Social Structure in the Punjab

Marian W Smith

This is the thirteenth of a series of village studies being published in The Economic Weekly. The author was in West and East Punjab in 1948-49 under the auspices of the Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, New York, and the Social Science Research Council, Washington, DC.

A N Y of the aspects of the social structure of the Republic of India have been clearly presented in previous articles in this series. Dr Srinivas has given an excellent account of the general features of village structure (The Economic Weekly, October 30, 1951) and as Mr Carstairs has pointed out (The Economic Weekly, January 26, 1952) these occur in oilier regions as well as in the south. The several detailed descriptions of particular villages furnish valuable information on the way these general features function under local conditions. Even in the 'Hermit' village of Kulu which stands in its isolation from other villages, Dr Rosser (The Economic Weekly, May 17, 1952) describes Kacets and Lohars as being mutually interdependent, each having status relative to the other. Juridical authority lies with the village council and this authority is essentially non-coercive. It is an an the presence of these and similar features that one recognizes the distinctive stamp of Indian village life. It is as though there wear just so many coloured fibres, that on differ cut looms these were differently combined to (orn) new patterns. Perhaps this fact accounts for the unity one feels in Indian life despite all its variety.

Yet this quality could be over emphasized, and Mr Newell has called attention (The Economic Weekly, February 23, 1952) to the peculiarities which distinguish one district from another, and to insist on their importance. Popular stereo types about Bengalis and Punjabis and Madrasis are not always truth formulated. And, in smaller sections, a single custom may throw all the elements into quite different loci. The varied content of this series of studies is ample evidence of the tact that familiarity with one part of India should never be taken as conclusive knowledge of am other.

A third factor emphasised in this series, in several instances in the titles of the articles, is that of change. Changes are coming about so rapidly in village life that their nature and direction demand the most careful and detailed attention. This is particularly true since the need for greater productivity in the economic sphere has led to an Indian programme of planned change in village life. Although existing conditions may not be good in them selves, they do nevertheless represent an equilibrium of social forces acquired over a number of years. Unintelligent planning can upset this equilibrium yet fail to introduce any substitute of relative value to production. Unplanned changes are often far-reaching enough without placing additional strain upon interpersonal relations through inept planning. "Plus fact should never, of course, be construed as an argument against change, for the status qua carries no quality which is inevitably valuable. But the unplanned effects of change may often be disturbing, especially in the intricately balanced society of India.

BASIS OF UNITY

Dr Srinivas has already suggested that the interdependence of castes within the village is one of the factors making for village unity. He calls this the 'vertical unity of many castes' and contrasts it with a 'horizontal unity' of castes in which caste alliances go beyond the village. Not only do castes interlock within the village to form an adhesive whole, but the spread of castes over several villages serves to form an interlocking mesh. Cross village ties may, indeed, become so strong that village unity suffers, Mr Miller has shown (The Economic Weekly, February 6, 1952) how difficult it now is to speak of a clearly demarcated village community in Kerala and he points out that the "vertical" system of rights and obligations between castes is not confined to the village.

In the present article, emphasis will be placed on various aspects of social structure discerned in one section of the Punjab. Under the British Raj, Punjab province was divided into twenty-nine administrative districts. Roughly six of these are included in the section under discussion. The tract is that which was the nucleus of Sikh population and extended from the country south of the Sutlej River, including Lohian and Ferozpur, to the region across the Beas River. The cities of Amritsar and Lahore lie within it. The line of partition between West and East Punjab came through the heart of this tract and there is probably no section in the western areas of the sub-continent that was so immediately and tragically affected by partition. Despite the great changes which the last six years have brought to families and to villages in this region, change will not be dwell on here. Attention will cento on the continuing features of society. The last hundred years have been eventful ones for the Pun jab, yet through all the literature of this period run certain stable threads of village life. Field work, carried on shortly after partition, could indicate how villages in which where population changes had been at a minimum. These were, naturally, the mainly Muslim villages of the Pakistani portion of the tract and the mainly Hindu and Sikh villages of the Indian portion. As Mr Miller has chosen to do a general pie me of village structure in North Kerala, so this picture of Punjabi social structure is also general. In certain aspects it surely extends beyond the tract within which work has been concentrated. There are also variations within the tract and it should be understood that the more detailed information refers to the Sikh segments of the population. Where this is true, the Sikh derivation of the data will be specified.

THE LAYOUT

As in many parts of India, the physical unity of the Punjabi village is immediately obvious. Houses of adobe cluster closely together forming a compact unit. Streets are lined by the walls of adjoining house compounds and unite the various parts of the village. They open out into each other so that some of the wider ones are recognizable mam arteries. The village is generally entered by way of one or the other of these mam thoroughfares, however narrow it may be, and it leads, however tortuously, to an open area, or areas, where shops and "or where the open meeting place of the village is situated. Tanks may occur within or on the edges of villages. Since agriculture is by irrigation, the fields tan out from the sources of water, whether wells or canals. In the more and less populated regions, the village is surrounded by its fields which gradually peter out into desert. This pattern is clearly visible from the air. Looking from a plane
window, one sees the country dotted with irregular patches on the brown plain. The patches are the warm colour of adobe at the centre, turn suddenly to green as the fields begin, and then fade out at the edges as the water is no longer sufficient to maintain the full vigour of the crops. In richer areas, the fields of one village adjoin those of the next and the settlement pattern is no longer so clear. Some villages are walled. But in any case, the housing area stops abruptly with the nails of the outer compounds. There are few instances of straggling buildings and one is either inside the village or outside it.

CONCEPTUAL BOUNDARIES

Sikhs have tended to limit ritual to a small part of their religion and no ritual boundaries are spoken of. Nevertheless, there are explicit con­ ceptual boundaries to a village. And whatever actual form a village may have taken over the years, Sikhs tend to think of it as a build­ ing; unit bifurcated in two direc­tions by highways running north south and east west, if it is thus divid­ ed in their minds into four equal sections. In this conceptualization, the meeting place of the village is in the open space in the centre of the village where the two highways cross, with the shops clustering around its edge, and gurdwars are situated outside the village beyond the dwellings at the four places where the roads leave the village. In actuality, many Muslim tombs and shrines, and main holy places of both Sikhs and Hindus are outside of the dwelling space of the village and along the approaches to it. Even in villages that are not walled, I have been told several times by Sikhs that the punishments meted out by village panchayas occurred at the “gate” of the village. Both physically and conceptually therefore, the village is a unit.

One of the difficulties which arises in discussing East and West Punjab is that one feels inclined to speak of the “Hindu”, “Muslim” or “Sikh” features of village life. So much of the recent history of the Punjab has served to accen­ tuate the religious differences of its population, that these are the dis­ tinctions which immediately leap to mind. My own data do not con­ firm that these are, in actually, the most significant divisions to be considered in regard to settlement patterns.

TRIBAL GROUPS

The population of East and West Punjab is divided among a relatively small number of what are variously called castes or tribes. Since these are in many cases dis­ tinguished from the jati by the people themselves, and since they are frequently said to have originated from tribal groups, authorities on the Punjab generally prefer the word tribe. These tribes are not racially distinct, nor are they iso­ lated from the bulk of the people in custom or belief. Rather the hulk of the population is divided among them. The most numerous and important tribes in the neigh­ bourhoods of Amritsar and Lahore are the jats and Rajputs. Aroras and Arams are likewise numerous. Members of these tribes may be of any religious persuasion; there are Hindu Jots, Muslim Jats and Sikh Jats, Jats are the dominant group within Sikhism. and the most signi­ ficant Rajput groups are Muslim. The jats have a reputation for fine husbandry and have often been refer­ red to as the “ycomen” of the Punjab. Rajputs are also cultivators. Both the Sikh Jats and the Rajputs follow other occupations as well and both are famous as war­ riors and soldiers. Although this matter needs further research, I have the impression that the home arrangements of the tribes are simi­ lar. Marked differences occur within any one village as to the detailed arrangements of living quarters. Some families tether animals within the compound, others have a scpa­ rale cattle area outside; the place­ ment of rooms and cooking arrange­ ments are strikingly dissimilar. yetJT homes tend to be alike. This likeness persists whether the families are Hindus, Sikhs, or Muslim:... I have also noted similarities within other tribes irrespective of religion or the exact position of the village. What at first sight may be a hap­ hazard internal arrangement of vil­ lage compounds, may therefore be adherence to traditional home plan­ ning on the part of the various tribes.

SUB-DIVISIONS OF VILLAGE

Confirmation of the tentative hypothesis that some element patterns are tribally influenced comes from the Lahore District OazeMeer for 10) ft (§ IV): “I n the older pit villages of the Majha it will be gener­ nally found on close inspection that the houses are divided oil in some sort of order according to the paths, tarafs or other internal sub­ divisions observed in the village constitution.” Whether this is more obvious in jat villages than in villages in which other tribes are predom­ inant should be carefully checked. Jats certainly; associate the tout quartiers into which the highways divide the village with the pattis of the village. Actually, villages are sub­ divided whether their inhab­ itants are mainly Jat, or Hindu, or Muslim. And the inhabitants know the boundaries of the divisions within the village though they are well aware that families belonging to division A may be living in division B because of such circum­ stances as overcrowding and avail­ ability-of housing. The sub­ divisions of the villages have both boundaries and recognized membership, even though these may not exactly cor­ respond. Lath sub­ division may also have its own open meeting place, its own shops and its own hob places. I have been told (by Jatis that even dogs know the boundaries of the villages which they belong and will not allow canine trespassers. Not only are village units physically and conceptually, but it can be seen that village sub­ divi­ sions are also units. Before giving additional instances of village and patt unity one other aspect of Punjabi village make­ up should be clarified.

COMMON ANCESTRY

The people of villages and pat tis are often said to be descended from a common ancestor. Thus, the four pattis of a village will be said to have been established by four brothers, the descendants of each man forming the basic population in each path. Such groups bear a name which is thought of today as a “ tamih name”. This name they hold in common with, for instance, the people of the home village from which the founding brother emi­ grated. Not all persons bearing the same name can trace relationship but they regard themselves as related and will not, therefore, marry. These exogamous, patrilineal groups are generally called gots in the tract of the Punjab under consideration. Hutton has discussed the relation between clans and gots (Caste in India, pp 48-50) in connection with Raiput gots. Jats and other tribes of the Punjab are similarly divided. In actuality, few, if any, villages are com poser I solely of members of one got. Neverthee's, villages are spoken of as being Sidhu villages, Ghil villages, etc. This refers -to the fact that the village is said to have been founded by one or more Sidhus or Ghils, and that Sidhus or Ghils are the dominant group in the village, probably troth numeri­ cally and in respect to the amount of land owned or farmed. In a
in London... they know that
more motorists use triple-action Mobil oil
than any other motor oil in the world!

The London taxi-driver, second in fame only to his fellow-citizen the policeman, plies his venerable vehicle around the clock, come wind come weather. He knows the way (some say the longest way) to any address you can name; and his powers of description are known only to the rash traveller who withholds a 'tip'.

Like wise drivers all over the world, he makes straight for the sign of the Flying Red Horse when he needs lubrication. His tip for smoother running, of course, is to use Triple-Action Mobil Oil — the Heavy-Duty motor oil that...

SAVES ON WEAR by lubricating properly at all temperatures;

SAVES ON REPAIRS by preventing harmful carbon deposits in the engine;

SAVES ON PETROL by preventing excess eating away the metal parts, which causes loss of power.

Stop at the sign of the Flying Red Horse

The Flying Red Horse is the sign of helpful service for your car. Go there for regular Mobilubrication — the complete motor service — and for Standard-Vacuum products backed by 87 years of leadership in the oil industry.

STANDARD-VACUUM OIL COMPANY
(The Liability of the Members of the Company is Limited)
similar way, the quotation above referred to a "Jat village". Here again few villages, however small, would be composed entirely of Jats. The same holds for religious groups. When the old Punjabi village was described as either Hindu, Muslim or Sikh, reference was to the dominant group in the village, not to the religious affiliation of its entire population. Villages, then, were ordinarily composed of populations including several gots, several tribes and several religions.

EXOGAMOUS UNITS
Despite the lack of homogeneity in village population, villages of the Punjab are exogamous units. Pattis are also said to be exogamous but, since they exist only within the larger unit this is relatively meaningless. Even in villages of three or four thousand, marriages are not arranged within the village. It would be interesting to know whether the patti becomes the functioning exogamous unit in towns, which are of larger size, but I have no information on this matter. It is enough for our present purposes to note that, for all the variety of its population, the unity felt to exist within the village is so strong as to make marriage within it an impossibility.

At the tune field work was being carried out, a number of villages had Government-recognized panchayats. Unofficial panchayats were also some tunes present, generally partially overlapping in personnel. Pattis may likewise have their own panchayats. Intra patti affairs being referred to the patti panchayat and inter-parti affairs going to the village panchayat. There has to have been a common feature of Punjabi village life. The identity of the patti is clearly marked by the organization of athletic teams. Sports contests are fairly common in the Punjab. Teams may be recruited from gots, one got playing another, or patti teams may play off with other pattis, the final village team chosen for competition with other villages being the winner in the play-off. Disputes between single members of pattis may quickly involve other members so that patti is lined up against patti. In any dispute between villages, however, the members of the various pattis tend to unite, all castes and religions functioning as village members on such occasions even against co-caste and co-religious members. Examples of such incidents where villages united against villages were given in disputes over boundaries, rights to irrigation water, and insults to women. (In contrast, it should be noted that the example of a village dispute given on Mysore by Dr Srinivas involved ritual prerogatives).

AFFILIATIONS
In order to understand how patti and village affiliation can cut across lines established by caste and religion in the Punjab even when there is little formal and recognized machinery of organization, it is necessary to realize the strength of what Dr Srinivas has referred to as vertical unity. This seems to depend economically upon two factors. The first is the relative permanency of certain ties between specific high and low caste groups. These hereditary service-customer relations are well described under the Jajmam System for Uttar Pradesh (W H Wiser, Lucknow, 1936) and referred to by Dr Srinivas for Mysore where the master calls his "servant hatnaga (old son), and by Mr Newell as birton agreements. Terminology and details seem to vary but such arrangements between families of different caste, continuing from one generation to the next, seem once to have been common in many parts of the subcontinent and still show considerable vigour. The second factor influencing vertical unity is by no means distinct from the first but operates in less individualized terms. This is what Dr Srinivas has called the "interdependence" of castes which rests, in turn, upon their social and economic specialization.

SIKH AND MUSLIM CASTES
In other parts of India it is reported that a religious minority in an otherwise Hindu population is treated as a caste. Even when the size of such a group is large its position in the caste hierarchy is often described as though it ranked as a single entity. Sikhs have similarly been equated with a caste in the Punjab. If one considers the occupational aspects of caste, ie, those aspects which depend upon social and economic specialization, this is, however, an unwarranted simplification of the facts concerning Punjabi social life. Although both Sikhs and Muslims explicitly deny the religions sanctions of the Vedic caste system, there are Sikh and Muslim castes. Because of their religious beliefs, all men tend to be regarded as equal, irrespective of caste, within the shadow of the gurdwara or mosque. Nevertheless, in daily life Sikh and Muslim castes were, and are fully recognized. Thus, the Muslim mochi is the same occupational caste as the Hindu or Sikh chamar, though often of slightly better social position; our there was said to be no difference between the machhi and the jh inwar except that the former was entirely Muslim and the latter only predominantly so. Sikhs and Muslims did not form two single castes in the Punjab before partition, and today in areas largely Sikh or Muslim in East and West Punjab there are still a number of interdependent castes.

The way economic specialization worked within the village may be illustrated by the steps involved in the production of a single garment in the village of Dakhar, East Punjab, south of the Sutlej. Sheep were not raised in Dakhar, so a Sikh woman, wife of a grain farmer of high caste, would purchase wool from travelling herders who regularly visited the village. This wool then went to a Sikh untouchable for cleansing. The woman gene-

November 21, 1953

EFFECTS OF PARTITION
Quite apart from other disturbing features of partition, the economic dislocation on the village level necessitated major readjustments and has probably had the effect of weakening the interdependence of castes within the village. One joint family of Sikhs, for instance, took the opportunity furnished by a journey to Delhi made by one of its members to have him buy a bolt of tweed. From this tweed the Hindu tailor made jackets for the five adult men of the family. In this instance it is the finished cloth which is purchased rather than the raw wool. Specialization or division of labour is still buy a bolt of tweed, with the withdrawal of key figures in the interlocking system, the number of linked groups has been reduced so that vertical unity is weakened. The next step, that of purchasing ready-made jackets, is still not a
frequent village practice since my data were collected just after partition. I do not know to what extent groups of specialists from incoming fellow-religionists have been able to take over previous occupations and reconstitute the old interdependency. Many factors would certainly lead them to make the attempt despite the difficulties which would be presented to their absorption as full village members. For certain tasks of common concern to the village, the nuances of daily existence, such as oil pressing (mustard oil is a Punjab food staple), it is astonishing how quickly the gap made by the loss of members of Muslim oil-pressers was filled by Hindus and Sikhs in East Punjab. Whole groups crossed caste lines to take up this economic slack.

As Mr Miller has already indicated, the mutual rights and obligations which characterize caste relations may extend beyond the village. That vertical unity itself goes beyond the village. Through out north India it often happens that Brahmins, dhobis or other groups necessary to the life of a village live outside it in nearby villages. In a previous article ("The Mivil: A Structural Village Group of India and Pakistan," American Anthropologist; Vol 54, pp 41-56, January March 1952), I have suggested that villages thus linked by the network of the social and economic specializations of their caste groups may form structural units with possible political overtones. As Mr Miller, this is confirmed for North Kerala where the mutual obligation between villages is probably one of the factors formerly contributing to the unity of the nad (chiefdom)

That mutual interests dependent upon specialization continue to relate different communities is made clear in the recent survey of the economic and social position of the chamars of Barpali in Orissa (The Economic Weekly, September 19, 1953). Owners of dead cattle call for a Ganda, a Ghasi or a Chamar who disposes of the skin to a Bepari Chammar. All hides pass through the hands of the Bepari Chammars who in turn depend upon the Ghasis to transport them by bullock cart to another village where they are purchased by Mahajans who are Muslims. This overlapping of caste and religious groups exactly parallels the Punjabi situation. In the Punjab, the politically divisive forces of religion were so capitalized that the economic links between persons of different religions became additional irritants. No business relation runs smoothly all the time and every incident could be developed into a religious—and political—grievance. In a different atmosphere, however, the same social and economic links might serve as part of the adhesive making for unity not only within the village but in a larger sphere as well. That such situations have had political significance in India in the past now seems probable. However this may be in the future, the recognition of the existence of a social and economic unity which goes beyond the physical boundaries of any single village leads us in two directions.

INTER-VILLAGE DEPENDENCE

The first of these concerns what is often spoken of as village self-sufficiency. It is usual in discussing changes which are coming about in Indian villages to contrast the former self-sufficiency of the village with its present relative dependence upon items brought in from outside where they are industrially produced. The classical example of such change is the introduction of factory-spun cotton cloth. Another example is given above in the buying of woven woollen cloth. There is no doubt that this is a significant change. The self-sufficiency of the Punjabi village, however, can be greatly over-estimated. Spices and metals are necessities which have been brought in from outside for centuries at least. The village may be isolated. Taken in its larger context, ie, including those villages with which it regularly exchanges goods, if is even more self-reliant and self-dependent. But the tenn self sufficient in economics is apt to conjure up the picture of the pioneer communities in the New World. These communities furnish a striking contrast with industrial society. Not only were they, like the Indian villages, almost entirely self-dependent in that few necessities or services bad to be brought in from outside, but they were made up of families which contained within themselves the skills necessary for maintenance. When a family, or a man, in such a community is spoken of as self-sufficient, it is implied that he can maintain himself very largely without any outside assistance of either skills or services. In the United States today rural communities still partake of a considerable element of this sort of self-sufficiency. And it is this which furnishes the greatest contrast with modern urban and industrial life in which services are interdependent. The change toward industrialization in the West has been a change toward specialization and toward interdependency. There is still considerable residue of feeling about the effect of this upon the human being: it is often said in the West that a man who must depend upon others is in some sense less a man. Such a statement must have small significance to an Indian villager.

SHIFT IN SPECIALIZATION

If manufactured goods from outside are accepted in the Indian village, it is not only because new needs have been created—the village has for many decades had more needs than he could satisfy—but also because their very acceptance is a release from the pressure of traditional dependences. As in the incident of the jacket, purchased items often actually represent a step toward increased self-sufficiency for the family rather than away from it. It is then necessary to distinguish between the self-sufficiency of the pioneer family which contained all the resources needed for its continuance and the self-sufficiency of the urban dweller who is able to maintain self-sufficiency through reliance upon a money economy. The latter is possible only because of an intricate network of mutually dependent services and specializations. As long as we mean by self-sufficiency in India an earlier condition under which few manufactured items were introduced into the village from outside, we are treading on fairly safe ground. But so soon as we imply by the term that the shift toward industrialization involves a shift toward specialization and toward interdependency, we are falling very wide of the mark. The effect of industrialization upon the Indian village is to shift from one sort of interdependency to another, from one sort of specialization to another.

Considerable analysis of the nature of specialization in world societies remains to be done. We do know enough, however, both about industrialization and the Indian village to recognize that many of the generalizations often heard concerning the effects of industrialization on the village are distressingly facile, and their implications frequently misleading. It is safest to be much more specific about the particular process one has in mind.

Once it is recognized that the structural unity brought about by the interaction of caste specializations extends beyond the village, a second problem faces us. Is the
CUT YOUR HANDLING COST WITH DUNLOP CONVEYOR BELTING

Longer and trouble-free life
Higher tensile strength
Better cover adhesion

THE DUNLOP RUBBER CO. (INDIA) LTD.
studied as such? There is no doubt about the strong sense of village identity which has been discussed above. The Punjabi village shares this sense of internal unity and identity with villages in many parts of the world. It is something the Westerner is well able to understand. But if the village has necessary ties with other villages can it be intelligibly studied as a single community?

The significance of this question is intensified by the "horizontal" unity of castes which form alliances going beyond village boundaries. Caste pair-mats were once strong and the usual ties between caste members exist in the Punjab as in other parts of India.

AFFINAL TIES

The Punjabi village has already been described as an exogamous unit. This means every marriage involves the village with other villages and that all affinal ties go beyond its boundaries. Dr Marriot has described (The Economic Weekly, August 23,1952) marriage in a UP village and has pointed out that the "structuring of marriage puts limits on the degree to which a village can manage its economic affairs as a local unit". In the village he discusses, marriage is patrilocally arranged in the Punjab and the direction in which girls pass determines marriage relations between villages.

Thus, if a marriage is arranged between a man in village A and a girl in village B, village A is said to be "high" in respect to village B (which is, therefore, "low") and in the future wives may go from B to A but the direction is not reversed. Village B would, alternatively, be "high" in regard to those villages from which wives have been taken. Sibly has made a conscious effort to limit the expense of weddings and reduce the economic exchanges at marriage. This has been only partially successful but in any case the network of villages formed by marriage ties can be directly compared with that described for the UP. In the Punjab three geographical strips are distinguished which lie very roughly north and south of each other: the Majha in which Amritsar as situated, the Duaba (or Doab) in the centre, and the Malwa to the south. It is said by Sikhs that, although most marriages naturally occur between villages fairly close to each other and therefore within these strips, marriages across their boundarries tend to be arranged so that girls pass from south to north toward Amritsar. To the extent that this is considered in arranging a marriage it would imply that the villages nearer the Holy City of the Sikhs were "higher" than those more distant from it. Otherwise villages are not regarded as "high" or "low" in respect of the direction of marriages. However, each village is said to have a traditional set of villages to which its girls regularly go in marriage and another set from which it regularly receives wives. It is thus perfectly clear to the villagers that they are part of a network of villages organized on marital lines.

To determine the constitution of such a network, and to check on its existence, requires particular data as well as general statements. The following Sikh material comes from a genealogical study made for me by Gurcharan Singh in April, 1940, of gott Dhillon, patti Raja Raja, tahsil Taran Taran, village Jhabal, district Amritsar, East Punjab. The data were analyzed in the winter of 1950-51 by McKim Marriott. The genealogy contains 402 names begin mug with Raja Raja who founded the putti and continues through the patrilincal line to a few descendants in the present and tenth generation. Women's names only begin to appear in the sixth generation within the memory of living informants. Between the sixth and ninth generations 208 marriages are reported, those from the seventh to the ninth probably approaching full coverage. Eighteen villages are listed as those from which wives should be obtained. Actually eighty-two villages are involved. Of the eighteen only thirteen are found at all and no marriage occurs but rarely. Taken together the list of preferred villages accounts for about one-half of the known marriages, ie, half the marriages of four generations have formed repeated links between fifteen other villages and Jhabal, the other half, scattered over sixty-seven villages, forming positive but weaker ties. Marriages occur in only one direction with five villages of the preferred list and a large number of the other villages. Absolute unidirectionability, however, is not confirmed. Marriages are also traditionally preferred between Dhillons and six other gots. Five of these are actually those with which marriages are most frequently arranged, although the other fails to appear at all. One of the preferred gots (Sandhu) accounts for 100 marriages, nearly half of the known total; the other four account for fifty-five marriages or one-quarter of the total. The remaining quarter of the marriages is spread over eighteen other gots.

Both village and got marital preferences seem in actuality to be contingent upon other factors as well. Chief among these seems to be the factor of spatial distance. No marriages at all have occurred within four miles of Jhabal. Not only, therefore, is the village exogamous in actuality as well as in theory, but the region surrounding the village is also exogamous in practice. The fact that it is regarded as indecent for the bride and groom to have even seen each other before marriage undoubtedly is one of the main reasons for this. Four villages apparently carry one beyond the acquaintance ship and potential visibility range. Yet great distance hinders a practical barrier to marriage, for two thirds of the marriages have taken place with villages between four and twelve miles from Jhabal, with the greatest number clustering around the eight-mile radius. Less than one fifth of the marriages link Jhabal with any place more than sixteen miles away. Since Jhabal is in the Madia and Amritsar falls within its marriage range, these data furnish no information as to directional ties between the Majha and the Puaba. To get a clear picture of the interlocking of villages through marital ties, we should have data not only on the oilier parts of Jhabal's population, but of all the ties of all the villages with which Jhabal is linked. The scope and complexity of any such material can easily be seen to be practically prohibitive. Nevertheless, the data available to us in this analysis well illustrate the extent to which Punjabi village interests extend beyond village boundaries. For any attempt to understand the interpersonal relations, or the social motivations, of one go of one of Jhabal's patti's, the marital community to be considered Moud must start four miles away and have to include at least those villages up to eight miles distant. This type of necessary relationship is not always easy for the Westerner to understand.

STRAIN ON FAMILY BUDGETS

In the Punjab, economic bonds within the patrilocal joint family have also operated to extend village contacts. With natural limits placed upon the amount of amble land available to each village, and with constantly rising population figures, the strain upon family budgets has been considerable even for land-owning joint families. The traditional way of handling this problem has been for one or more younger sons to leave the village and take up employment at a distance. These
November 21, 1953

men were ordinarily married before they left and their wives and young children remained in the family to be cared for. Any possible proceeds of their employment were then sent back to defray the upkeep of their families and to eke out the joint family finances. Needless to say, the amount of these remittances depended on a number of individual factors and they were regularly forwarded to the heads or other responsible members of the joint families. Mr. Bulley has mentioned that a similar practice adds to the income of his Oriya-speaking village (The Economist Weekly, March 21, 1953) and it is certainly known in other parts of India as well. Yet the numbers of men who leave Punjabi village, for outside employment may well be unusually large. The Gazetteer for 1916 (p. 341) states that "immigration into Lahore city is very large, 436 per mille of the inhabitants being born outside the district."
The nature of the humiliation has led to a preponderance of males, and the proportion in the city is only 596 females per thousand males. Other men went further afield and numbers of Punjabis joined the Imperial Army. It was always expected that these men would return to their home villages, and their places in their joint families were kept secure. The result of this has been that hardly a Sikh village today is without its experienced traveller, its old soldier, or its former city dweller.

COMMUNAL ORGANIZATIONS
Under modern conditions, the strength of Punjabi communal organization should also be taken into account if we are to understand village life. Under these circumstances, the relationship between Government representatives and the villagers before partition were effectually limited to tax collecting and policing. With rationing, and especially since partition, there has been an increase in Government services and contacts in the village both in East and West Punjab. Nevertheless, the opportunities given to the villagers for participating in Government have been practically nil. This fact is coupled with the strange paradox that the Punjabi villager is often an expert politician. He spends a great deal of his time assessing personal motivations against a background of possible economic and social advantage. He knows how to play clique against clique and he has a shrewd sense of positive leadership. During the last hundred years, the major outlet for these capacities has been in the communal organizations, all of which have had their political as well as religious side. The intricate organizations built up by such groups as the followers of Guru Gobind Singh, the Ahmadiya and the Arya Samaj must be studied to be believed. Lacking a place in governmental organization, a shrewd men have built their own organizations which penetrate to the village level as Government does not. In the paper quoted above, I gave details of the main Government structure within which the Punjabi village is encapsulated. In contrast to this, there tends to be a constant flow of interest and involvement in communal affairs straight from the smallest village to the leaders, it is no wonder that votes are often determined by this stream of allegiance. Limitations of space make it impossible to give details here of the way the communal organizations (function at the village level. But even a superficial knowledge of Punjabi politics is convincing evidence of the communal interest taken by many villagers.

Like caste alliances, communal ties form a strong element of horizontal unity, structurally relating the affairs of one village with those of others distant from it. Numerous forces in modern life have worked to weaken the old caste alliances but these seem in many cases to have been supplanted by communal participation. Government insistence upon village and patti unity for administrative purposes has undoubtedly served to provide an additional element in vertical unity, which is being increased with the increasing official recognition of village panchayats. Whether one is thinking of the past or the present, the unity of the Punjabi village and the ties beyond it with other villages must be weighed together. Vertical and horizontal units must be considered together in any analysis of village life.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY
Under these circumstances, the extent to which the village may be considered a single "community" seems to me extremely limited. In terms of economic and social specialization, marital ties, and religious and political organization, the structural unit is larger than the village. These are not contacts in which the villager may indulge, they are imposed upon him by the habits of his existence. Important as single village studies may be, therefore—and I would be the last to underestimate their significance—it does not seem to me that any complete picture of Punjabi life can ever be obtained from them alone. Punjabi society and self-sufficient village fragments. It is more like a carpet in which each part, although unified and identifiable in itself, is inextricably woven into the fabric. Thus the social structure of the Punjab resolves itself into a balance of various structures each of which must be considered if we are to grasp the meaning of the whole.

The painstaking reader will already have recognized that our analyses have proceeded on several different levels. Perhaps this is inevitable in the present stage of our knowledge concerning the forces at work in society. Several factors operative in Punjabi village life have not been considered here at all. Yet if we are looking toward the future, it is encouraging to realize that the cooperation of Indian and Western social scientists is gradually building up a body of trustworthy information on India which can hardly be paralleled for any other nation of the world.

"The aim of all legitimate business is service, for profit or a risk."
—Benjamin C. Leeming

INDIAN TRADE & GENERAL INSURANCE COMPANY LTD.
Jehangir Building,
Mahatma Gandhi Road,
BOMBAY.
Telephone 36881-3
General Manager: T. M. STURGEOS.