the northwest part of the district, while older residents like Gonds had spread "all over the District." He concluded they were "immigrants of a comparatively late date."² The archeologist, Beglar, speculated they were from Bihar, as he had heard a story about 36 (Chhattis) houses or families (ghar) of Chamars who had migrated south. He thought that was the origin of the name of Chhattisgarh, which was now mispronounced,³

None of these explanations appears wholly adequate. It is probable Ghasi Das met a Satnami pilgrim from north India on the pilgrimage trip to Puri and learned the essential Satnami creed from him.⁴ The concentration of Chamars in one of the most fertile and densely populated areas, which appears to have been cultivated for centuries, would support rather than question the Chamars' long residence. C. U. Wills discounts the Chhattis ghar migration theory as "garh is, to the native ear, as distinct from ghar as to the Englishman 'shave' is from 'safe'."⁵ But, while he clearly traces the origin of "Chhattisgarh", he offers no explanation for the origin of the large Chamar population.

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1. Raipur SR (1869), p. 33, par. 110.
 2. Ibid.; Oscar Lohr suggests the Chamars came from the Punjab, Letter 20 November 1880 quoted in Central Provinces, Report on the Census of 1881, by T. Drysdale (Bombay: Education Society Press, 1882), p. 34. Hereafter C. P., Census 1881.
 3. P. N. Bose, "Chhattisgarh: Notes on its tribes, sects, and castes." Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 59, pt. 1, nos. 3 and 4 (Calcutta, 1891), 269. Hereafter Bose, "Chhattisgarh."
 4. Russell, Tribes and Castes, 1:308, 313.
 5. Wills, "Chhattisgarh," p. 201, par. 6.

On the other hand, the Chamar claim to long residence may be taken seriously. Mr. Banerjee, a resident of Raipur who studied the Chamars, found nothing to favor the theory of immigration, since the Chamars had no "speech or habit to show Gangetic origin," and had no tradition of immigration. On the other hand, castes such as "Lodhi and Kurmis clearly remembered that they came from the Northwest."¹ The endogamous divisions of Chhattisgarh Chamars might indicate both long residence and recent additions. The Satnamis did not intermarry with other Chamars, and were called "Jharía or jungly", which implies that they are the oldest residents in Chhattisgarh." Two other Chamar divisions were the Kanaujias and Ahirwar. The first would indicate immigration from North India (Kanauj city), and the second considered themselves "the descendents of the prophet Raidas or Rohidas" and one of his seven wives who was an Ahir woman.² It is further speculated in this study that the Chhattisgarh Chamars may have been the remnant Buddhist population of Chhattisgarh who were eventually placed in the lowest position of Hindu society in a similar process which occurred in Bengal. Their claim to long residence, the Jharía sub-caste, their identification with lakhabatta, their agricultural occupation, and other evidence support this conjecture.

Satnami and non-Satnami Chamars

Hewitt raised the question whether all Chamars were Satnamis and determined that:

It is generally supposed that the name Satnamis and Chamars are synonomous; but this is by no means the case, as the Satnami

1. Mr. Banerjee, quoted in C. P., Census 1881, p. 35.

2. Russell, Tribes and Castes, 2:406.

religion does not refuse to receive proselytes from any class, but as Chamars form the majority of the sect, and as no distinctions of caste are admitted among its members, all converts of other castes become, in the eyes of the Hindu, Chamars.¹

Hewitt might have added that generally the same applied to Englishmen. In their eyes, too, there was no distinction between Satnamis and Chamars. Almost all British administrators indiscriminately referred to Chamars, Satnamis, or Satnami Chamars. Almost the only persons who attempted to distinguish between the two were Census officers or those interested in social investigations.

It is clear that all Satnamis were usually considered Chamars, though not all Chamars were Satnamis. In the 1860s, Reverend Oskar Lohr of the American Reformed Church, had established a Mission at Birsampur particularly to serve the Chamars.² In a letter in 1880, Lohr stated that out of 325,000 Chamars, only 25,000 could be called Satnamis. The others observed "all the Hindu festivals, eat meat; . . . they smoked tobacco and drink intoxicating liquors; many of these are working in leather also. They are what their forefathers were, Hindus."³

Most British observers failed to realize the Satnami movement was as much a social as a religious movement. Ghasi Das did not reject the Hindu religion and it was not his purpose to destroy the caste system by demanding social equality, but rather to raise the position of the Chamars within the caste system so they were more "equal" to upper castes.

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1. Raipur SR (1869), p. 32. par. 111.
 2. Raipur DG (1909), pp. 278-78.
 3. Lohr, quoted in C.P., Census 1881, p. 35.

M. N. Srinivas has described this process as "Sanskritization" It is the process by which a low "Hindu" caste or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology, and way of life in the direction of a high, and frequently, "twice-born" caste.

The "claim to a higher position" is

made over a period of time . . . before the "arrival" is conceded. Occassionally a caste claims a position which its neighbors are not willing to concede.¹

Ghasi Das did not reject the Hindu religion nor Hindu social concepts; he rejected the position upper caste Hindus assigned to Chamars. Like many Hindu reformers before and after him, Ghasi Das selected a type of Hinduism (Monotheism) and social customs of "purer" castes to begin the process of raising the Chamars in their position in Chhattisgarh Hindu society. This was his "social revolution."

Efforts for Social Uplift

It took many decades before Satnamis could obtain the concessions of their "arrival" to a new position as a caste separate from the Chamars. During this time Satnami leadership, their prestige and wealth changed. Following Balak Das' death, there are indications the leadership weakened. Balak Das had married a Chitari (painter caste) woman, and had a son by her, Sahib Das. However, Ghasi Das' brother, Agar Das, kept the leadership in his hands. He had two sons; one by the Chitari widow, and one by a "legitimate" wife. Both sons, Ajab Das and Agar Das, claimed succession and they became joint gurus of the Satnami community.²

1. M. N. Srinivas, Social Change in Modern India (Berkeley: University of California, 1968), p. 6.

2. Raipur DG (1909), p. 82.

In the time of Ghasi Das, he evidently toured the Chhattisgarh area with his disciples, called Bhandaris, collected subscriptions of one rupee for every household and performed marriage and initiation rites. He eventually built a house in a village, Bhandar, in Raipur district, and the later gurus bought the village. Bhandar became the Satnami headquarters, and the followers gathered there for an annual fair as well as to receive the guru's blessing and carry back sacred water in which the guru had dipped his toe.¹

A report in the 1881 census complained that the Satnamis had gone "astray" in their morals. Some permitted smoking and had formed a separate sect, the Chungis, and begun to worship idols.² One of the problems was the laxity in religious leadership described as the Satnami's "sleeping guru and Bhandaries." In 1881 the "present guru spent his time managing his own temporal concerns, and in making a sort of progress (tours) through the country, receiving presents, offerings, and homage from all, but enlightened none."³ In 1890, B. N. Bose reported the guru "went on tour in great state, with elephants, camels, and a large following." His Bhandaris collected his dues and represented the guru in all "social ceremonies."⁴

Reports in the early twentieth century said only the guru went on pilgrimages to Girod. The fair at Bhandara was no longer held. The

1. Russell, Tribes and Castes, 1:311.

2. Banerjee, in C. P., Census 1881, p. 38.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

4. Bose, "Chattisgarh," pp. 293-94.

"subscriptions" had "largely fallen off,"¹ now the guru only received a coconut offering on his tours.² Golden pinnacles on the guru's house had been stolen, replaced by silver ones; the gurus had become indebted to a Bania (the Raja Gokuldas firm!) who had foreclosed the mortgage. A rich Satnami was trying to negotiate its repurchase.³

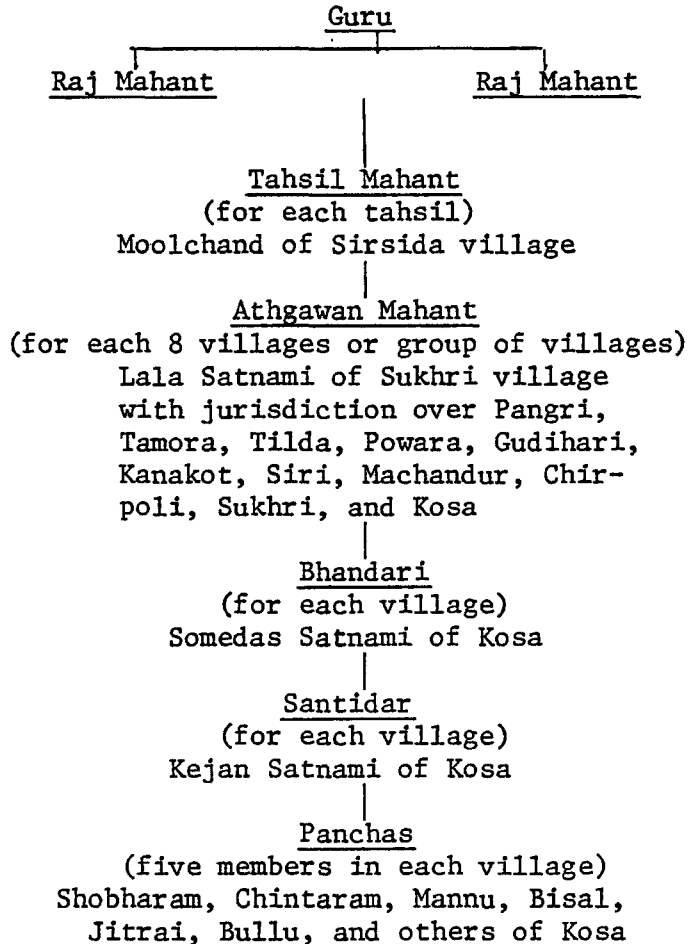
In spite of this decline, it appears the Satnamis maintained or strengthened their internal caste structure. The Bhandaries lived in many villages and reported social offenses to the guru who would decide what fines to impose.⁴ They conducted marriage and initiated ceremonies, at which time the initiate would repeat a Satnami creed and receive a necklace of wooden beads as a symbol of his new status.⁵

By the early twentieth century Satnamis had established a firm and separate identity from their original Chamar caste. Other castes still did not apparently accept a change in their social position. Durga Prasad Pande (a Maratha Brahmin?) contributed to the "Satnami" article in R. V. Russell's Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces and did not seem to withhold either his appreciation or his continued contempt for the Satnamis. It was true, Satnamis would not admit members of "impure castes, as Dobhis (washermen), Ghasias (grass-cutters) and Mehtars (sweepers), whom they regarded as inferior to themselves." They "abstained from spiritous liquors." But "their women wear nose-rings, simply to show contempt for the Hindu social order, as this ornament was

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1. Russell, Tribes and Castes, 1:311. 2. Raipur DG (1909), p. 82.
 3. H. E. Hemingway, Final Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Raipur District of the Central Provinces (Nagpur: Government Press, 1912), p. 28, par 61. Hereafter Hemingway's Report is Raipur SR (1912).
 4. Russell, Tribes and Castes, 1:311. 5. Ibid.; and Raipur DG (1909), p.83.

FIGURE 5

INTERNAL CASTE HIERARCHY
SATNAMIS--CHHATTISGARH
1961



SOURCE: Dubey, Kosa, p. 142.

Note: Blenkinsop reported in 1901, "The Chamars have a complete system all over Raipur, Bilaspur, Nandgaon and Khairagarh. The circle heads are called Bhandaris after the name of their head-quarters Bhandar. Sahib Das and Ajib Das have distributed this territory, and they travel about on elephants. They are received with respect and a collection is made by the Bhandari and presented to them, but their influence is not very great. Sahib Das gave me a list of 286 Bhandaris falling to his share in the Raipur District. He is since dead and a child Ajanan Das is in his place." Drug SR (1903), p. 45, par. 68.

formerly forbidden to the lower castes." Under Indian rule before the British "they would have been severely punished." But now "the Chamar women can indulge their whim with impunity." They showed "contempt for the Hindu religion" by trampling milk and curds at the Krishna festival, substances otherwise caught and eaten by Hindus as sacred and pure food. Even in the railway carriage they "push up purposely against Hindus." The Hindus then "are defiled and have to bathe in order to become clean."¹

In 1926, the Satnamis finally convinced the "local Government" they were a separate caste, to be recorded and recognized as not Chamars.² This was at least one concession indicating they had "arrived." The Census of 1931 included the remarks of Hira Lal, co-author of the Tribe and Castes,

Again there is abrogation of impurity when a person changes his religion Exemption from begar (the landlord forcing low caste cultivators to work for no wages), for instance, has been a great inducement for Chamars of Chhattisgarh to change their religion.³

Economic and Political Revitalization of the Chamar Cultivator

Hira Lal's remarks on Satnamis and begar indicate the Satnami movement was not only religious and social but tied to their economic role in society. As information on the Satnami Chamars of Chhattisgarh did not generally distinguish between Satnamis and Chamars during the

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1. Russell, Tribes and Castes, 1:313-14.
 2. Central Provinces and Berar, Report on the Census of 1931, by W. H. Shoobert (Nagpur: Government Printing, 1933), p. 345. Hereafter C. P., Census 1931.
 3. *Ibid.*, p. 391.

late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it is difficult to separate the two during that period. The same applies when trying to discover the proportion of Satnami Chamars in the various occupational classes of Chhattisgarh. Specific references are rare, yet they provide enough insight to vaguely distinguish areas where they concentrated and their probably occupations.

Most Chamars lived in a corridor running from the area between Raipur and Durg towns, north and eastward on each side of the Seonath river, almost to the eastern borders of Raipur and Bilaspur districts. Hewitt remarked Chamars lived mostly in the northwest part of the district, and also that "the great majority of the Nowagurh and Deorbyjya ryots (tenants) were Chamars."¹ The Census of 1891 indicates a high concentration in the same area, which was called Simga tahsil by then. The population was between one-fourth and one-third Chamars (28.8 percent), while just north in the Mungeli tahsil of Bilaspur district there was an even higher concentration (36.4 percent). South and east of these tahsils the Chamar percentages declined to about 20 percent in Raipur and Seorinarian Tahsils and around 16 percent in Durg and Bilaspur tahsils. The lowest percentage (7.5 percent) was found in the southern tahsil of Dhamtari.² As the table on the next page indicates, these concentrations generally persisted at least to the 1961 census.³

1. Raipur SR: (1869), p. 105, par. 281.

2. Central Provinces, Report on the Census of 1891, by B. Robertson (Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, 1893), p. 208. Hereafter C. P., Census 1891.

3. Madhya Pradesh, Census of India, 1961, Madhya Pradesh, District Census Handbooks: Raipur, Bilaspur, and Durg Districts (Government of Madhya Pradesh, 1964). Hereafter Dt.C.Hdbks. (1960).

TABLE 24
CONCENTRATION OF THE CHAMAR POPULATION
IN CHHATTISGARH

1891		1961	
Percent of total pop- ulation	Tahsil	Percent of total pop- ulation	Tahsil
36.4	Mungeli	24.3	Mungeli
19.3	Raipur	20.9	Raipur
19.9	Seori Narain	19.9	Janjgir
28.8	Simga	19.7	Baloda Bazar
		16.6	Bemetara
15.9	Bilaspur	14.6	Bilsapur
16.9	Durg	14.2	Durg
7.5	Dhamtari	5.7	Dhamtari

SOURCES: C. P., Census 1891, p. 208; Census District Handbooks, Census 1961 (1964) for Bilaspur, Raipur, and Durg Districts.

Note: Because of boundary changes the tahsils roughly correspond to the same area though not exactly.

The Gazetteer of 1870 expressed great hopes for the Chamars of Chhattisgarh. They made "up some twelve percent of the population," and were

mainly all cultivators. A considerable portion of them have acquired tenant rights, and they own 362 villages out of a total of 6713.

Although, therefore, they have not quite risen to an equality with other castes, they have entirely broken the tradition of serfdom. . . and they have been emboldened by the material change in their condition to free themselves altogether from the tyranny of Brahmanism.¹

The Gazetteer emphasized the Chamars had a strong "social bond," and hoped as "good and loyal subjects," when they had "grown out of a certain instability and improvidence . . . they will become valuable members of the community."²

Hewitt also remarked on their solidarity.

As a class they always act together, and are persistent assertors of their rights, real and fancied, and a terror to encroaching malgoozars (landlords), few being bold enough to stand up against the resistance of Chamar ryots to unpopular measures.³

He thought the Chamars' "apparent inability to improve their position" was partly "due to Hindu opposition," but largely because of their "migratory" character which hindered "the accumulation of property." In this early period (1860s) the British seemed to be bothered by the "migratory" behavior of villagers--some did not remain permanently in the same area which the British defined as a family's "village", but shifted to neighboring "villages" for a period of years to work or

1. Central Provinces Gazetteer (1870), p. cxxiv.

2. Ibid., cxxx.

3. Raipur SR (1869), p. 34, par. 112.

cultivate land. It is very probably they remained within a clan-settlement area such as the barhon, which contained several "villages." In commenting on the population of Bilaspur district in the 1869 famine, an administrator said that

thousands of cultivators changed their places of residence in search of employment and thus relinquished their (tenant) holdings. They did not leave the district but merely shifted from one village to another. Many of them subsequently returned after two or more years, but the interruption in their possession deprived them of their right to hold the same land again.¹

These "migrations" were not long-distance trips.

Chamars were primarily tenants, agricultural laborers, and a few of the new landlords. Most reports which describe them indicate the great majority of them were peasants, mainly dependent on the produce they grew themselves by cultivating the land. After the 1860s the Land Revenue Settlement Reports began to include lists of tenant castes, Chamars are the largest caste in almost all these lists. In Bilaspur district before the turn of the century, for example, the 32,873 Chamar tenants were the largest caste of tenants (28.5 percent), followed by Gonds (10.4) and Telis (8.8) out of a total of 115,227 tenants. The Settlement Officer said they formed "the great bulk of the agriculturalists."² In Durg tahsil about the same time Chamar tenants were 25.2 percent (5,860 out of 23,265), followed by Telis (20.9) and Kurmis (8.7).³ Similarly, the Raipur Settlement Report of 1912 listed Chamar tenants as 28 percent, followed

1. Parshotum Das, (Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of Bilaspur District, 1886 to 1890) (Nagpur: 1892), p. 31. Hereafter Bilaspur SR (1892).

2. Ibid., p. 27.

3. E. R. K. Blenkinsop, Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of Drug Tahsil in the Raipur District of the Central Provinces, effected during the years 1896 to 1902 (Nagpur: Secretariat Press, 1903), p. 38. Drug SR (1903).

by Telis (21 percent) and Gonds (10 percent).¹ In Bilaspur they had maintained their position from the 1890s to the second decade of the twentieth century, still being 28 percent of the tenants. Though scattered all over the district, they were "most numerous in Mungeli" tahsil of southwest Bilaspur district.²

Economic Changes and Village Structures

From the 1860s through the 1920s the Chhattisgarh economy expanded rapidly. Hewitt thought that even in the 1860s the cultivated land had trebled within the last decade and prices risen enormously. Yet poor communications prevented the export of a large amount of the grain. Cultivators with "carts and bullocks" were about the only ones who could profitably take grain in their "leisure time."³ By the late 1860s (1867), however, a considerable trade had grown up, and in the

spring as soon as the harvest work was over, endless strings from Chhattisgarh, and from the Wainganga country, brought rice, wheat and pulse, into the marts of Nagpur and Kemptee; or even passed through the Nagpur country, en route for the dearer markets of Berar. The farmer, who drove the carts and owned the produce, seemed to regard the journey as a pleasant way of spending what would be otherwise a dull season of the year, and as a sure mode of getting a full price for their grain.⁴

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1. Raipur SR (1912), p. 20.
 2. J. E. Hance, (Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of Bilaspur District (Khalsa), 1904-1912) (Nagpur: 1914), pp. 73-74. Hereafter Bilaspur SR (1914).
 3. Raipur SR (1869), p. 35.
 4. Central Provinces, Report on the Administration of the Central Provinces for the Year 1866-67, by J. H. Morris (Nagpur: M. Lawlor at the Chief Commissioner's Press, 1867), p. xii. Hereafter C. P., Ad. Report.

Communications improved slowly between the 1860s and the 1880s. The railway reached a station (Raj Nandgaon) just outside Chhattisgarh 1883, linking it with Bombay; in 1888 the rail reached Raipur; and with the completion of a link in 1892 to Calcutta, Chhattisgarh had railway access to both seacoasts and the intermediate territory. In the twentieth century more railway construction connected Chhattisgarh with Jabalpur and the Ganges plain to the north and the Vizagapatnam port to the south.

Preceding chapters have already indicated the growth of population and exports during these decades. They also have described the process by which British administration conferred the status of landlord mostly on upper castes, who in turn consolidated their position during the decades, being able to increase the payments (whether in rent or other forms) from tenants. At the same time the British administration at regular intervals raised the land revenue. It was these pressures from the landlords and the administration, as well as periodic famines, which made it necessary for tenants and agricultural laborers constantly to seek out new avenues to maintain or restore their economic (and political) position in society.

There are several ways to indicate how Chamars revitalized their position over the decades. One is by examining the institution of Lakhbata; another by looking at tensions between Chamars and other castes; a third by the methods Chamars used to adjust to adverse economic conditions; and fourth by sketching the history of a Satnami village in Chhattisgarh. Two characteristics of Chhattisgarh need to be examined as a background to these developments--the Chhattisgarh village and agricultural methods,

Descriptions of Chhattisgarh villages indicate their populations consisted of landowners at the top of the economic hierarchy, followed

by a variety of tenants, from those cultivating large holdings to those cultivating small holdings; then agricultural laborers, both as farm servants and casual laborers; and finally village servants. By the early twentieth century "the typical Raipur village" had "an area of almost one thousand acres and . . . about 500 inhabitants."¹ The person of "first rank in village society" was the lambardar, who was usually the "richest" of the landlord families. He paid the revenue to the government, collected rents, accepted the holdings of "broken tenants," and determined who should "do bhet-bigar or unpaid service." The "backbone of the village" were the twenty-five or thirty tenant families, about "one-third of the total population." The smaller tenants usually worked three to four days for a landlord or large cultivator in order to obtain the use of a plough and bullocks for one day. Some villages were all "Hindu", while others were all Chamars and called ekajati villages, but villages where both lived had separate "parras" (wards or hamlets) for each. The rest of the village was "made up of laborers and dependents." They consisted both of farm servants called saonjias and field laborers. The saonjias were often hired regularly from year to year on the pay of one-fourth of the produce, and the proportion was so well known that the common expression for one-fourth and three-fourths, even when referring "non-agricultural matters," were sonj hissa (the saonjia's part) and thakar hissa (landlord's part). Besides laborers there might be village servants--blacksmiths, carpenters, shepherds, barber, watchman, Brahmin priest and village priest (Baiga).²

1. Raipur DG (1909), p. 109; C. U. Wills' description of a Chhattisgarh village.

2. Ibid., p. 110.

The main crop of Chhattisgarh was rice, sown before the monsoon and harvested in the late fall. A particular method in Chhattisgarh for growing rice was biasi, which mainly saved labor by a rough transplanting and weeding method.¹ When the plants were about a foot high the land was ploughed. In the 1860s it appeared a large variety of other crops were growing including wheat, sugarcane, and pulses. By the 1890s the cultivated area had expanded, rice also covering more of the area, while items such as sugar were imported. The cropped area of wheat also expanded during this period, but rust, the famines, the drop in wheat prices and other factors reduced the area in the twentieth century. The cultivated area usually included four types of soil on the undulating land of the Chhattisgarh plain: Bhata (light soil) on the worn-down ridges, matasi (yellow soil) and dorsa (half matasi and half kankar) on the intermediate lands, and kankar (black soil) on the lowest lands.² Each had its advantages, depending on the amount of rainfall and type of crop: rice on the first three and wheat on the last three. Bhata, being poorest, needed regular fallows or manure. "After crops" or utera were often grown broadcast in the "slush of the rice fields" in the fall. One administrator thought the utera crop, though low yielding, was sufficient to pay the cultivator's rent.³

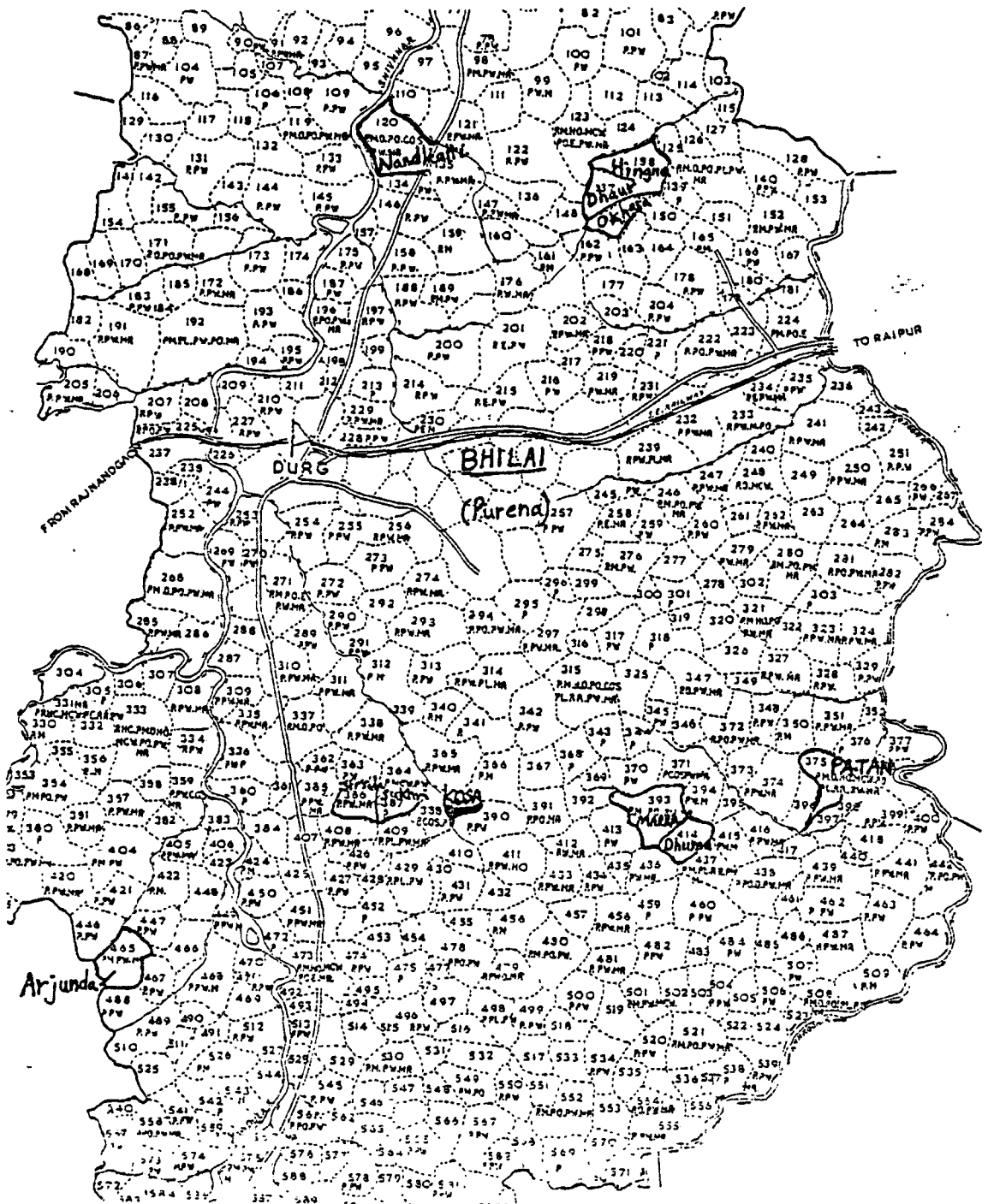
The village of Kosa appears to have been dominated by a Chamar population with few other castes, rather than a mixed village with separate parras. Its history exemplifies some of the development in

1. Ibid., p. 138. 2. Ibid., pp. 130-133.

3. L. S. Carey, Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Raipur District of the Central Province, effected during the years 1885 to 1889 (Bombay: Education Society's Press, 1891), p. 19, par. 30. Hereafter Raipur SR (1891),

MAP 7

KOSA, MARRA, AND OTHER VILLAGES IN DURG TAHSIL



SOURCE: Durg District Census Handbook (1964).

Chhattisgarh during the period from 1860 to 1930. One of the oral traditions about the establishment of the village relates that seven generations ago (1800?) the villagers settled after clearing the growth of reeds in its geographical depression, creating the village site. The first settler was an old Satnami with two wives--Kari (black) and Pandri (white). They cleared the land and built the first hut.¹

In the Land Revenue Settlements of the 1860s, in many of the villages of Raipur district, the British awarded the landownership to non-Chamars. Of the 3,276 villages, Brahmins were made landlords over 606 villages, Kurmis in 392, Rajputs in 290 and Baniyas in 264. Chamars were made landlords in only 111 villages.² In Kosa, a Rajput malguzar rather than a Chamar became landlord of fifty-one other villages as well. Both Kosa and Marra were located in the lands between two large villages which had been Garhs under the Haihaiyabansi rule--Patan and Arjunda.

In the Settlement Reports it appears Chamar tenants had the worst relationship with those landlords who became patels of gaontias under the Marathas--especially Marathas, Maratha Brahmins, Kurmis, and Rajputs. On the other hand, Chamars found the Chhattisgarhi Brahmin and other older residents of the district to be better landlords.³

The Lakhabata Institution

Three forces worked to disrupt agrarian relations in Chhattisgarh during the 1860s--the attempt of the British administration to establish a new land revenue system with a variety of tenures, the more secure

1. Kosa, p. 3, 2. Raipur SR (1869), pp. 38-45.

3. Raipur SR (1912), pp. 26-29.

position of upper caste landholders, and the famine in the late 1860s. The lakhabata system had evidently been developed in Chhattisgarh to accommodate changing conditions: (1) to allow cultivators an equal share of land as the cultivated land and population expanded or contracted, (2) to attract new settlers by offering equal types and amounts of land, and (3) to equally share the village's fluctuating tax burden, which sometimes changed each year, especially during the last years of Maratha rule before 1818. The British land revenue system, on the other hand, tried to freeze land holdings for each cultivator until the next land settlement twenty or thirty years later. While earlier lakhabata had several advantages for the ryots and even the gaontias and was "popular with the ryots before," Hewitt said, "now since settlement," it had lost its "charms." The landlords found the lakhabata custom had a "good side for him." It prevented "ryots from acquiring rights of occupancy (tenure) and attracts new settlers." They, therefore, encouraged "it in every way." But Hewitt wanted to modify it and hoped that "a good deal might be done towards eradicating the worst evils of the present custom."¹ The British passed a special provision to deal with lakhabata--tenants who would have had occupancy rights, except for lakhabata, would be allowed to acquire them. (See Chapter VII on Land.)

By the time of the revision of the land revenue of Raipur district in the 1880s, Settlement Officer, L. S. Carey, thought lakhabata "rarely takes place" anymore. He called it "a most pernicious custom," which retarded "the progress of the country." It had made the holdings "infinitesimal areas scattered over the surface of several square miles," so that cultivators had to go "to and fro" and waste time in order to get

1. Raipur SR (1869), p. 59.

to their holdings.¹ It also was irritating to the Settlement Officers, because each holding had to be separately mapped, classed, and assessed, and that took much of their time: 4,933,643 fields had to be surveyed in a 4,442 square mile area.²

E. Blenkinsop, in the Settlement of Durg tahsil at the turn of the century, quoted Hewitt's hope to eradicate "the worst evils" of lakhabata, and reported "we are still at the same point." Though "intelligent cultivators see the disadvantages," others "who find profit in pilfering their neighbor's crops," support it.³ Blenkinsop identified the lakhabata system with Chamars.

The lakhabata system is essentially a system of perfect equality, a principle which is also the essence of the Chamar religion,⁴

He viewed lakhabata as a way for Chamars to satisfy their "greed for land," and repeated a common saying, "ek tan baila, Taranga tak jot" ("with only one bullock, he wants to plough all the way to Taranga"--a village in northwest Raipur district).⁵ He thought Chamars sought lakhabata because they "lost ground and felt aggrieved" when other cultivators did better than they. As a Settlement Officer he had to decide the rents for tenants, and he attempted to show many of his rents corresponded closely to rents where lakhabata had occurred. In sixteen out of twenty-nine cases they showed "uniformity." In one, however, the land had been left fallow, because the Brahmin landlord, who had just bought the village, had quarrelled with the Chamar tenants. The village, Dhuma, showed less uniformity. In ten other villages, "similar to Dhuma, in which there have been quarrels and many changes due to famine" there was also less uniformity.⁶

1. Raipur SR (1891), p. 34. 2. *Ibid.*, 65. Holdings averaged about seven to the acre.

3. Drug SR (1903), p. 18. 4. *Ibid.*, p. 45. 5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*, p. 65. The villages where Blenkinsop found the greatest "uniformity" were Matang, Santra, Soram, and Kashi.

Within a few years H. E. Hemingway again discussed lakhabata. He saw the advantages of a cultivator having several fields with a variety of soils. Thus "any calamity must affect all tenants equally."¹ But he still regarded the system "a very bad one, and it would be a blessing if the scattered holdings could be amalgamated." He tried several attempts but the tenants "would have nothing to do with it." and they said "everybody had lost."²

In the late 1920s the Agricultural Commission reviewed lakhabata and the attempts at land consolidation of chakabandi (tying land tracts together), which had occurred especially during Hemingway's time and in 1914. Some were done without government initiative and supervision. Almost all were failures; the most successful ones occurred when landlords consolidated their holdings at the expense of tenants. This was especially the case in twenty-seven villages of Janjgir tahsil. The report said that though "much of" the consolidation had probably been "by fair means, undoubtedly some has been by high-handed methods and by such procedure as obtaining the surrender of tenant's land by involving him in debt."³ The last revenue settlement of Raipur district (1932) did not mention advantages or disadvantages of lakhabata or chakabandi attempts.

Lakhabata appears to have been an institution before the British period which permitted a flexible land system to deal with changing economic and administrative conditions. The introduction of the British

1. Raipur SR (1912), p. 23.

2. Ibid.

3. J. F. Dyer, "note on the Consolidation of Holdings in Chhattisgarh," Great Britain, Royal Commission on Agriculture in India, Evidence taken in the Central Provinces, vol. 6 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1927): 153.

land revenue system changed the effect of lakhabata mostly in favor of the landlord by minutely and clearly recording holdings and enhancing the position of the landlords. In the twentieth century the attempts to reverse the process--to consolidate rather than divide land--continued to favor the landlord under the British land revenue system. Chamars and other tenants by that time, understanding the unfavorable effects on their position, opposed land distribution or consolidation. This was not because of the two reasons British administrators gave--that tenants had "acquired a sentimental attachment to the fields" which their fathers and they had ploughed and held since the first settlement; or that people were "intensely conservative." Chamars and others reversed their pre-British popular attitude toward land distribution because, under the British system, equal redistribution was no longer possible--"the stronger malguzars seized all the best land in the villages, giving inferior land in exchange."¹

Economic and Political Tensions and Accomodations

It is unknown if the Satnami villagers of Kosa benefited from the expanding trade of Chhattisgarh during the period from the 1860s to the 1880s. The main rail line between Nagpur and Raipur was completed by 1888 with the nearest station at Bhilai, about twelve miles directly north of the village. L. S. Carey conducted a new land revenue settlement during the 1880s and thought the trade of Chhattisgarh had at least trabled in the last decade.² He found the Satnamis "certainly hardworking

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1. Raipur DG (1909), p. 144. Hemingway probably wrote this section. He summed up reaction to Chakabandi; it "stinks in the nostrils of the Raipur tenantry."
 2. Raipur SR (1891), p. 35.

but slovenly cultivators." They were "sensitive to a degree owing to the manner in which they are always treated by Hindus," As a result they were "quarrelsome (ziddi) and litigious," and caused "friction in many villages where the malguzar is a Hindu." He thought, however, they were "not a difficult people to govern, provided they are treated firmly but justly." The "colonies" where they were "notorious for their turbulence and thieving propensities," were mostly villages where they had "received unfair treatment at their landlords' hands,"¹

In the investigations of the late 1880s and early 1890s Chhattisgarh became characterized as an area with a lower living standard compared to the other parts of the province and where there was "little difference between rich and poor" among the various occupational classes of smaller landlords, tenants, saonjias, and agricultural laborers.² If there was less income, the people had lower expenses; there was less indebtedness, and "clearly no real pressure of hunger."³ The Chamar malguzars in Bilaspur district were considered "generally very poor," only because they had to share their net profits among "a large number of co-sharers, and separately cultivated "small holdings."⁴

The condition of a Chamar, Manai, was recorded during one of the investigations of the late 1880s. Manai lived in Padampur in Balaspur

1. Ibid., pp. 41-42.

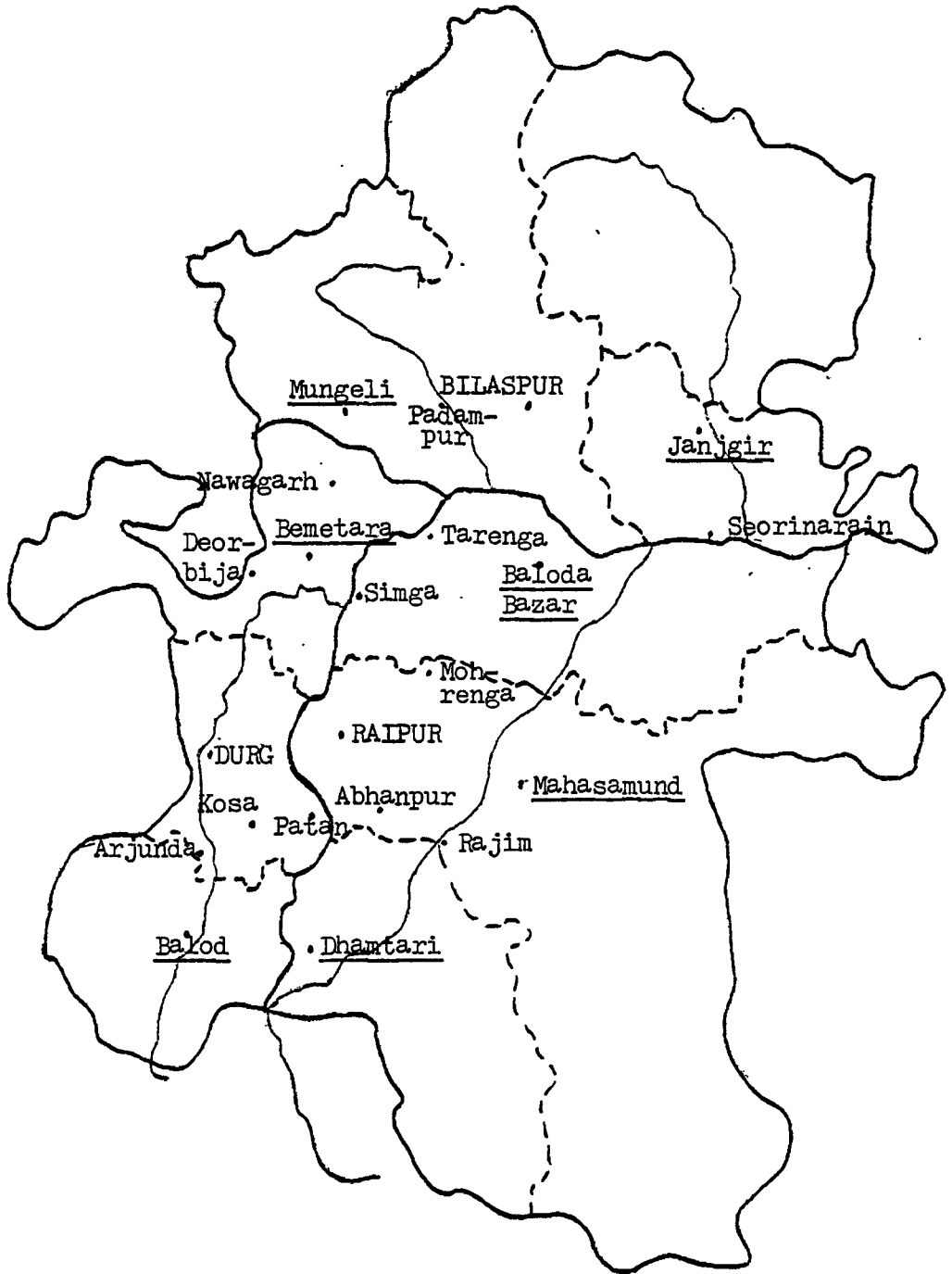
2. Bilaspur SR (1892), p. 28, par. 26; and India, Revenue and Agriculture Department, Proceedings, December 1888, Famine no. 15, "Reports on the Condition of the Lower Classes of the Population of India," Central Provinces, Abstract of District Reports, Raipur, p. 22. Hereafter "Lower Classes" (1888).

3. Andrew H. I. Fraser, Commissioner of Chhattisgarh Division, quoted in Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces to Government of India, 25 July 1888, p. 11, par. 15, in "Lower Classes" (1888).

4. Bilaspur SR (1892), p. 22.

MAP 8

DISTRICTS, TAHSILS AND VILLAGES
OF CHHATTISGARH



district with his wife and blind mother-in-law, and cultivated two and one-half acres of land at a rent of Rupees 3.50. In addition to the rent he spent about Rs. 5 a year for clothes, Rs. 1.50 on salt, Rs. 1 for cooking oil, Rs. .50 "fee to the guru of his caste (Satnami)" and other smaller amounts on vegetables, pots, etc. His expenditure totaled Rs. 12 per year. They earned about fifteen maunds of rice and kodo a year, and ate about a seer of rice gruel (pej) a day; once or twice a month they could afford to eat boiled rice (bhat). He said he had no "complaint of any kind" and could never remember going "to sleep without his evening meal."¹

The picture of Chhattisgarh in the late 1880s and early 1890s indicates a low standard of living, especially among the Chamars. A majority of the people seemed to be able to live above the bare subsistence level by working or cultivating in the villages. The famines of the next decade made conditions much worse; the decline in the population indicates many people were unable to survive the disastrous years, even when the government finally organized famine relief.

One Chhattisgarhi song recalls

Hai brother hear what happened in '98
 There was famine in '97; next year death came with cholera, . . .
 In some houses there were none left to weep for the dead . . .
 It was dry in Sawan, no rain fell, it was hard to get water
 With Asadh's rain the rice sprang up; with Sawan's drought it withered
 We held our heads and wept
 Puddling ceased, there was no weeding to be done
 There was no work to be had, there was no food to eat
 This is what happened in '98.²

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1. "Lower Classes" (1888), p. 25-26. A seer is about two pounds and a maund about 80 pounds.
 2. Kurmi song from Nipaniya, Baloda Bazar tahsil, Raipur district, in Verrier Elwin, Folk Songs of Chhattisgarh (Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 267-68.

1891 is the first year of a recorded population for the small village of Kosa--221 people. By 1901 the population had declined to only 157 people (a 29 percent decline).¹ This may have been both from deaths as well as migration; a decline much worse than in Durg and Raipur districts. Their populations fell by fifteen and seventeen percentages respectively.²

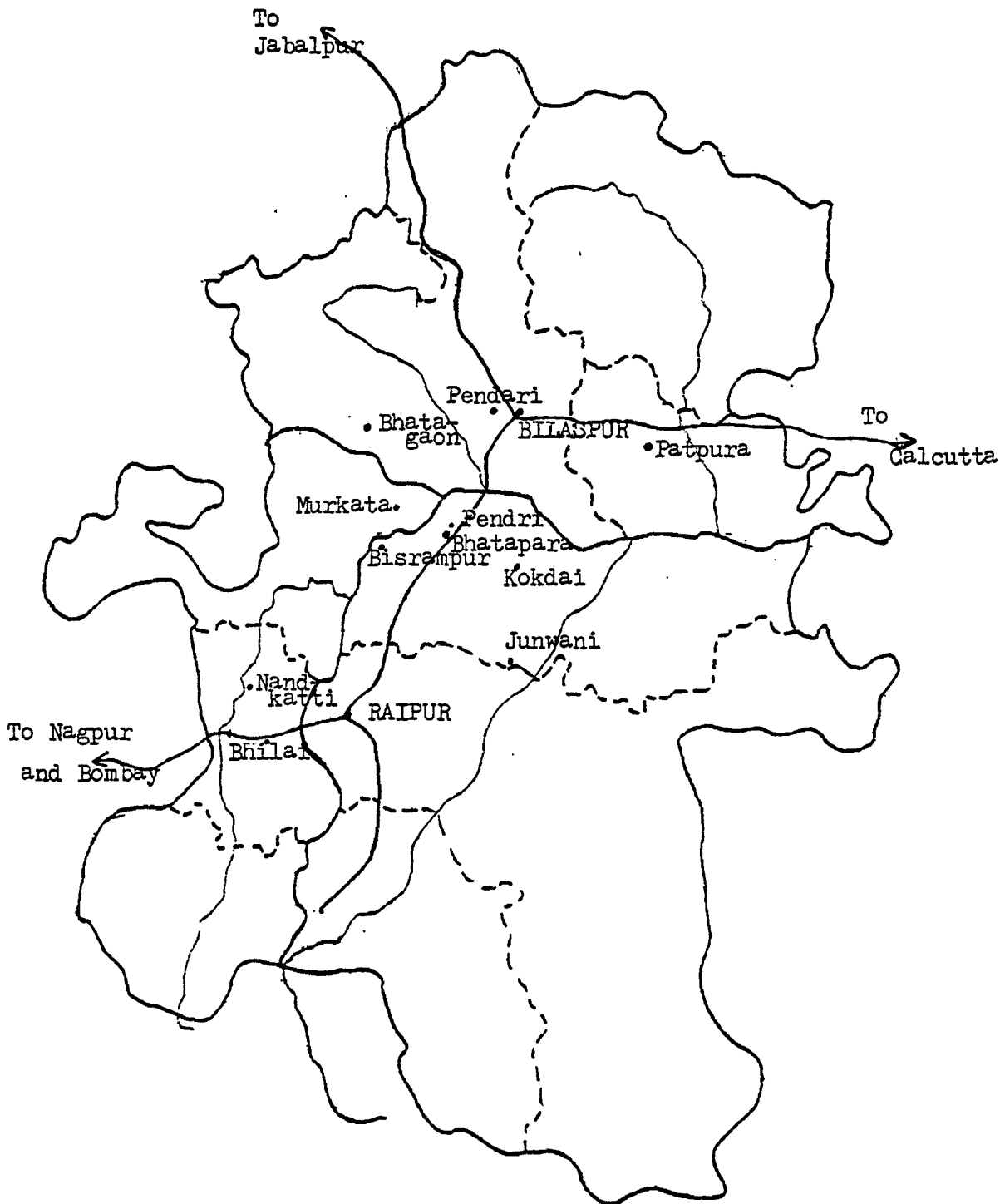
Many other events occurred during these years besides a decline in the population. People left their villages in search for work, even travelling outside the district on the new railway to Calcutta, where they worked in the city and on the docks, or went further to the Assam tea plantations. Violence erupted in several villages as landlords tried to expand their holdings by "getting rid" of tenants; among the Chamars there was a "no-rent" campaign in some of the villages.

The late 1890s was the first time people of Chhattisgarh migrated out of the district in considerable numbers. As E. R. K. Blenkinsop (Settlement Officer for the Durg tahsil) reported, they "temporarily left the district for work" in "large numbers," going to Kharagpur (where there was a locomotive manufacturing industry) and to the Gondi-Jabalpur railway line which was being built.³ Some took their whole families and returned with "a good deal of money."⁴ Migrations from Bilaspur district to Assam and the "Colonies" (outside India) began with the 1897/98 famine of 1,376 persons, and reached a record high of 7,016 persons in 1899/1900. Other smaller peaks occurred during the scarcity years of 1902/03 (3,527 persons), and 1907/08 (4,140 persons.)

1. Kosa, p. 4. 2. Ibid. 3. Durg SR (1903), p. 46,

4. Bilaspur SR (1914), p. 61, par. 150.

RAILWAY AND VILLAGES IN CHHATTISGARH



By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, the temporary emigration had become "a regular feature of years of scarcity," and some men migrated "every year to earn some extra money." They worked at the Calcutta docks and the Bengal coal fields and railway works.¹

Famines stimulated other changes besides migration. In the late 1880s and early 1890s Chhattisgarh landlords were generally characterized as different from other areas of the province--"land-grabbing" by landlords trying to add to their holdings had been "practically unknown;" and tenants, on the other hand, paid rents "punctually and in full."² Both of these changed with the famines.

In the ensuing years of the late 1890s and early twentieth century three types of villages with different political structures may be distinguished; first, multicasite villages, with strong landlords who were interested in obtaining more land under their direct management; second, villages with landlords generally satisfied with their existing holdings; and third, some Chamar villages.

In the first type of villages, landlords (mainly of Bania, Rajput, Bhat [Maratha], and Kurmi castes) expanded their holdings, in some cases by large amounts. In Mungeli tahsil of Bilaspur district, their "home-farm" lands increased "by 47,824 acres or 56 percent" between the settlement

1. Ibid., pp. 61-62,

2. Raipur SR (1891), p. 52; and L. S. Carey, letter 10 May 1901, par. 7, in Central Provinces, Revenue and Agriculture Department, Proceedings, August 1901, Revenue no. 10, p. 102. Carey's remarks of 1901 are part of a set of letters on "Collection and Recovery of Rent:" hereafter abbreviations for above proceedings: CPRAP, and for this set of proceedings: "Recovery of Rent."

of the 1890s and the second decade of the twentieth century.¹ During about the same period, the home-farm area in Raipur district "increased by over 60 percent as a result of the famines."² They achieved this by using a variety of methods--the main one was refusing tenants, who had left during the famines (the British called them "absconding" "deserting" tenants), to re-enter their holdings.³ In a few cases they ejected tenants for rental arrears, which landlords had allowed "to accumulate in order to seize their tenants' land," In other cases, after threatening to seize the tenants' seed-grain, they extorted "bonds from them for large amounts to be paid from the next rice crop."⁴ Since the tenants' rent had been fixed by the last Settlement, landlords found it unprofitable to keep "low-paying" tenants or discovered other ways to enhance payments. As Blenkinsop said in 1903, "it is not profitable for malguzars to have low paying tenants. They find much more profit in cultivating the land themselves."⁵ They took nazaranas (presents)

1. Bilaspur SR (L914), pp. 62-63.

2. C. D. Deshmukh, Final Report on the Revision of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Raipur District (Khalsa) in the Central Provinces, effected during the years 1926 to 1931 (Nagpur: Government Printing, 1932), p. 2. Hereafter Raipur SR (1932).

3. Raipur SR (1912), p. 26.

4. Charles E. Low, Bilaspur Settlement Officer, 7 February 1901, par. 4, in "Recovery of Rent," p, 104.

5. Drug SR (1903), p. 37.

from new tenants as a fee to allow them to cultivate tenant land; they took annual cash leases (rēgh) to cultivate portions of the landlord's land; and they began taking barras (contributions)¹. These barras were taken for several reasons--allowing tenants access to jungle produce; for a special occasion such as "a wedding or a pilgrimage or a law suite," or for village ceremonies; even to help pay for a landlord's purchase of a "gramophone."²

It is difficult to estimate the number of villages which had landlords of the three types. The first type probably was more numerous than the other two combined. As an illustration of the second type, H. E. Hémingway (in the third settlement of Raipur district) mentioned at least one landlord whom he considered "the ideal of what a malguzar should be," Ramratan Tiwari of Semra village. He owned eight mahals (revenue villages) and exemplified the Chhattisgarhi Brahmin landlords, who spent "most of their time in their estates" and whose "relation between landlords and tenant" was "as a rule excellent." He contrasted them with the Maratha landlords who were "grossly tyrannous," and the Bania and Kurmi landlords, who were "frequently nearly as bad, though not so violent." In two areas with about the same fertility, the area (Mohrenga) under Kurmi landlords had a population which had declined considerably, while the area (Abhanpur) where Chhattisgarhi Brahmin landlords with Chamar tenants lived had kept population "practically stationary in spite of the famines";³ He implied Chhattisgarh Brahmins helped tenants in the famines, while Kurmis did not.

1. See earlier land Chapter VII on nazarānas.

2. Drug SR (1903), p. 38; and Raipur SR (1912), p. 28, par. 62.

3. Raipur SR (1912), pp. 27-29.

J. B. Fuller illustrated the third type of village in his description of Chamar tenants of Durg in 1899. He called the Satnami Chamars "a masterful folk" who had "a considerable portion of the land . . . in their hands as tenants." They "strenuously" held "in practice as well as theory to the old tradition" from Maratha times that "even ordinary rents cannot be enhanced save at settlement." He thought the tenants of Durg tahsil were "prosperous" since "the payment of rent" was done with a "minimum of exertion."¹ However, even by that time, some Chamar villages had begun a "no-rent" agitation; they had "combined to withhold rents even before the famine period."²

British administrators were divided in their opinion of whether landlords of Chamars were more at fault for the no-rent" agitation; they insisted, however, that Chamars had to be brought "in line" or "to their senses."³ The British suggested several reasons for the

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1. Chief Commissioner, Resolution on the Preliminary Assessment Report of the Settlement Officer, Raipur, for Durg Tahsil, 3 July 1899, in CPRAP, July 1899, Settlement, p. 460, par. 6.
 2. Drug SR (1903), p. 44.
 3. E. R. K. Blenkinsop, Settlement Officer, Raipur, 8 February 1901, par. 4, "Recovery of Rent," p. 103; and Carey, par. 7, *ibid.*, p. 102. These opinions were in reply to a letter of R. H. Craddock, Commissioner of Settlements and Agriculture, 30 September 1899, when he asked if "exceptional powers" might be necessary to deal with a "No Rent" agitation among the Satnami Chamars; in CPRAP, May 1900, p. 24, par. 13.

no-rent agitation in the villages where "relations between tenants and malguzars were notoriously bad."¹ In the worst cases, "the malguzar is almost always . . . responsible" for he had "dispossessed Chamar tenants by means of false documents and perjury, and then roused the opposition of the whole body." As a result, Chamars looked upon "Civil Court orders" as "obtained by trickery (jhal) as no doubt they sometimes have been," and they continued to cultivate the land "after orders of ejection," or reaped the crops "whoever cultivates the land." In milder cases, the landlords had not given tenants "due protection and assistance in time of need," so the Chamars had relied on money-lenders and "learnt to disregard the claims of the malguzar."²

During the 1890s, besides withholding rents, Blenkinsop characterized Chamars as being "at their worst" for "to lie, steal, destory cattle and commit arson are every-day affairs; whilst the bolder spirits indulge in burglaries, dacoities, and violent assaults."³ In 1892 sixty persons were arrested for rioting in Bilaspur district. The report called the Chamars "a turbulent and lawless set,"⁴

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1. Low, par. 2, "Recovery of Rent," p. 104.
 2. Blenkinsop, pars. 3 and 5, Ibid., p. 103.
 3. Blenkinsop, quoting his Decennial note on the agricultural population, in Drug SR (1903), p. 44. Similar comment on the Chamars: "in 1896 and 1897 the criminal classes of the district got out of hand for a time, especially the Chamars of the Mungeli tahsil, who, every ready on slight provocation to take to crime, formed organized gangs for levy of blackmail, poisoning and stealing cattle, committing dacoities and house-breakings." in Central Provinces; District Gazetteers: Bilaspur District, Vol. B (Nagpur: Government Press, 1927), p. 109.
 4. Central Provinces, Report on the Police Administration of the Central Provinces for the Year 1892 (Nagpur: 1893), p. 3. Hereafter C. P., Police Rept.

Four years later Chamars attacked a police officer investigating robberies (dacoities) in Bilaspur district.¹ In 1898 a court official was attacked by Raipur Chamars when he went to seize the cattle for payment of a debt.² In the late 1890s, the Chamars of the same district attacked a malguzar in his village, killed him, and set his village on fire.³ In 1902 a malguzar's house was stoned by Chamars of the neighboring village, and after he returned from reporting the incident to the police, he found his house looted. Before the stoning, the malguzar had brought the police to recover a brass pot which a Chamar said was taken in retaliation for the malguzar's "seizure of some axes of Chamars."⁴ Not finding any proof of the stolen axes, the British officer had warned the Chamars that "they would be seriously dealt with if they again took the law into their own hands."⁵

There is a danger of making too much of these violent incidents and the no-rent agitation; but there is an even greater danger of making too little of them. The reported cases of violence and the

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1. Ibid., 1896, p. 3. 2. Ibid., 1898, p. 3.
 3. A. B. Napier, Deputy Commissioner, Raipur, to Commissioner, Chhattisgarh Division, 8 July 1903, par. 9, in Central Provinces, Home Department, Proceedings, October 1903, Police, p. 69, titled "Quartering Punitive Police." Hereafter CPHP, and Napier, "Punitive Police."
 4. Ibid. The person involved was actually the son of the Rajput landlord of Hingna. The son, Rampershad, lived in Dhaur village, while the Chamars lived in the neighboring village of Ukhra or Okhara. According to the Durg District Census Handbook (1964), the percent of the population who belonged to Scheduled Castes (probably Satnamis) was Hingna--none, Dhaur--29.2%, and Okhara--69.3%.
 5. Ibid., par. 5.

number of no-rent villages are both small and lack detail. Yet, they obviously represent the tip of the iceberg and clearly indicate tensions between landlords and tenants, especially between upper castes and Satnami Chamars, and of the difficulties of combating the adverse famine and political conditions.

The British took two actions to end the Satnami Chamar no-rent agitation. First, in Durg tahsil, the rents of "contumacious" Chamar tenants were "treated differently;" they were enhanced higher than others. Blenkinsop said the purpose was not really to "break down any such combination" (of organized withholding of rents), but to ensure a Chamar would not be able to "twist" an "exemption from enhancement into approval of his action."¹ Second, malguzars were encouraged to collect arrears of rent, and if they could not, the government would take the estate under attachment for non-revenue payment, and use one of its officers to collect rent. L. S. Carey personally "experimented" in rent collection. He went to one of the worst villages, Pindri, in the Tarenga estate which was "under attachment for failure to pay Government revenue." All the tenants of the village were Chamars; they had received monetary assistance in charitable grants and government improvement loans (takavi) in the previous June, but had only sown one-fourth of the grain they purchased and ate the rest. They earned a "livelihood" in the neighboring boomtown of Bhatapara "quarrying and carrying stones" for construction there. Carey said some appeared "really poor," but one,

1. Drug SR (1902) p. 45; and also p. 62 where Blenkinsop says he did not want the Chamars "to misinterpret undue leniency."

who "wore gold ornaments" paid "his rent without demur." Another offered to pawn some trinkets, and that was accepted, Carey had been "skeptical" at first about using such "stringent measures," but he thought it now necessary because of the "no-rent' agitation." With these measures and the "return of ordinary seasons, rents will be paid punctually in the future as was the case in the past."¹

Besides these measures against no-rent agitations, the administration had begun to temporarily station "punitive police" in turbulent villages since the mid-1890s. In such cases villagers paid the expense for the extra police to keep the peace as long as necessary.² Punitive police were imposed, for example, on the Chamar village, whose residents had stoned and looted the maguzar's house. In a letter of early 1901, the Bilaspur Settlement Officer, Charles Earnest Low, concluded

the crushing blows inflicted by the famines of 1897, and by the strong Police measures, which their own criminal propensities caused, has practically laid the Bilaspur Chamars at the feet of their malguzars in all but a few cases.³

Ten years later, Hemingway reported the Raipur district "Chamars are practically beaten, and in only one village, Junwani, are they still

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1. Carey, "Recovery of Rent, " pp. 101-102.
 2. I do not know when the quartering of punitive police began as a practice in the Central Provinces. Evidently there were provisions for it in connection with "rioting" which the police dealt with under Section 107 and magistrates dealt with under Section 145 of the Criminal Procedure Code. The first clear reference I have is in CPHP, December 1896, Police, pp. 224-25 about imposing punitive police on a Bilaspur village to control dacoities.
 3. Low, par. 2, "Recovery of Rent," p. 104.

defying the decrees of the Civil Court!"¹ At the same time Hance in Bilaspur recalled that "some 10 years ago" the Chamar's "strong sense of caste solidarity . . . and independence" had "manifested itself in a strong disinclination to pay his rent to the Hindu malguzars," whom the Chamars regarded "as interlopers in the little commonwealths which the Chamar villages form." The "tendency" was "not so noticeable now."² During the famines many of the Chamar landlords, especially in Mungeli tahsil, had been "ousted," and the poorer tenants had "lost their land." Because of this drastic "amputation . . . upon the body politic in Mungeli," Hance thought the area over the years had been restored, "if somewhat maimed, to comparatively normal health."³

If one accepts that Chamars were "beaten," obviously the administrators, landlords, and upper caste tenants had "won." The question, therefore, remains--what happened to the "beaten" Chamars? Evidence indicates they found additional ways to supplement their agricultural earnings at the same time renewing or persisting in their pressure against malguzar and government actions which they felt were unjust.

Chamars had always carted produce during the nineteenth century. They continued to do this in the twentieth century. Hemingway remarked (in 1912) that

the most important feature of the Raipur district system of trade is the absence of Banias from the villages. Practically the whole of the carting, between the village and the large markets on the railways, is done by the tenants in their own carts.⁴

There was no middleman and "so the actual cost of carting is an unknown quantity." Some Chamars and Telis (another large cultivating caste of

1. Raipur SR (1912), p. 29. 2. Bilaspur SR (1914), p. 74, par. 182.

3. Ibid., p. 76 4. Raipur SR (1912), p. 4.

Chhattisgarh) were "not content with" the neighborhood trade, borrowed large sums, and made "long expeditions" to the zamindari forests to buy "til (sesame), forest produce, and tobacco; or else hire out their carts to wealthy traders." Thus the Chhattisgarhi was a "far more sophisticated person" in 1911 "than he was in 1897."¹

In addition to carting, Chamars found other ways to earn income. Around railroad towns such as Raipur and Bhatapara, small tenants found it better to sublet their holdings and work in the towns.² Bhatapara had been a small Chamar village of 461 with a few huts in 1891 before the railway came. By 1901 its population had risen to 2,900; it further increased to 4,028 in 1911, and 4,937 in 1919.³ In those decades it became the center for the trade of Singa, southern Mungeli, Baloda Bazar, and other previously large market centers. In the villages some Chamars became retail cattle-dealers (called Kochias), buying at large cattle markets such as Baloda Bazar and Bamnidih and selling them in "small village bazars."⁴

In 1916 one survey of the Chhattisgarhi Chamars listed the types of work they performed: it included emigration to the Calcutta docks, the tea plantations, coal mines, railway works at Kharagpur and Chakradharpur, and railway porters.⁵ This process continued into the 1920s, when

1. Ibid. 2. Ibid., pp. 28-29.

3. Raipur DG (1909), p. 266; Central Provinces, Local and Municipal Departments, Proceedings, April 1919, "Terminal tax on Bhatapara," p. 2.

4. Russell, Tribes and Castes, 2:420. 5. Ibid.

"whole Satnami families" were "in the habit of temporarily emigrating to industrial centers" after the monsoons and returning at planting time. They provided "the bulk of the casual labor on the roads, railways, and canals."¹

The Banking Enquiry Committee of the late 1920s mentioned several cases of how Satnamis earned their living. The villagers of Purnea earned a "good income from plying carts for hire on the main road" between Raipur and Durg nearby.² A large number of cultivators of Kodadi (Baloda Bazar tahsil, Raipur) worked for wages, plied carts and a few lent money.³ Hiralal Satnami of Pendari in Bilaspur tahsil held thirteen acres of twelve rupees rent and was the principal dealer in buffalos.⁴ Gajraj Chamar of Patpura (Janjgir tahsil, Bilaspur) had a large family of eleven; most of them did agricultural labor and carting besides cultivating the family's six and a half acres.⁵

One of the ways tenants and agricultural laborers, particularly Satnami Chamars, renewed and retained a viable economic position in the Chhattisgarh economy in the early twentieth century was to earn wages through a variety of activities. Most Satnami Chamars, however, still remained primarily involved in direct agricultural production during most of the year in their villages. It was here that some of them continued to face demands on their time and wealth. Kosa village was south of Purnea village, mentioned above, but it is not known if they

1. Raipur SR (1932), p. 20.

2. Central Provinces, Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee; Report, 1929-1930, 2 vols, (Nagpur: Government Press, 1930), 2:448. Hereafter CP, Banking Enquiry (1930).

3. *Ibid.*, 2:423-24. Jatti Satnami in the village owned seventy-five acres of land and had lent out Rupees 200.

4. *Ibid.*, 2:428. 5. *Ibid.*, 2:274-75.

participated in the transportation of goods like villagers there. Nor is it known if their landlord exacted begar (forced labor) from them, or charged Chamars extra interest rates.¹ One report points to the tenants' problems about begar: in order to build a house, the landlord "made his tenants cart timber and bricks to Rajim many miles from his village" during the cultivation season, "their fields consequently remaining untilled."² Because Chamars had a "bad reputation," they had to pay "very high rates of interest."³

Four characteristics of agrarian relations are illustrated by Kosa village in the twentieth century. First, during the Durg tahsil Settlement of 1903 some landlords tried to conceal rent enhancements in order to obtain lower land revenue assessments. Kosa's landlord lived in Marra, and Blenkinsop reported Marra's landlord had tried to conceal the fact he had raised "the rental by 156 percent" since the last settlement. One tenant, who was listed as paying Rs. 7 rent, admitted he actually paid Rs. 40.⁴ Second, landlords who found they had more home-farm land than they could cultivate, let out the land on annual leases for high cash rents (regh), which had to be paid before cultivators could plough the land.⁵ By 1911 the Rajput landlord of Kosa had settled "tenants on the whole of the home-farm," either by regh or other methods.⁶ Third, Kurmis, who were characterized as good

1. Drug SR (1903), p. 45, par. 69. 2. Raipur DG (1909), p. 84.

3. Drug DG (1910), p. 94. 4. Drug SR(1903), p. 37; see also, p. 61.

5. Ibid., and Raipur SR (1912), pp. 26-27.

6. H. E. Hemingway, Settlement Report of Drug District, Drug Tahsil Report, (1911), p. 1536, quoted in Kosa, p. 77. Hereafter Drug Thl. Rpt.

agriculturalists though not necessarily good landlords, had actively begun to buy up a large number of villages and were strengthening their caste position in the twentieth century.¹ Just before the 1911 Settlement, the Marra landlord sold Kosa to a Kurmi, Mukti. Fourth, Satnami Chamars continued to oppose landlords' "excessive demands," in spite of Hemingway's opinion that they were "beaten." Mukti Kurmi in 1911 was trying "to force" tenants "to give up their holdings by demanding excessive rents," yet, the report stated, "they neither pay nor give up the land." The thirty tenants were "mostly Chamars,"² The total population of the village had grown in the last decade (1901-1911) by five percent (from 157 to 162 persons).³ Kosa village around 1910 thus illustrates changing agrarian relations--the strong landlord selling to a new one who was again attempting to strengthen his position over resisting Chamar tenants.

There continued to be evidence of tensions and violence in agrarian relations in Chhattisgarh in the twentieth century. These especially centered around the years from 1911 to 1913, soon after the British had revised and raised the rents and land revenue of the three districts. One police officer speculated that the cases of "riots" connected with land disputes might "be one result of the settlement, without in any way reflecting on the correctness of the Settlement Officer's decisions."

1. Raipur SR (1912), pp. 27, 29, and especially p. 36. See also Thomas F. Weaver, "The farmers of Raipur," in Developing Rural India: Plan and Practice, by John W. Mellor et al. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), pp. 143-234. He particularly looks at the Kurmis in Chapter 8, "Caste and Change," pp. 160-180.

2. Drug Thl. Rept., p. 1536, in Kosa, p. 77. 3. Kosa, p. 4.

He thought just as strong a reason for land riots was the "readiness of the Chhattisgarhi to urge his claim to land, however weak, by force."¹ In 1907 a malguzar was killed in Bilaspur district during "a riot over land."² In 1911 "two claimants to a piece of land," both of whom had cultivated it, arrived at harvest "with bands of adherents armed with lathis (heavy wooden rods or staffs) and proceeded to fight." Two men were fatally wounded.³ In Nandkatti village of Durg the next year "one of the Pahlwans or hired bullies" was seriously injured when he tried to assist a faction leader in "enforcing his claims to the land in dispute."⁴ Two cases occurred in 1913. Gajadhar Sao led one faction and Anjordass led another (a Bania and a Satnami?) in Doeri village (Mungeli tahsil); they "were on bad terms with each other." When a complaint was lodged in the court, its hearing was delayed four months during which time a murder occurred and twenty-three people of Anjordass' party were arrested. Eventually all were released except one who was sentenced to one year imprisonment. The other case was a "serious riot" in the Durg village of Murkata where the villagers took "the law into their own hands" and assaulted a "head constable."⁵

During the war years British officials were very sensitive about criticism of British rule in India. In 1915 Parashram Krishna was imprisoned for criticizing British rule, and in 1916 a man of Nimar district (north-western Central Provinces) was jailed for one year for shouting that the "British Raj would cease."⁶ Land riots received much less

1. Police Report, 1911, p. 5. 2. Ibid., 1909, p. 6.

3. Ibid., 1911, p. 5. 4. Ibid., 1912, p. 7.

5. Ibid., 1913, pp 8-9. 6. Ibid., 1915, p. 18; 1916, p. 10.

attention, though the police continued to be concerned about the difficulties of preventing land disputes, especially since they thought most riots were "unpremeditated quarrels which could not possibly be foreseen;" they said people were "addicted to settling disputes with the lathi . . . without much provocation," and that often village headmen (mukaddams) were themselves often involved or "concerned," so they delayed reporting until the "actual breach occurs."¹

These sketchy reports and opinions reveal tensions in the Chhattisgarh "body politic" between agriculturalists and local authorities whether the participants were local law officers, village headmen, moneylenders, or villagers.

In the late 1920s, a fourth revision of the land revenue of Raipur was made by C. D. Deshmukh. He thought both landlords and tenants were strong enough generally to protect their interests, as

Communal opinion is strong in a Chhattisgarh village and the oppressive malguzar sometimes over-reaches himself and brings organized opposition into existence. The tenants seldom resort to violence but can effectively boycott the malguzar by depriving him of the services of village artisans and agricultural laborers.

On the other hand,

for many a day to come the ordinary malguzar, who is not immoderate in his demands and is not blatantly unsympathetic, will continue to wield influence in his village.²

Kosa village seemed to represent some of this characterization in the late 1920s. Unlike the general population of Durg district which registered a four percent decline between 1911 and 1921, due to the influenza epidemic and the two famines between 1918 and 1922, Kosa's

1. Ibid., 1914, p. 12. 2. Raipur SR (1932), p. 23, par. 77.

population grew seventy-two percent. Somehow they escaped those hardships or received several immigrant families. Over the two decades from the previous settlement (1911) the net cropped area had expanded by twelve percent, and thirty-one percent more land was under rice. The number of tenant families had risen from thirty to thirty-nine, and were still "mostly Satnamis." The Kurmi landlord had evidently succeeded in obtaining some land for his own cultivation through the "surrender of high rental tenancy land."¹ The Settlement Abstract listed "relations with tenants strained," and called the tenants "extremely turbulent and quarrelsome, a substantial portion of them being previous convicts."² There was, however, no mention of specific crimes and convictions.

Conclusion

The difficulties which tenants and agricultural laborers faced during the decades from 1860 to 1930 were made more severe by the pressures from those who dominated their lives, and by adverse economic conditions of scarcities and famines. Those difficulties were somewhat alleviated, however, by an expanding economy, and a new transportation network, and by organized activities of tenants and laborers opposing or resisting excessive pressures from above. A large part of the Chamar population, by joining a new religious and social reform movement, achieved a separate status as Satnamis by the late 1920s. While no upper castes are known to have recognized this separate caste status, the Satnami religion and social organization

1. Central Provinces, Mahalwar Abstract Prepared at the time of the Settlement of Drug District (1929), in Kosa, pp. 77-78.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

provided its members with an ideology and identity with which to reject upper caste domination.

This chapter has also traced cycles when peasants faced increased political and economic pressures. The Satnami Chamar peasant adopted various methods to accomodate himself to these pressures--he turned to alternative occupations to earn an income, withheld payments to landlords and government agents, and at times violently resisted their demands and actions. Though not always or fully successful, the Satnami Chamar peasant in Kosa and other villages persistently sought ways to revitalize his position when faced with new or revived pressures and excessive demands.

CHAPTER XI

COLONIAL LIMITATIONS AND SOCIAL VITALITY

The Central Provinces was a ~~different~~ place in the 1920s from what it had been when formed in the 1860s. Its society and economy still remained rural and agricultural but increased population mobility, economic diversity and trade had transformed the province. Railways ran through almost every district; roads had been improved and carts, bicycles and motor vehicles passed along them. The British provincial administration retained its preeminent position though it was challenged by a critical Indian public which had emerged in the preceding decades.

The history of the Central Provinces between 1861 and 1921 may be reviewed within several conceptual frameworks. The one presented here is not exhaustive, but indicates the main ideas of this study and the connections between its topical divisions.

The study has investigated two major types of processes in the Central Provinces; those occurring within the British colonial framework, and those operating within a diverse and complex Indian society. Each may be viewed as occupying a separate activity "space:" vertically divided by the imposition of an administration upon a society, and horizontally separated by the different ideologies and types of activities which predominated within each space. Much of the time each functioned separately, while occasionally Indian

society responded to administrative measures. In this intermediate zone of interaction, each influenced the other because of their various goals, methods, and institutions. This especially occurred at the times when either attempted to encompass a portion of the other's activity space, or tried to prevent the intrusion of the other into its own space. While the general position or location of the two changed little during this period, the focus and intensity of activity in this intermediate zone shifted in response to changing goals, methods, and institutions. Other forces of change, especially economic and demographic, disrupted activities and called for readjustments.

The British colonial system of administration was permeated by English ideas and institutions. The main participants in this sphere of activity, the British administrators, maintained a distinctive English cultural and social community segregated from Indian society. As part of the wider British Indian Empire, they often relied on idealized models of English government and society to form opinions and policies.

Three main kinds of divisions within the provincial administration have been suggested. The first was between departments to consolidate British rule on the one hand, and developmental departments on the other. These second types of departments sought to provide social services, establish civic institutions, and promote economic growth. Two further distinctions have been emphasized, which some earlier studies of British India have often overlooked or ignored. These distinctions were between policy, implementation and results, and between upper provincial and lower district levels of administration. British activity (and hence funds) tended to focus more on consolidation

of the Raj, through the departments of police, courts, and revenue collection; it also emphasized policy formation at the upper levels of administration often at the expense of being able to coordinate lower level implementation procedures with government policies, or being able to permit the results of government programs to strongly influence policy discussions and decisions. Thus, in spite of an ideological commitment to develop the province, in practice the administration slighted the building of social services and civic institutions and agricultural development. To illuminate such differences and tendencies, this study has examined four non-consolidative departmental activities--education, local self-government, health, and agricultural improvement, and one consolidative departmental activity--land revenue collection. In its non-consolidative roles, the British administration introduced ideas, programs and institutions based almost entirely on British and Western concepts with few Indian influences. In its consolidative role, the British often acted in ways similar to those of previous Indian administrations to maintain law and order. Even here, however, British ideas influenced the elaboration of inherited administrative structures, and British ideas served to justify its position and activities.

The Central Provinces was divided geographically into four sub-regions, and socially into various hierarchies of castes and classes. Particularly in one sub-region, however, the hierarchical divisions were less evident--in the Satpura plateau with its tribal population. Each sub-region had distinctive economic, social, historical and cultural characteristics. The major products of each sub-region varied

among wheat in the north, rice in the southeast, cotton and sorghum in the southwest, and millets and forest produce in the center. Social groups had migrated from different areas into each sub-region; the character of previous administrations differed. There were also linguistic and religious differences. In spite of improvements in transportation and communication, the strong and distinctive sub-regional characteristics prevented the emergence of a larger regional identity under the veneer of the British provincial administration. While caste distinctions remained clear, class distinctions such as among landlords, tenants, agricultural laborers, merchants and bankers, and professionals were often vague and mixed. The Marwari family of Gokidas was at the same time a merchant and banker, industrialist, and landlord family. While a few Satnami Chamars were landlords, the majority were tenants and agricultural laborers. Changes in Indian society have been studied both generally as they paralleled activities of British departments and specifically in three case studies--the commercial and landlord family of Raja Gokuldas, the Baiga tribe, and the Satnami Chamar peasants. The three case studies reflect some of the history of three sub-regions respectively--the northern Narbudda valley, the central Satpura plateau, and the southeastern Chhattisgarh plain. References to changes in the southwestern Maratha plain sub-region are made in the general descriptions of Indian activity, especially concerning the creation of political institutions.

The second section of the study examines the activities of several departments of the colonial system of administration while describing related activities in Indian society. Although British administrators hoped landlords would be the leading class among the population to

spearhead the increase of literacy and the participation in local self-government institutions, it was instead mainly the elite class of professionals who showed an uneven and more rapid increase in literacy and who promoted the growth of an Indian press and voluntary associations. Landlords participated in an Indian form of political activity, which I have labeled petition politics. British efforts to improve public health stalled due to the inadequate commitment of funds, the small number of public medical institutions, and especially the unavailability of appropriate advanced medical technology; as a result, the population grew sporadically between periods of famines and epidemics. The British introduced a new land revenue system to increase land taxes and stabilize agrarian relations. Instead British land policy often disrupted land relationships as the British first strongly supported the landlords and then sought to strengthen the position of the tenant. In general landlords re-adjusted their methods to maintain or increase payments from tenants and others, and resisted the administration's periodic attempts to enhance the land revenue.

The third section concentrates on the Indian arena of activity. The first case study describes the formation by a family of a commercial kingdom, and ends by comparing it as a domain with the British administrative domain. The second case study of the Baiga tribe describes the methods of alternative occupations and exodus which they used to survive the pressures of British administrators who attempted to transform them into settled agriculturalists. The third case study deals with the Satnami Chamars, examining their attempt to acquire a new caste or social status, and the methods of (again) alternative and supplemental occupations, withholding rent, and violence which they

used to maintain their position in face of landlord demands and adverse economic conditions. These case studies represent, respectively, Indian communities which collaborated with the British, retreated from the British, and constantly revived their economic and social position.

The intensity of activity, whether in the parallel spheres of endeavors or in the intermediate zone of interaction, was greatest at specific times and points of contact. It peaked twice, first during the establishment of British provincial rule in the 1860s, and second, during the longer period of fluctuating prosperity and famine in the middle three decades from 1880 to 1910. Points of contact varied according to the types of action and participants. The Indian professional elite's zone of political interaction with British administrators was greatest in the early 1890s, over the issue of cow-protection, and around 1905 to 1910 over extreme criticism of colonial rule and moderate demands for representation on an advisory council. When the British made new land revenue settlements in the 1860s, their contact was primarily with landlords, as they enhanced landlords' taxes and re-defined agrarian relations; and in this same early period with Baigas as the British took possession of forest lands. The Baiga zone of interaction was again intense in the 1880s with the aid programs and the establishment of the Baiga Chak. The British attempted to have direct contact with tenants in the late 1860s through laws intended to give them greater security of tenure, but generally that contact remained indirect and weak, even with further legislation favorable to tenants which allowed the British to determine the amount of rent, and even with the programs of debt reduction and cooperative credit societies later. Landlords became and then remained the barrier to

direct British contact with tenants, mainly because the British originally and even later wished the landlords to be the main agents of educational, political, and agricultural changes in the Indian arena. The Satnami Chamars revitalized their position with landlords three times, in the late 1860s, from about 1896 to 1903, and from around 1909 to 1914. Except through the imposition of punitive police and the unusual British rent-collection procedures, the Satnami Chamars' zone of direct interaction with the British administration remained small. These and other examples indicate the distinctive characteristics of various participants, their spheres of activity and zones of interaction, and their dynamic relationship at different times.

An overall impression of the history of the Central Provinces in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reveals two paradoxical characteristics: British power and weakness, and Indian resistance and resilience. While British administration appeared very powerful and energetic, in several respects it was limited and weak; Indian society was portrayed by the British as stubbornly resistant, but it exhibited a remarkable resilience and adaptability under unstable economic conditions and when faced with inconsistent British attempts to transform Indian society by imposing incongruous Western ideas and institutions. In other words, although previous studies often emphasized British power and Indian resistance, this study has shown many areas where British limitations and Indian resilience more accurately characterized colonial rule, in this case in the Central Provinces.

Two voices from the past typify such a view. In the 1860s an

administrator in the Central Provinces remarked that Richard Temple had been appointed Chief Commissioner "as a reward for distinguished services" in other parts of India and that Temple regarded the Central Provinces

as a grand field for display of energy and talent He travels over every part, looks to everything himself, pushes on local improvements, treeplanting, and cattle breeding--examines jails, dispensaries, routs out everybody and keeps them at work through incessant circulars and orders. The country is very backward, and he is determined to shove it forward--the country resists inertly as long as it can, tumbles back as often as Temple props it up, and when forcibly driven forward, runs the wrong way, like a pig going to Cork market. But we know too well what is good for it and insist on it being educated and improved.¹

The villagers of Baiji in Durg district are quoted as answering the members of the Banking Enquiry Committee in the late 1920s, when "asked by us as to their needs,"

Our cattle often die of cattle epidemics and this puts us to loss. We sometimes suffer from attacks of cholera and smallpox. Sometimes our crops fail owing to the failure of the monsoon. These are misfortunes which come to us from heaven and they depend on the displeasures of our Great Master. These we can endure as best we can. We do not ask you gentlemen to do anything for us. You may do anything which you think good; but we pray you, in your kindness not to bring any Government irrigation canal here, nor to open any co-operative credit bank. These are misfortunes which we should not be able to bear. Any other misfortune we can tolerate but this.²

The paradoxical characteristics of the British colonial system and Indian society fade when examined within the conceptual framework of making distinctions of separate and parallel spheres of activity

¹Alfred C. Lyall to his relative Sibylla, 11 June 1864, Ho-shagabad, India Office Library, London, MSS, European F 132, MSS #4.

²Central Provinces, Banking Enquiry Committee, Report 1930, 2:455.

and zones of interaction between the two types of participants. The strength of the British colonial system is most apparent in its consolidative role, in policy formation, and at the upper levels of administration. Its limitations are most evident in its developmental programs and institutions based on English and Western models, its inadequate implementation procedures, and at the local level. It is, however, in these second types of activity and at this lower level that Indian society often had contact with the colonial system and exhibited its own strength and vitality. Segments of Indian society readjusted their methods in order to deal with the disruptive forces of a changing economic, social, and administrative environment.

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TABLE 25. ACCIDENTAL DEATHS AND THE EXTERMINATION OF WILD ANIMALS
IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES, 1865-67 and 1895-97.

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A. Deaths.

<u>Accidental deaths, 1865-1867.</u>						Decade
<u>Causes</u>	<u>1865</u>	<u>1866</u>	<u>1867</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Equivalent</u>
Falling into wells, tanks, and rivers	904	1010	1126	3,040	1,013	10,133
Falling from walls	65	75	77	217	72	723
From other causes	427	485	373	1,285	428	4,283
suicides	341	372	314	1,027	342	3,423
Killed by wild beasts	546	699	506	1,751	584	5,837
Killed by snake bite	651	506	717	1,874	625	6,247
Total	<u>2,934</u>	<u>3,147</u>	<u>3,233</u>	<u>9,314</u>	<u>3,105</u>	<u>31,047</u>

<u>Loss of human life, 1895-97.</u>						Decade
	<u>1895</u>	<u>1896</u>	<u>1897</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Equivalent</u>
From tigers	142	172	350	664	221	2,213
From other animals	149	189	350	688	229	2,293
Sub-total	<u>291</u>	<u>361</u>	<u>700</u>	<u>1,352</u>	<u>451</u>	<u>4,507</u>
From snakes	1,279	1,133	1,010	3,422	1,141	11,407
Total	<u>1,570</u>	<u>1,500</u>	<u>1,710</u>	<u>4,780</u>	<u>1,593</u>	<u>15,933</u>

<u>Loss of Cattle, 1895-97.</u>						
From tigers	4,444	3,740	3,280	11,464	3,821	38,213
From other animals	<u>5,253</u>	<u>4,763</u>	<u>1,297</u>	<u>11,318</u>	<u>3,773</u>	<u>37,727</u>
Sub-total	<u>9,697</u>	<u>8,503</u>	<u>4,577</u>	<u>22,754</u>	<u>7,588</u>	<u>75,880</u>
From snakes	244	249	4,111(?)	(740)	(247)	2,465
Total	<u>9,941</u>	<u>8,752</u>	<u>4,824</u>	<u>23,522</u>	<u>7,841</u>	<u>78,405</u>

B. Elimination of wild animals.

<u>Wild beasts destroyed, 1865-1867.</u>						Decade
	<u>1865</u>	<u>1866</u>	<u>1867</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Equivalent</u>
Tigers	543	543	518	1,604	535	5,347
Panthers	760	982	895			
Bears	392	512	534			
Wolves	168	108	467			
Hyenas	<u>387</u>	<u>433</u>	<u>475</u>			
Animals	<u>2,250</u>	<u>2,578</u>	<u>2,889</u>	<u>7,717</u>	<u>2,572</u>	<u>25,723</u>
Snakes	---	6,010	13,644	19,654	9,827	98,270
Total	<u>2,250</u>	<u>8,588</u>	<u>16,533</u>	<u>27,371</u>	<u>12,399</u>	<u>123,990</u>

<u>Wild beasts destroyed, 1895-97.</u>						Decade
	<u>1895</u>	<u>1896</u>	<u>1897</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Equivalent</u>
Tigers	225	323	222	770	257	2,567
Leopards	681	654	562			
Bears	228	239	202			
Hyenas	261	228	5			
Total	<u>1,474</u>	<u>1,566</u>	<u>1,197</u>	<u>4,237</u>	<u>1,412</u>	<u>14,123</u>

Sources: Central Provinces, Administration Report, 1867-68, p. 15; and Government of India, Resolution on Results of Measures Adopted for the Extermination of Wild Animals and Poisonous Snakes in British India for the Years, 1896 and 1897, in C.P. Home Progs. General, 1898, p. 45-54.

TABLE 26. POPULATION VARIATION IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES
1881-1931

	Central Provinces- British Districts	Jabalpur Division	Jabalpur District	Nerbudda Division	Hoshang- abad District	Nagpur Division	Nagpur District	Chhattis- garh Division	Haipur District	Durg District
1881	9,270,578	2,200,771	667,233	1,765,363	464,384	2,696,514	696,514	2,607,930	980,783	746,269
1891	10,151,345	2,375,485	748,146	1,883,204	493,941	2,908,492	756,946	2,984,173	1,109,010	827,557
1901	9,217,312	2,082,052	680,585	1,785,142	446,645	2,658,580	750,935	2,691,538	1,082,433	690,614
1911	10,858,996	2,421,748	748,892	2,081,638	457,395	3,108,993	808,922	3,246,617	1,310,584	789,810
1921	10,837,444	2,296,508	745,685	2,013,021	445,733	3,146,228	792,521	3,381,687	1,392,768	757,154
1931	12,065,885	2,463,466	773,811	2,254,566	486,630	3,602,108	940,049	3,745,743	1,527,573	817,924
DENSITY (per square mile)										
1881	113	116	176	96	126	118	182	118	101	158
1891	124	125	191	102	134	128	197	135	114	175
1901	112	110	174	97	121	117	196	122	111	146
1911	132	128	191	113	124	137	211	138	135	167
1921	132	121	191	109	121	138	207	153	143	161
1931	147	130	198	123	132	158	245	169	157	173
INDEX (with 1881 population as base)										
1881	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
1891	110	108	109	107	106	108	109	114	113	111
1901	99	95	99	101	96	99	108	103	110	93
1911	117	110	109	118	99	115	116	125	134	106
1921	117	104	109	114	96	117	114	130	142	102
1931	130	112	113	128	105	134	135	144	156	110
CHANGE IN POPULATION, 1881-1931 (per mille per decade)										
	60.3	23.9	25.2	55.4	9.2	67.0	70.0	87.3	111.5	19.2

Central Provinces, Census, 1931, p. 5-8.

TABLE 27
DISEASE DEATHS, DEATH AND BIRTH RATES
Central Provinces, 1877-1920

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(Ratio: per 1,000 population)												
<u>F I V E Y E A R A V E R A G E S</u>												
Years	Chol- era	Small- pox	Pla- gue	Fevers	Dysen- tery	Resp. dis.	Total dis- ease	Inj- uries	Other	Death rate	Birth rate	Growth
1877-80	2.44	1.67		20.99	2.70		27.79	.51	5.02	33.37	40.25	6.88
1881-85	1.40	.45		18.62	2.89		23.35	.52	7.93	31.74	43.67	11.94
1886-90	1.98	.81		20.57	2.56		25.93	.55	7.87	34.18	39.64	5.46
1891-95	1.81	.24		21.94	1.87		25.86	.57	8.24	34.27	36.93	2.66
1896-00	3.75	.44		26.20	3.95		34.34	.61	10.53	45.50	33.54	-11.96
1901-05	.08	.42	1.75	15.01	2.02	.94	20.22	.55	10.05	30.81	45.95	15.13
1906-10	1.42	.44	1.55	18.32	3.63	2.54	27.90	.55	11.76	40.25	52.81	12.56
1911-15	1.13	.26	.99	16.85	3.33	3.00	25.56	.51	9.93	35.98	49.26	13.28
1916-20	1.56	.35	1.40	32.75	2.77	3.47	42.30	.53	9.53	52.39	41.74	-10.65
<u>T E N Y E A R A V E R A G E S</u>												
1881-90	1.69	.63		18.69	2.72		24.64	.54	7.90	32.96	41.66	8.70
1891-00	2.78	.34		19.59	2.91		30.10	.59	9.38	39.89	35.24	-4.65
1901-10	.75	.43	1.65	16.67	2.83	1.74	24.06	.55	10.90	35.53	49.38	13.84
1911-20	1.35	.31	1.20	24.80	3.05	3.23	33.78	.52	9.73	44.19	45.50	1.31
<u>T W E N T Y Y E A R A V E R A G E S</u>												
1881-1900	2.24	.49		21.83	2.82		27.37	.56	8.24	36.42	38.45	2.03
1901-1920	1.05	.37	1.43	20.73	2.94	2.49	29.00	.54	10.32	39.86	47.44	7.58
<u>F O R T Y Y E A R A V E R A G E</u>												
1881-1920	1.64	.43	(.71)	21.28	2.88	(1.24)	28.18	.55	9.49	38.14	42.94	4.80

Source: Table of annual ratio of deaths and births, Central Provinces, 1877-1921.

TABLE 28

Ratio of deaths from various causes and births per 1,000 population

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Central Provinces, 1877-1921

	Cholera	Small-pox	Fevers	Dysentery	Injuries	All other causes	TOTAL deaths		Birth rate	Growth rate	
1877	.46	.37	17.70	2.01	.47	2.80	23.91		39.26	15.35	
1878	5.53	2.18	29.50	3.52	.50	4.77	46.01		38.63	-7.41	
1879	3.72	3.44	18.34	2.66	.52	5.75	34.44		38.24	3.80	
1880	.04	.69	18.40	2.59	.55	6.74	29.10		44.87	15.77	
1881	1.23	.24	19.42	2.98	.53	8.16	32.58		48.94	16.36	
1882	1.36	.45	17.31	2.80	.48	7.58	29.98		41.73	11.75	
1883	1.84	.53	19.86	3.02	.52	8.79	34.62		40.59	5.97	
1884	.02	.55	16.48	2.49	.51	7.25	27.30		41.75	14.45	
1885	2.54	.38	20.02	3.14	.56	7.85	34.21		45.36	11.15	
1886	1.89	.31	20.01	2.91	.51	7.60	33.24		37.79	4.55	
1887	1.43	.38	19.20	2.95	.56	8.18	32.70		40.20	7.50	
1888	.10	1.22	17.94	2.00	.55	6.89	28.70		41.52	12.82	
1889	5.96	1.90	23.93	2.94	.58	9.29	43.74		39.30	-4.44	
1890	.54	.26	21.76	2.01	.55	7.40	32.52		39.41	6.89	
1891	2.42	.08	23.61	2.37	.60	8.46	35.54		35.81	.27	
1892	4.21	.10	19.79	1.69	.54	7.81	34.14		38.39	4.25	
1893	.06	.17	17.88	1.37	.53	7.69	27.70		38.23	10.53	
1894	.74	.16	25.11	1.78	.56	8.87	37.22		38.82	1.60	
1895	1.63	.70	23.30	2.14	.61	8.37	36.75		33.41	-3.34	
1896	5.58	.82	29.55	3.15	.67	9.55	49.31		31.72	-17.59	
1897	6.01	.38	40.98	8.53	.79	12.64	69.34		26.83	-42.51	
1898	--	.11	15.68	1.24	.48	5.88	23.40		29.91	6.51	
1899	.01	.14	15.98	1.28	.45	9.73	27.65		47.35	19.70	
1900	7.14	.76	28.82	5.55	.65	14.84	57.82		31.90	-25.92	
	<u>Ch.</u>	<u>Smxpx</u>	<u>Plague</u>	<u>Fevers</u>	<u>Dyns.</u>	<u>R. D.*</u>	<u>Inj.</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Total</u>		
1901	.01	.63	--	14.28	1.18	--	.63	6.73	23.46	29.20	5.74
1902	--	.45	.11	14.52	1.11	.82	.56	8.25	25.82	48.29	22.47
1903*	.03	.17	4.13	15.27	2.66	1.36	.51	11.39	35.52	45.00	9.48
1904	.24	.16	3.43	13.54	2.14	1.22	.52	10.81	32.06	53.19	21.13
1905	.10	.70	1.07	17.43	3.02	1.30	.54	13.05	37.21	54.02	16.81
1906	3.26	.83	1.53	18.95	3.58	1.40	.53	13.39	43.47	51.70	8.23
1907	.36	.32	3.18	18.00	3.94	2.64	.53	12.73	41.70	52.46	10.76
1908	.76	.75	.52	18.16	3.40	2.59	.58	11.36	38.12	52.84	14.72
1909	.64	.35	1.61	15.08	2.79	2.60	.57	9.45	33.09	51.63	18.54
1910	.44	.23	2.42	21.43	4.45	3.48	.56	11.87	44.88	55.42	10.54
1911	.22	.12	2.01	16.85	3.15	2.71	.45	9.26	34.67	49.47	14.80
1912	2.46	.33	1.38	19.41	4.23	3.21	.47	10.83	42.34	48.24	5.90
1913	1.10	.46	.04	14.05	2.49	2.70	.49	8.95	30.28	49.26	18.98
1914	1.46	.33	.06	16.86	3.45	3.20	.55	10.78	36.69	51.37	14.64
1915	.41	.08	1.46	17.09	3.31	3.17	.58	9.81	35.91	47.95	12.04
1916	2.82	.02	2.06	18.31	2.91	3.41	.52	9.90	39.95	43.85	3.90
1917	.05	.03	3.45	16.26	2.55	3.52	.52	9.68	36.06	48.13	12.07
1918	.24	.16	.80	82.41	3.02	4.33	.55	11.09	102.60	43.24	-59.36
1919	4.46	.53	.66	21.90	3.21	2.99	.55	8.94	43.24	34.31	-8.93
1920	.25	.13	1.03	24.88	2.18	3.08	.50	8.03	40.11	39.17	-.94
1921	4.19	.13	.39	23.57	3.13	3.00	.53	9.07	44.01	37.90	-6.11

Sources; Statistical Abstract Relating to British India (annual), and Administration Report (annual for the Central Provinces)

*1903--1921, based on population of Central Provinces and Berar.

TABLE 29. Deaths from diseases and other causes in the Central Provinces

Year	Population registered	Cholera	Small-pox	Fevers	Dysentery & Diarrhea	Injuries	All other causes	TOTAL			
1877	7,403,074	3,413	2,763	131,123	14,867	3,522	21,441	177,139			
1878	" "	40,935	16,151	218,577	26,098	3,739	35,334	340,884			
1879	7,409,365	27,575	25,492	135,933	19,747	3,849	42,617	255,213			
1880	" "	303	5,134	136,840	19,205	4,126	49,962	215,647			
1881	" "	9,140	1,316	143,933	22,133	3,957	60,488	241,467			
1882	8,802,040	11,932	3,945	152,407	24,639	4,236	66,709	263,868			
1883	" "	16,235	4,699	175,119	26,623	4,593	77,487	304,763			
1884	3,317,135	149	4,832	145,342	21,991	4,446	63,904	240,714			
1885	" "	21,363	3,864	170,534	27,455	4,936	73,427	301,624			
1886	" "	16,679	2,774	176,429	25,708	4,505	67,014	293,109			
1887	" "	12,576	3,368	169,326	26,057	4,399	72,099	238,325			
1888	" "	921	10,729	158,195	17,618	4,871	60,727	253,061			
1889	" "	52,588	17,529	203,052	25,894	5,160	31,032	386,155			
1890	" "	4,737	2,265	191,883	17,721	4,830	65,263	286,754			
1891	" "	21,312	748	190,550	20,839	5,235	74,580	313,364			
1892	9,501,401	39,972	995	188,017	16,021	5,098	72,245	324,348			
1893	" "	557	1,602	169,913	13,001	5,031	73,034	263,143			
1894	" "	7,043	1,500	238,551	16,880	5,362	84,270	353,606			
1895	" "	15,506	6,644	221,418	20,316	5,327	70,426	349,137			
1896	" "	52,935	7,747	230,760	29,832	6,391	90,704	468,460	Plague		
1897	" "	57,131	3,641	339,334	91,092	7,550	120,062	658,822	"		
1898	10,526,620	7	1,149	164,999	13,038	5,129	61,907	246,360	131		
1899	" "	76	1,511	158,326	13,439	4,703	102,365	291,054	584	Respiratory diseases	
1900	10,526,620	75,112	8,021	303,370	53,474	6,328	156,296	608,691	596	- -	
1901	9,705,566	49	6,081	133,707	11,437	6,134	65,386	227,853	9	- -	
1902	" "	23	4,394	141,828	10,799	5,475	80,614	252,279	1,061	8,020	
1903	12,491,909*	437	2,130	190,707	33,181	3,398	142,297	443,697	51,514	17,033	
1904	" "	2,967	2,026	159,171	25,742	6,467	135,016	400,510	42,366	15,255	
1905	11,387,703	1,217	3,364	207,195	35,379	6,444	155,131	442,333	12,706	15,397	
1906	11,244,340	33,763	9,389	225,141	42,583	6,338	159,164	516,613	18,121	16,609	
1907	" "	4,291	3,826	213,908	46,829	6,311	151,346	495,683	37,774	31,327	
1908	11,990,419	9,043	9,044	217,773	40,760	6,966	136,252	457,081	6,236	31,002	
1909	11,970,201	7,637	4,155	180,544	33,386	6,833	133,174	396,135	19,189	31,090	
		<u>Cholera</u>	<u>Small-pox</u>	<u>Plague</u>	<u>Fevers</u>	<u>Dys&Di</u>	<u>Resp.</u>	<u>Injur.</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Total</u>	
1910	11,970,201	5,315	2,794	28,961	256,492	53,276	41,605	6,643	142,110	587,252	
1911	13,916,308	2,998	1,714	27,933	234,489	43,777	36,351	6,328	128,902	482,497	
1912	" "	34,313	4,556	19,139	270,162	58,825	44,729	6,496	151,005	589,285	
1913	" "	15,286	6,416	512	195,534	34,660	37,535	6,846	124,606	421,395	
1914	" "	20,345	4,581	399	234,528	48,045	44,575	7,674	150,015	510,652	
1915	" "	5,662	1,151	20,264	237,834	46,123	44,155	8,001	136,492	499,632	
1916	" "	39,205	339	28,629	254,785	40,467	47,434	7,273	137,868	555,999	
1917	" "	691	452	48,036	226,204	35,438	49,027	7,313	134,673	501,334	
1918	" "	3,351	2,186	11,093	1,146,770	42,053	60,283	7,720	154,389	1,427,850	
1919	" "	62,089	7,342	9,219	304,742	44,612	41,630	7,593	124,494	601,720	
1920	" "	3,491	2,176	14,374	346,276	30,281	42,853	6,949	111,728	558,128	
1921	13,912,760	58,331	1,737	5,467	327,930	43,486	41,695	7,330	126,246	612,322	

*Central Provinces and Berar, 1903---

TABLE 30
POPULATION GROWTH, 1820s-1865
Three District Areas, Central Provinces

JABALPUR DISTRICT (without Bijeragogarh tract)				HOSHANGABAD DISTRICT (without Harda tahsil)				CHHATTISGARH PLAIN (Raipur and Bilaspur Khalsa)			
Year	Area (Square miles)	Population	Density	Year	Area	Population	Density	Year	Area	Population	Density
								1820	a-16,964 b-(11438)	566,845 571,915	30-33 50
1825-27	(3647 $\frac{1}{4}$)	467,627	128	1832-36	(1581)	205,476	130				
				1844-47	(1576)	242,641	154				
1854-58	(3647 $\frac{1}{4}$)	480,504	132								
1865	3647 $\frac{1}{4}$	538,358	148	1865	1582	254,818	161	1865	14,326	1,652,222	115
Total % increase		15.6				23.8				100-200	
Number of years		40				30				45	
% increase per decade		3.9-4%				7.9-8%				22-44%	

Sources: District Gazetteers, Settlement of Land Revenue (in Districts of the Central Provinces, 1860s), Central Provinces Census, 1865; a) Patrick Vans Agnew, A Report on the Subah or Province of Chhattisgarh written in 1820 A. D. (Nagpur, Government Press, 1915), p. 4; b) J. F. K. Hewitt, Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Raepore District, Chuteesgurh Division, Central Provinces, 1869 (Nagpore: Chief Commissioner's Office, 1869), pp. 1 and 28.

POPULATION GROWTH, 1881-1961
Central Provinces and Three Districts

Area and year	Area (Square miles)	Population	density	Growth per decade	
				1881- 1921	1921- 1961
Jabalpur					
District					
1881	3912	687,233	176	8.5%	
1921	"	745,685	191		
1921	3908	744,783	191	17.8%	
1961	"	1,273,825	326		
Hoshangabad					
District					
1881	3693	464,384	126	-1.0%	
1921	"	445,733	121		
1921	3851	458,536	119	8.7	
1961	"	618,293	161		
Raipur					
District					
1881	9717	980,783	101	10.5%	
1921	"	1,392,768	143		
1921	8214	1,243,165	151	15.3	
1961	"	2,002,004	244		
Central Provinces					
1881	82,153	9,270,578	113	4.2%	
1921	"	10,837,444	132		

Sources: Central Provinces, Census, 1931; Madhya Pradesh, Census, 1961.

TABLE 32
DISEASE DEATHS, 1868-1870

Central Provinces

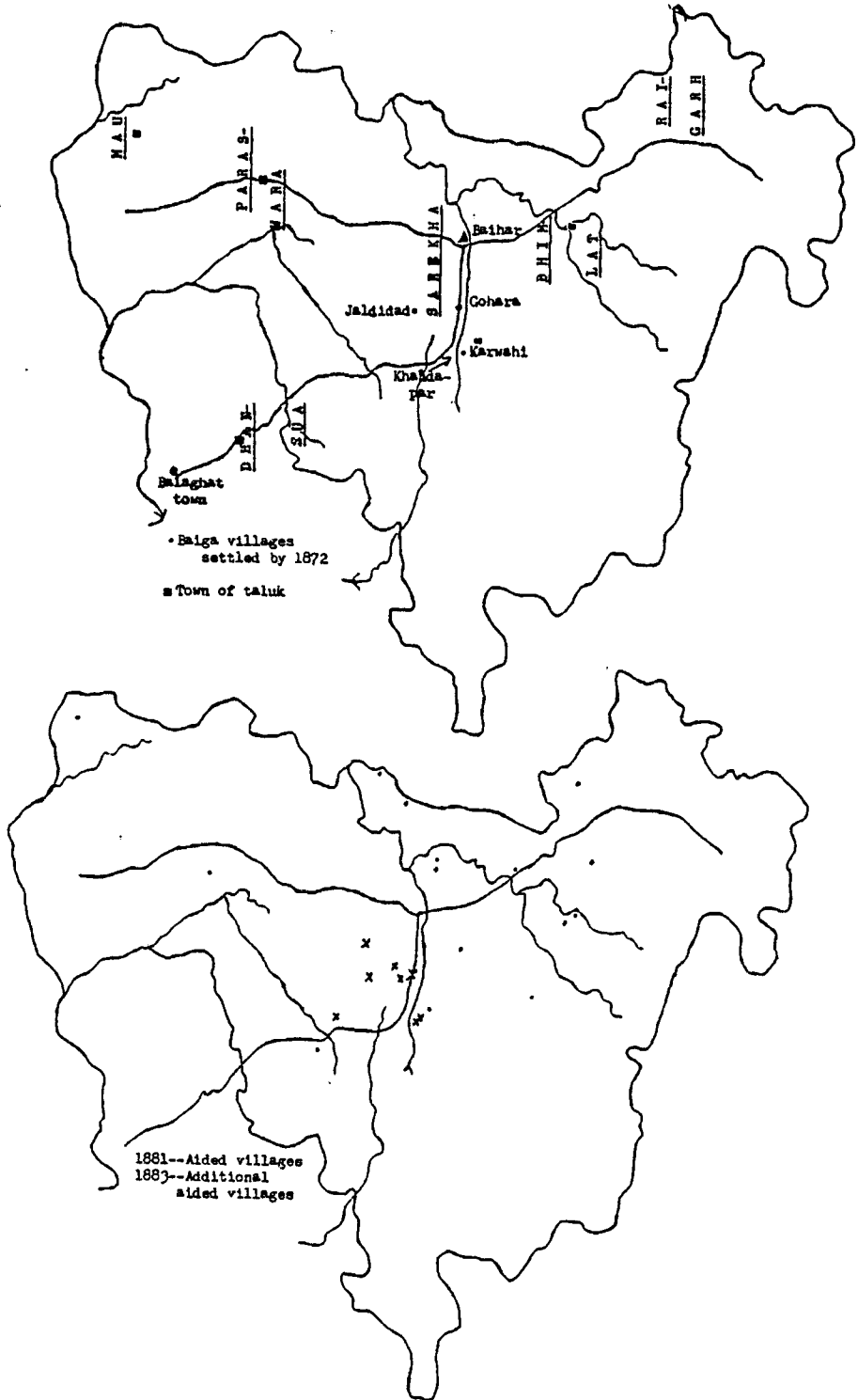
Year	Smallpox	Cholera	Fevers	Bowel complaints	Other diseases	Total diseases
1868	2,843	7,952	47,169	4,175	13,928	77,058
1869	16,849	51,387	68,999	12,550	23,488	173,273
1870	2,348	107	81,244	14,497	13,407	111,603
Annual average	7,347	19,815	65,801	10,741	16,941	120,645
Incidence per mille*	1.73	4.66	15.48	2.53	3.99	28.39
Percentage of total disease deaths	6.09	16.42	54.54	8.90	14.04	100.00

SOURCE: Fuller, Review, p. 5.

*Per mille incidence on a registered population of about 4,250,000.

MAPS 10 and 11

BAIGA SETTLEMENTS IN BAIHAR-BALAGHAT
1872 and 1881-83



MAPS 12 and 13

BAIGA SETTLEMENTS IN THE BAIHAR-BALAGHAT AREA
1886-87

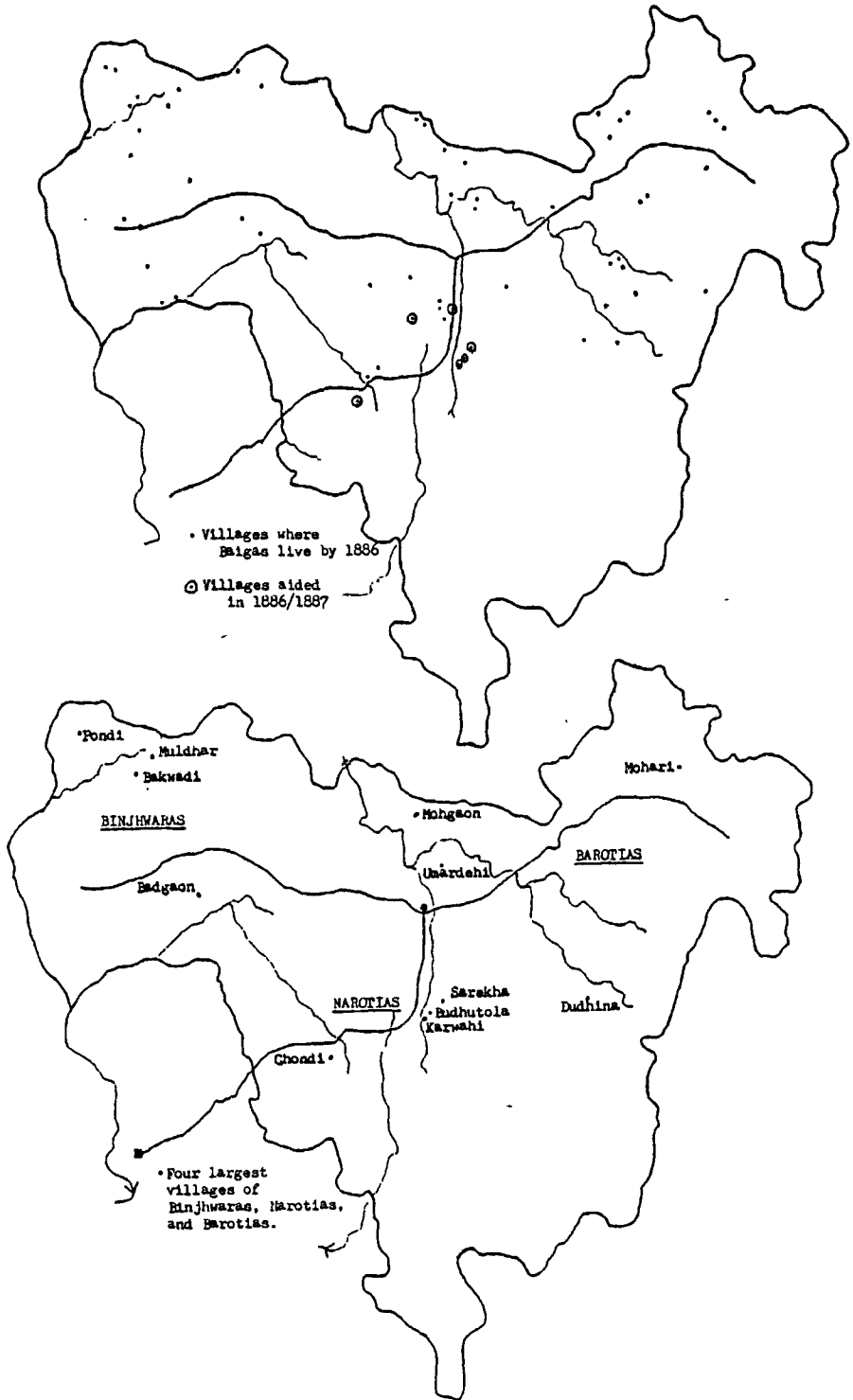


TABLE 33. LIST OF VILLAGES IN BALAGHAT DISTRICT WHERE BAIGAS SETTLED OR WERE AIDED, 1868-1888

I Talug (location)	II Num- ber	III Village	IV Before 1873	V 1881	VI 1882	VII 1883	VIII 1886			IX 1888 A
							a	b	c	
Sarekha (Central, south & west)	257	Gohara	X	X	N	N	6	6		A
	253	Jaldidad	X	X	N	N	7	7		A
	320	Karwahi	X	X	N	N	38	35	3	A
	320	Budhutola		X	N	N	30	28	2	A
	310	Kandul		X	N	N	23	21	1	
	194	Balaganagar		X	N	N	8	8		
	229	Manikpur		X	N	N	7	7		
	91	Kopa		X	N	N	4	2	2	
	311	Sarekha			N	N	34	29	5	A
	64	Kalegaon			Ba	Ba	4	4		
	27/28	Dhanwar			Ba	Ba	2		2BB	
	216	Atria				N	1	1		
	107	Ghana					2	2N		
	?375	Sunderwahi					4	3N	1N	
	39	Zulaf (Jhulup)					6	6BB		
	74	Mohgaon					16		16Ba	
	230	Kareli				N	3	3N		
128	Kareli				N					
Dhansua (Southwest)	366	Ghondi			N	N	44	39	5	A
Enimlat (Central, east)	232	Karamsara			N	N	2	2		
	140	Mukhi			N	N	1		1	
	188	Nikkum			Ba	N	5	4	1	
	?	Bargaon			Ba	Ba				
	136	Umardehi			Ba	Ba	22	8	14	
	?189	Balgaon					1		1N	
	?	Samuhapur					2		2N	
	208	Bhadgaon					3	1Ba	2Ba	
	?305	Dudhina					4		4Ba	
	239	Bakal					1		1Ba	
	210	Deogaon					3	3Ba		
237	Tingipar					1		1Ba		
Balgarn (North- west)	129	Lapti			N	N	7	6	1	
	735	Kugaon			N	N				
	19	Arundi					3		3Ba	
	118	Mana					2		2N	
	23	Mohari					7		7Ba	
	36	Arni					2		2Ba	
	22	Dhiri					2		2Ba	
	31	Sukdi					3		3Ba	
	?45	Chandgaon					2		2Ba	
?68	Bhindongri					1		1Ba		
Paraswara	? 147	Bargaon			Ba	Ba	14	13Ba	1Ba	
	13	Nata					2		2N	
	212	Manpur					2	2N		
	163	Saley					5	2Ba	3Ba	
	95	Sarwarjhor					10	7Ba	3Ba	
	?	Bariya					3		3Ba	

TABLE 33--continued

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I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII			IX
							a	b	c	
Mau (North- west)	333	Gudma					7		7B1	
	2	Pondi				B1	12	3B1	9B1	
	4	Sonekhar					2		2B1	
	8	Barkhoo					3		3B1	
	10	Muldhar					22	5B1	17B1	
	12	Kukda					3		3B1	
	13	Bakwadu					17		17B1	
	22	Batawa					1		1B1	
	34	Dhilmrootola					4		4B1	
	42	Khaira					7		7B1	
	44/46	Janamkhar					7		7B1	
	60	Kanari					8	7B1	1B1	
	73	Kami					5		5B1	
	74/75	Dundera					1		1B1	
	?	Janewani					6	4B1	2B1	
TOTALS		59 villages	3 vs	8 vs	20 vs	23vs	454	269	185	
							235	206	39N	
							140	43	97B1:	
							79	20	59B1.	

Column I--Relative geographic locations. All taluqs in Baihar tahsil, except Mau and Dhansua in northern part of Balaghat tahsil.

Column II--Serial location number according to the Balaghat District Census (1961) Handbook.

Column IV and V--villages where Baigas have settled by 1873 and the end of 1881.

Columns VI and VII--villages where Baigas have settled by the end of 1882 and 1883.

Symbols--N for Narotria Baigas

B1 for Binjhware Baigas

Ba for Barotria Baigas.

BB for mixed Binjhware/Barotria villages.

Columns VIII a, b, and c--a for total number of families settled; b for those families aided before 1886; and c for those families not aided before 1886.

Column IX--villages aided between 1886 and 1888.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- Ad. Rept.: Administration Report
- CCCP: Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces
- CP or C.P.: Central Provinces
- CP and B: Central Provinces and Berar
- CPAFP: Central Provinces, Agriculture and Foreign Department Proceedings
- CPAP: Central Provinces, Appointments Department Proceedings
- CPCIP: Central Provinces, Commerce and Industry Department Proceedings
- CPEMP: Central Provinces, Education and Medical Department, Proceedings
- CPG: Central Provinces, Gazette
- CPGAP: Central Provinces, General Administration Department Proceedings
- CPHP: Central Provinces, Home Proceedings
- CPLMP: Central Provinces, Local and Municipal Department, Proceedings
- CPPPP: Central Provinces, Police Department Proceedings
- CPPAP: Central Provinces, Police and Appointments Department Proceedings
- CPPGAP: Central Provinces, Police and General Administration Department Proceedings
- CPMPP: Central Provinces, Military and Political Department, Proceedings
- CPRAP: Central Provinces, Revenue and Agriculture Department Proceedings
- CPRSP: Central Provinces, Revenue and Scarcity Department Proceedings
- CPSRP: Central Provinces, Separate Revenue Department Proceedings
- CPSSP: Central Provinces, Survey and Settlement Department Proceedings
- Cr.: Commissioner

DC or D. C.: District Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner
DG: District Gazetteer, Vol. A, Descriptive
DG-B: District Gazetteer, Vol. B, Statistical Tables
Dn.: Division
DSP: District Superintendent of Police
GOI: Government of India
IARCP: India, Agriculture, Revenue, and Commerce Department Proceedings
IFP: India, Foreign Department Proceedings
IG: Imperial Gazetteer
I Gaz: India, Gazette
IGP: India, Home Department Proceedings
IRAP: India, Revenue and Agriculture Department Proceedings
Jab.: Jabalpur
MP or M. P.: Madhya Pradesh
PP: Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers (Commons)
Progs.: Proceedings
Rai.: Raipur
RGDB: Raja Gokuldas Biography
SR: Settlement Report
SVN: Selections from the Vernacular Newspapers