

# SONS OF THE ARAVALLIS : THE GARASIAS

R. B. LAL





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*BY*

**R. B. LAL**

*RESEARCH TEAM*

R. B. Lal

K. S. Naik

M. I. Masavi

G. P. Pandya



**TRIBAL RESEARCH & TRAINING INSTITUTE**  
**GUJARAT VIDYAPITH, AMDAVAD-380 014.**



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FOREWORD

For the past thirty years I have been keeping myself keenly interested in the ethnological studies of the various ethnic communities in Gujarat. In the early fifties when I, myself, was studying the Bhil tribe there was a very promising academic atmosphere for carrying out such studies and it looked as if the existing gaps in the scientific research of the rich cultural heritage, mirrored in the diverse social and cultural life of both tribal and non-tribal communities, would be bridged over. But alas ! when I went to London soon after finishing my work among the Bhils of Gujarat and later was called upon to organize the Tribal Research Institute in Madhya Pradesh, a slackening in the tempo of anthropological research in Gujarat was noticed by me. In the last two decades, anthropological researches in this State has been of a very fragmentary character and one can certainly say that there has been utter neglect of such studies. This has been a very unfortunate and sad situation as a large mass of useful information is being lost each year due to gradual disappearance of the rich traditional life of the different ethnic communities before our very eyes, which ought to have been studied and recorded carefully much earlier. It appears that in this State there are very few people who understand the value of such collection of material and information of the rapidity with which they are being lost and therefore the speed with which they should be collected. My own work in Madhya Pradesh prevented me from giving serious attention to do something tangible to correct the situation. With the establishment of Tribal Research Institute as well as a Department of Social Anthropology in the State, I expected that the lacunae in the scientific research of the ethnic communities would be gradually removed and a steady and systematic programme of studying the various social and cultural groups in the State



would be undertaken. But nothing of that kind happened and today when I look over, I find a huge gap in our knowledge of the cultural groups, based, ofcourse, on scientific research. It is in this background that the present ethnographical study of the Garasias by Shri Lal is most welcome.

The Garasias are a very colourful, lively and tradition bound people. When I recently visited the area where they live I was struck to view that although they live in close proximity of a materialist society, in which standards are low and fashions matter more than ideas, they have successfully resisted in becoming part of such a materialist society. However, tradition, economy and language cut them off from the outside world. This resistance on their part, accompanied by the autipathy of the development agents, has resulted in the perpetuation of their poor economic condition and as Shri Lal has observed many of them live below the poverty line. They are poor inspite of the efforts made through tribal development programmes to improve their economy. This is largely because the outsiders do not try to understand them. It is hoped that Shri Lal's work would be certainly help in creating a better understanding of them as well as in developing empathy for them.

This ethnographic work is a promising attempt to rescue the evidence of traditional cultures which are in danger of extinction. Evidently, many more such works are needed in Gujarat and I fervently wish that other researches would also be tempted to undertake this type of study. In any case, such studies need to be promoted on a systematic scale. I do hope that Shri Lal, too, would keep his interest alive in studying other traditional culture in this State.

We certainly owe an apology for the delay in the publication of this work. When I took over the Directorship of this

Institute, I, first of all, started salvaging the earlier studies done at this Institute from going to rot. When I looked into this work on the Garasias, I immediately took the decision to get this valueable work published without any further delay, first in mimeograph form. It would later be printed in a book form to reach a large audience. Apart from Shri Lal, his other colleagues who have been in the team for doing the field work need to be congratulated for collecting such valueable information on the various aspect of Garasia's life and culture.

T. B. NAIK  
DIRECTOR



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My debts of gratitude are many; to all those residents of Matadham village as well as other Garasia villages which we visited, officials and non-officials and too numerous to be named individually, who have helped each of us in so many ways during our field work in the Garasia country. I extend my grateful thanks to them.

Dr. B.K.Roy Burman, the then Deputy Registrar-General, Government of India and Shri K.K.Leuva, the then Zonal Director, Backward Class Welfare, Government of India had taken the trouble to go through the earlier draft and made valuable critical comments which enabled me to rearrange the material and eventually in rewriting the monograph. I owe a deep sense of gratitude to both of them.

To the colleagues at the Institute, Shri K.S.Naik (who is now in the Department of Rural Economics of Gujarat Vidyapith), Shri M.I.Masavi and Shri G.P. Pandya, I am extremely grateful to them for their kind assistance to me in conducting the field work. It is precisely and largely because of their efforts and pains that this monograph could be prepared. Shri Naik, in particular, helped me much in preparing the chapter on Garasia Economy. Without his insight, it would not have been possible for me to analyse the data on economic life in a meaningful manner. Dr. Siddharaj Solanki provided many useful information about Garasia's life and culture. I am much grateful to him for enduring me in the long discussions.

For typing the manuscript, I thank Shri Abdulmajid U. Shaikh, our erswhile colleague at the Institute. An in making out the stencil copies carefully, Shri Prakash Mehta did a commendable job. He deserves my special thanks.

Lastly, but not the least important, I feel a great sense of obligation towards our Director, Dr. T.B.Naik for his keen interest in bringing this work to light. While he was serving as an Expert on the Study Team on Tribal Research Institutes (under the Chairmanship of Shri L.M.Shrikant) the earlier draft of this monograph had been sent to him. After a while I happened to meet Dr.Naik at Delhi in a seminar and there he conveyed to me his keen interest in this work as he had liked it after reading the draft. He also gave a number of useful hints for the purpose of revising the draft. Needless to say, I certainly profited a great deal. I thank him deeply for all these.

R. B. LAL



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According to 1971 Census, the tribal population in Gujarat State is 37,17,301 which constitutes 13.99 percent of the total population of the State. In matter of tribal population this State ranks number fourth in India following Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Bihar. Gujarat has been the home of one of the most ancient tribes of our country, the Bhils. Their reference is found even in the 'pauranic' literature of India. The famous legendry boy, Eklavya, mentioned in the Mahabharat was from the Bhil community. The original home of the Bhils, since paleolithic period, has been this region, which is now known as Gujarat. In the present time, the Bhils are the second largest tribal community in India, next to the Gonds. In Gujarat State, the Bhils number 14,48,692 (1971 Census) forming 38.97 percent of total tribal population in the State. Besides the Bhils, there are several other tribal communities in the State, most of whom have retained their language and much of their native culture. The entire eastern belt of the State, right from north to south, is hilly and forested. Eight out of the total nineteen districts of Gujarat comes under this belt. These eight districts are Banaskantha, Sabarkantha, Panchmahal, Bharuch, Vadodara, Surat, Valsad and Dangs. All these eight districts combined together may be termed as the tribal region in the State of Gujarat. There are other pockets also, such as the hilly and forest tracts of Junagadh, Kutch, Surendranagar and Bhavnagar where tribal communities are found. Thus, to anthropologists and ethnologists, Gujarat has, for some generations, represented one of the finest treasure houses of living tribal culture.

But, the tribal communities in Gujarat have not attracted adequate interest insofar as actual anthropological, ethnological and linguistic research work is concerned. Whatever work that has been achieved has had to be undertaken in a piecemeal fashion and at considerable intervals by a few enthusiasts individuals



and casual team of researchers. Only a few names, that of P.G.Shah, D.N.Majumdar, T.B.Naik, P.C.Dave and Y.V.S.Nath are well known in this respect. Considerable material too has been collected by other interested persons but not yet published and remains buried as fieldnotes or manuscripts. It is also to be remembered that whatever publications are there have been written on very slender data, some of it of a dubious nature. Evaluating the relative urgency of field research among tribal communities of Gujarat our first reaction would be to say that the whole field, without exception, needs immediate attention. For most of the tribes in Gujarat we have nothing more than brief sketches, with an emphasis on some topics at the expense of others. In whatever way one looks at the situation, it is quite apparent that very inadequate anthropological data have been collected in Gujarat. So there is much we do not know about the tribal communities in Gujarat and unless we collect this information soon, very soon indeed, it will be too late because the same would be buried in the debris of the past. As far as the traditional life is concerned, it is disappearing before our eyes. After a generation or two, most of it would be gone. Its disappearance is being accelerated by administrative policies of assimilation and the general downgrading of what has begun to be called the traditional way of life of the tribals.

While it is impossible, even if it were considered desirable to save traditional tribal society and culture for posterity, it is possible to record a great deal about it and it is quite urgent that we should do so. Academically this is important in a number of ways, say anthropologically and ethnographically, as well as ethnologically. Practically such information is necessary if we are to understand and control the processes of change occurring in these societies to day so that their development takes place on correct lines.

In early 1967, a decision was taken by the Institute to undertake systematic studies of all the major tribal communities in the State, in order to remove the gaps in our knowledge about them. It seemed quite vital to us that we should concern first with gathering sound ethnographic material for each of the major ten tribes in Gujarat. It was felt by us that unless a solid foundation of ethnographic knowledge based on field data is laid for each tribe, it would be virtually impossible to undertake applied anthropological researches among these tribal communities. Examination and assessment of problems concerning the development of these people could be understood in a better frame if an accurate account of their society and culture is available to us. It is also necessary because in order to explain the present we need to know about what has gone before—which does not, of course, mean that such explanations should be couched in historical terms. Further, the question of social and cultural change could be more systematically studied if sound ethnographic material has been already gathered.

For carrying out these ethnographic studies intensive planning was undertaken at the Institute. The first ten tribes chosen for undertaking the studies were the (1) Bhil, (2) Konkna, (3) Warli, (4) Choudhry, (5) Dubla, (6) Dhodia, (7) Dhanka, (8) Rathwa, (9) Naikda and (10) Gamit. As the Bhil tribe has several sub-groups it was decided to study the major sub-tribes separately. Thus, Bhil-Garasia (or Garasia) Vasava and Dangli Bhil were selected to be studied in addition to the main tribe Bhil. As we decided that these studies must be done now, it was agreed that these ethnographic studies must be intensively made in one typical village of each tribe. Although it is not possible to understand any tribal village in isolation, it can serve as a useful focus for research. A tribal village with its extension into the surrounding region constitutes a functioning segment of tribal society. Thus, any village of the concerned tribal



community, properly understood, represents in a general way villages of the region where the tribe is concentrated. However, in case of Bhils, including its sub-groups, it was felt that field research in only one village would not help much in understanding all of them as these people are scattered in different regions, all over Gujarat. Hence, it was agreed to select one village from each region where the Bhils (including sub-groups) are preponderably populated.

The research reported here is in the nature of a community study of the Garasias. The Garasias in Gujarat have not been treated as a separate tribal group in the scheduled list of tribes in Gujarat although in Rajasthan where they are located in south west of Aravalli hills, have been listed as a separate tribal group. In Gujarat they have been grouped under the Bhil tribe and are commonly referred to as the Bhil-Garasias. However, the Garasias of Danta taluka, who have retained their social and cultural ties with the Garasias of Rajasthan throughout the period of recorded history feel themselves degraded if referred to as Bhil-Garasias. It is considered derogatory by them to associate the name of their community with that of the Bhils. This kind of feeling is now being expressed openly by all sections of the Garasias, whether they are Rajput Garasias or Dungri-Garasias or Bhil-Garasias. These are the three sections of Garasia community in Banaskantha and Sabarkantha districts of Gujarat. The present study, however mainly deals with that section of the Garasias who pride themselves in referring to their community as Garasia Rajputs and who claim that only they are the descendents of pure Rajputs while all other Garasias are descendents of the Bhils.

These Garasia Rajputs (henceforth we will refer them as Garasias as it is a more convenient term) are mainly found in the Danta taluka of Banaskantha district and hence Danta taluka was selected for this research. Besides Danta taluka small pockets of these Garasias are also found in the Poshina patta of

Khedbrahma and in the Vijaynagar taluka of the Sabarkantha district.

The selection of the field centre was made on the basis of a two-fold consideration: firstly, the village to be selected must have a representative character with regard to the culture of the community under study and secondly, the village must have a suitable size and setting.

From the point of view of Garasia population, Danta taluka can be divided into two major parts- the hill region around Ambaji town in the north and the Hadad patta in east. Among these two parts it is the former one which possesses more of the typical culture of the Garasias whereas the conditions of the Hadad patta which is comparatively open to outsiders may not give a good insight into and a proper understanding of the way of life of these people. Our primary attention was, therefore, focussed on the hill region near Ambaji town. It is not to say here that the Garasias of this region have remained uninfluenced by modernisation. Nevertheless, they are still primarily oriented toward their own traditional background. On account of living in mountaneous and forest regions till recently, they have escaped large scale displacement or absorption by more advanced population.

In selecting a site for research, preliminary statistics were collected for about ten villages of the area. Consultations with the local authorities and public workers was also done. Although it was not possible to select a typical village as no such thing exists, it was at least possible to avoid selecting villages with obvious peculiarities. We set out to find an orthodox Garasia village of modest size neither very much in the interior from nor close to the taluka head-quarters. Our final choice was village Matadham.<sup>1</sup>



We chose a village as the locus of our study, not because we were interested in making a village study but because we wanted to make intensive and extensive observation of all the Garasia households of a convenient territorial unit. However, in order to ascertain the data obtained from Matadham village we paid visits to seven other villages: Jambera and Dhadera in the Danta taluka itself, Bara and Bedi in the Poshina patta of Khedbrahma taluka in the Sabarkantha district, Bhombhudi and Adepur in Vijaynagar taluka of Sabarkantha district and Siawa in Abu Road tehsil of Sirohi district in Rajasthan State.

The field team started field work in June 1968 and altogether spent nearly two and half months. The field team consisted of four research workers of the Institute, two of them were trained anthropologists while two were trained economists. The field team did not spend the two and half months in one stretch but in five field trips made to the village between June 1968 and March 1969. During the period of field work, the field team lived in Matadham. In addition to their residence in the village, one from the team had a fairly extensive contact with three or four villages in the immediate area and paid brief visits to seven other Garasia villages.

The major problem confronted during research in Matadham was concerning the establishment of <sup>rapport</sup> rapport with the local people. The villagers were at first suspicious of us and our motives. A few months before our arrival in the village, there had been family planning campaigns in the surrounding area. In one case, the family planning staff persuaded a young man, against his will, for vasectomy operation. The members of the staff gave false information to him and it was alleged that in a way they forcibly carried him away in the vehicle to Danta and operated him. This incident had infuriated the Garasias of the whole region to such an extent that they refused to converse with any Government official, not to talk of cooperating with him. These people were already against any kind of family planning campaign. In such

an atmosphere when the field team finally arrived at the village to live there, none of the family accepted them. Ultimately, after great persuasion, a vacant room could be found, attached to the house of a childless couple. In their second field trip, the field team again experienced the same difficulty, this time because of another reason. It had been circulated among the villagers by vested interests, rooted in Ambaji that the Government was collecting figures about the number of family members, in order to remove them from this village and to get them settled in the villages of Surat district where on account of the floods all men and women had died and thus there was an acute shortage of men and women to cultivate the land. And with this aim these 'Sahebs' have come from Ahmedabad. The villagers were pretty upset over this. They convened a meeting of the elders of the village in which it was decided to have no truck with us. However, with tactful persuasion the field team could establish a fairly good and lasting rapport with them. Gradually the field team won their confidence and then they cooperated freely and wholeheartedly with the team.

The primary source of data were the Garasias of Matadham itself. Besides Matadham, as mentioned earlier, we visited seven other villages. Again, information about several other villages were also obtained from informants who visited Matadham during our stay there. Information was obtained primarily from observation and through informal interviews. Some objective and largely quantitative type of data were gathered through questionnaires. Genealogies of important families in the village were also collected. Interviews were conducted whenever necessary in the most suitable places therefor.

The Garasias, like most tribes, are an unusually closed society, whose members are accustomed to concealing and protecting themselves from the outside world. Data obtained by survey techniques on matters about which villagers are sensitive would,



in all probability, have been of little value except as a kind of projective test and any attempt to secure such data would have jeopardized further research efforts. Knowing this, the questionnaire for collecting data on their economy was circulated during the last field trip after an excellent rapport had already been established.

Literature dealing with the Garasias is extremely scarce. The earliest account which is indispensable for all research workers is Todd's Ras-mala<sup>2</sup>. Gazetteer of Sirohi State<sup>3</sup> also provides a good source about the history of the Garasias. However, in none of these one gets a comprehensive account on these people. In recent times, Dave's work-'The Garasias'<sup>4</sup> is quite comprehensive in certain aspects of their life. But as he has collected most of the data through secondary sources,<sup>5</sup> the work does not have enough and reliable data on their social, cultural, ceremonial and ritual life and due to this the description of these has become sketchy.

The present study is, therefore, perhaps the first ethnographic study of the Garasias done through anthropological techniques. The material which we obtained from Matadham are, as far as we have been able to ascertain, by no means entirely peculiar to that village. Infact in large measure they are not. Matadham is fairly representative of the Garasias villages. This research report is, therefore, offered as an analytical description of the cultural life of the Garasias of Gujarat.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SETTING

The mountain ranges which bound Gujarat on the north and the east and which project numerous branches into the nearest parts of the State, are steep, craggy and difficult of access. The shoulders of the hills and the valleys which intervene between the spurs are the traditional homes of the Garasias. The mountains and the forest regions on the north-east divide Gujarat from Rajasthan. The grand chain of mountains on the north-east is the Aravalli range which forms a line running north-east and south-east from Delhi to the plains of Gujarat. Aravalli means hills of strength. Geologically it is considered to be the oldest ranges in India, older than the Himalayas. The southern part of the Aravalli mountains is mostly a net work of forest clad hills enclosing well watered valleys and tablelands. The southern range of the Aravalli may be taken to extend from the mountaineous region of Pali district to Udaipur district in Rajasthan while its branches extend up to Sabarkantha district of Gujarat. In Gujarat this range cuts across the north-east of the Banaskantha and the Sabarkantha districts. The steep and craggy hills of pink or grey granites, do not exceed about 700 metres in height on the north-east frontier of Gujarat. Even, the highest peak Gurushikhar on Mt. Abu is only 1,722 metres high. The whole region is very picturesque and presents a beautiful highland scenery. The small but translucent river Saraswati runs westwards towards the Rann of Kutch, from the celebrated shrine of Koteswar Mahadeo, in the marble hills of Arasoor. Other important rivers such as the Banas and the Sabarmati also originate from the hills of Aravalli range of south-west. There are several rivulets flowing from the mountains but they are not perennial. These rivulets are indicative of rapid mountain torrents, carrying in their descent a vast volume of alluvial deposit to enrich the soil below.



## GEOLOGY

The general character of the Aravalli range in the north-east of Gujarat is its primitive formation. Granite, reposing in a variety of angle (the general dip is to the east) on massive, compact, dark blue slate, the latter rarely appearing much above the surface or base of the super incumbent granite. It is believed that the oldest of all physical

features which intersect the Indian continent is this range of mountain known as the Aravallis and that the Aravallis are but the depressed and degraded relics of a far more prominent mountain system which stood in palaeozoic times on the edge of the Rajputana sea.<sup>1</sup> The geological formation of the hills belong to azoic and igneous groups. The internal valleys abound in variegated quartz and a variety of schistons slate of every hue. The Aravalli and its subordinate hills are rich in both mineral and metallic products. The Geological Survey of India has been trying to tap the mineral resources of the hills in Arasoor region. In other regions of the Aravalli ranges, copper, tin, oxide of antimony, etc. had been already discovered.

## FLORA

The shoulders of the hills and the valleys which intervene between the sphere, were once covered with thick and dense forest. The forest is still there but in the valleys, it has mostly disappeared, on account of large scale authorized and unauthorized cutting. However, the hills slopes and many strips of valleys are still covered with trees, bamboos and brushwood. The chief forest trees are bastard teak, khakhro (*agaveiggius latifolia*); the wood apple, kathi (*feronia elephantum*); the Jambul, Jambudi (*eugenia jambolana*); the nim, limbdo (*melia azadirachta*); the teak, sag (*tectona grandis*); ber (*Zyzyphus jujuba*); mahuda (*bassia latifolia*); and bamboo (*bambusa*). Of hedge and field trees in the valley, the following are chief: mahuda, mango (*mangifera indica*); rayan (*mimosa indica*); banian or Indian

fig tree, vad (*ficus bengabasis*); ashopolaw (*poly althea longiflora*); and palm (*phenix sylvestris*). The chief forest products are gum and honey.

## FAUNA

The forest on the north-east part of Gujarat was also once rich in fauna. The fauna was varied and included tigers, wagh (*felis tigris*); leopards, chitta, (*felis jubatus*); panthers, dipdo (*felis leopardus*); stag, sambar (*rusa aristoteles*); bears, rinchh (*ursus labiatus*); wild boar, dukkar, (*bus indicus*); antelope, Kahar (*antelope bezoartica*); porcupine, sahudi (*hystrix cristata*); hyenas, wolves, jackals and wild cat (*felis chaus*). Now wild animals have almost disappeared although here and there one may come across such animals. On account of the presence of such wild games, the region was considered full of good game sancturies and was fully exploited by the former princely rulers and chieftains. Monkeys swarm near the village sites and in the jungles. Snakes of all kinds and sizes are found. A variety of birds, common in dry deciduous forest such as cuckoos, jungle fowls, etc. are also found. Among the domesticated animals mention may be made of buffaloes, oxen, cows, goats and sheep.

## DANTA TALUKA

Danta taluka in Banaskantha district which has been selected for the present study is nestled in the Aravalli mountain ranges. The earlier description given for the physical feature of Gujarat's north-east part is entirely applicable to the entire Danta taluka. Danta taluka is a land of thousand hills, although possessing no peaks or hills of special interest. This taluka may be taken as the north-east frontier of Gujarat. It lies in 24° 12' north latitude and 72° 50' east longitude. The taluka is famous throughout Gujarat and Rajasthan on account of having several places of pilgrimage for Hindus as well as the Jains. The temple of Amba Bhavani lies embosomed among the hills of Arasoor, at the south-west



termination of the Aravalli range. Near Ambaji town, there is another famous place for pilgrimage at Koteshwar where the temple of Lord Shiva (Koteshwar Mahadeo) is located. Also nearby Ambaji is a little village founded by Kumbho Rana of Chittor and called after his name, Kumbharia. Here there are some handsome Jain temples constructed by Vimal Shah in the 11th century.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY OF DANTA TALUKA

Danta, a small town nestling at the base of wild and rocky hills, had been the seat of Parmar Chieftains who ruled Danta State before its merger with the Indian union after independence. Its total area was then 847 sq.miles. The Parmar rulers of Danta have been the most favoured followers of Amba Bhavani since it is claimed by them that Amba Mata had bestowed upon them the state of Danta in Arasoor hills to rule, sometimes in the 11th century, when the ancestors of Parmar rulers who were ruling over Nagarthattha in Sind province, were driven out by the Mohummedan invaders. At that time Ambaji Mata inspired the then chieftain, Jas Raj to migrate to Arasur and take her there as the land of Nagarthattha had been defiled by the Muslims. It is said that Jas Raj migrated with his family to Arasoor. There he was asked by Mata to ride the tiger which was her mount and blessed him that whatever territory he would go around, it would be his kingdom. Consequently, Jas Raj established his throne there. He first made his seat at Gabbargadh which was quite close to Ambaji temple. Later he raised an army and went to fight with the Mohummedans who had occupied Nagarthattha. He drove them out and thereafter he stayed there. His son, Kedar Singh, who remained at Gabbargadh during this period fought with Tursungia Bhil who reigned at Tursunghmo.<sup>2</sup> Kedar Singh after having slain him shifted his royal seat to Tursunghmo. Several generations after this, in 1544 A.D. Rana Jetmal removed his royal seat to Danta. In between this period, several bloody battles were fought, in the mountain fastness of this region, between one ruler and

another ruler. It has been stated that the town of Danta derived its name from Dantorio Veer, who was probably a Bhil Chieftain and whose shrine is situated two miles to the west, on the road to Nawa Vas, where the people make offerings of clay horses.<sup>3</sup>

The rulers of Danta, who were placed in the second class (Britishers' classification of feudal states on the basis of revenue) enjoyed special influence on account of the famous shrine of Amba Bhawani where pilgrims of all ranks came from all corners during August, September, October and November. Their costly offerings in those days used to come ultimately into the ruler's exchequer. After the establishment of British rule, the rulers of Danta were made tributary chiefs paying the Gaikwad an annual sum of Rs.2371 as ghasdana,<sup>4</sup> the Maharaja of Idar Rs.513 as Khichdi<sup>5</sup> and the Diwan of Palanpur Rs.500. Till, 1920, the state was politically controlled by the Political Agent of Mahikantha Agency whose headquarter was at Baroda. Later on it was included in Rajputana agency and remained under it till it was merged with the Indian union after independence. After reorganisation of States in 1960, it formed a taluka in Banaskantha district of Gujarat State.

The rulers of Danta State were addressed by the title of Rana. During their regime, the administration of the State was carried on by the Rana, assisted by one or two ministerial officers known as Kamdars or Karbharis and who with a staff of clerks, formed what was called 'Mahakma Khas' or Chief Executive department in the State. All powers, even in matters of routine, were however, retained by the Rana in his own hands.

For revenue purposes the State was divided into three divisions, each under an official who was directly subordinate to the Revenue Superintendent and who exercised minor civil and criminal powers.



Political relations between the Danta Darbar<sup>6</sup> and the then British government were conducted through the Resident and the Governor General's Agent for Rajputana. The Resident was assisted by the commandant and second in command of the Mewar Bhil corps who were respectively Political Superintendent and Assistant Political Superintendent of the hilly tracts.

There was a regular small army and police force maintained by the Danta Darbar during the British period. Under instructions from the Political Superintendent, the police force had been reorganised around 1870, on the pattern then prevalent in British India. At the village level, the office of Police Patel was introduced near about the same time. In the administration of justice, the court of Danta was generally guided by the enactments of British India, modified to meet the local needs. Much earlier, in 1838, Sir James Outram had instituted border panchayat for the settlement of numerous blood feuds and disputes between the wild Bhils of Mahikantha and Rajputana frontier.<sup>7</sup> The system which consisted of monetary compensation for crime was found to be effective in preventing reprisal and maintaining peace. The office of the Patel in the village was the link connecting the peasants with the Danta Darbar.

The principal tenures in the then Danta State were Jagir, muafi, bhumi and khalsa. A large part of the land was under the possession of Rajput jagirdars which had passed to them in return of assistance given to the Darbar in times of troubles or as marks of personal favour and in consideration of services to be rendered in future. These jagirdars used to pay an annual tribute and had to assist the Darbar with their entire resources when called upon to do so. Lands were also granted on muafi or dharmada tenure to Brahmins, bards and temples from motive of charity or religion, the holders were not required to pay either revenue or tribute to the Darbar but had no power of alienation. The tenure in the khalsa or crown land was ryotadari and the

ryot or cultivator was generally undisturbed in his possession so long as he paid land revenue. A majority of the population of the State which was tribal were under the crown as ryots.

Land had also been granted to Garasia chieftains who were required to pay a nominal quit-rent (Bhum barar) and to perform such services as watch and ward of their villages, guarding the roads, escorting the treasury etc. Those holdings on the bhum tenure were held by the Garasia chieftains as long as they did not neglect their duties. As the settling of the 'Giras' or 'Bhum' claim rested in the hands of the officials of the Darbar, they used to exploit the Garasia chieftains on the slightest pretext of neglecting their duties. There used to be much discontent among the Garasia chieftains and at one time, about 1870, an attempt was made by the Political Agent to procure for the Garasias, under his political supervision, a settlement of their rights. Mr. Willoughby, Assistant Political Resident at Baroda, was deputed for this task.<sup>8</sup> He was also investigating the affairs and security bonds of Mewasis in Mahikantha agency. But this procedure was vehemently resisted by the Gaikwad of Baroda and till the Danta State was merged with the Indian Union, right of the Darbar to settle Giras claims through his own officials, remained intact. Sometimes after the failure of Mr. Willoughby's attempt, a Kandar or Agent of the Darbar was deputed to investigate the Giras claims of the Garasias but little came out of it as the latter did not appear before the Darbar's representative, probably due to their having no confidence in the Darbar.

The ryot was the proprietor of the soil in Danta State. He called his land his 'bapota', the most significant, the most emphatic and the most cherished phrase in his language commended for patrimonial inheritance (bapota means from father). The Garasias still use this phrase for patrimonial inheritance.



This is the short history of Danta State during the reign of Parmar chieftains. This history would be useful to understand the history of Garasia community which would be given later. It was clear from the early history of Danta that this mountain fastness had known days of bloody strifes. Murders, rapines and fights were order of the day before the Britishers came on the scene. The greatest sufferers of such bloody strifes were the Garasias and the Bhils who had to flee to more remote jungles in order to get rid of the oppressions and intimidation.

#### THE PEOPLE AND THEIR HISTORY

The earliest settlers, both rulers and ruled, in the Aravalli hills were the tribes, now known as Bhils. This is an established fact now. Writing about the Bhils Sir Col. James Tod describes, "All this space from Udaipur to Sirohi frontier is inhabited by communities of the aboriginal races, living in a state of primeval and almost savage independence, owning no paramount power, paying no tribute, but with all the simplicity of republics, their leaders with the title of Rawat, being hereditary. Their habitations are dispersed through the valleys in small rude hamlets, near their pastures or places of defence"<sup>9</sup>. There are many more evidences which establish the fact that before the Rajputs came in the area, the population in the valleys of the Aravalli hills consisted mainly of Bhils. The next comers were the Rajputs, whose arrival seems to date from the establishment of Arab power in Sind and the fall of Vallabhinagar in the eighth century. In the eleventh century the Musalman destruction of Nagarthattha in Sind drove out the Parmar Rajputs and in the twelfth and the thirteenth century further advance of Musalman power drove away many other Rajput chieftains, the Parmars of Chandravati, Rathods of Kanauj, and the Chavda of Anhilvada, into the Aravalli hills. When the first Rajput dynasty was established at Idar, the place was being governed by Mandalika, a chief of the Bhil tribe. There is an interesting story about the enthroning of the first Rajput ruler by the Bhils themselves.

It runs as follows 'After the assassination of Siladitya, king of Vallabhinagar, one of his queens, named Pushpawati, gave birth to a son at Arasoor where she had gone on pilgrimage to Amba Bhavani. As the prince was born inside a cave, he was named as Goha. The queen confided her son, to a Brahman woman and then became 'Sati' to follow her dead husband in heaven. As the young prince grew to manhood, he became tired of the peaceful life with his foster parents and found hunting and raiding with the wild Bhil tribesmen of the adjoining district of Idar far more to his taste. Eventually he became the chosen chief of the Bhils and during eight generations his descendents ruled over these primitive children of forest. 'The earliest rulers of Parmar dynasty at Danta, had to fight with Tursungia Bhil, the chieftain of Tursunghmo to claim their supremacy in that region. In the beginning, the Rajput chieftains had to come in conflict several times with the Bhil chieftains in the valleys of Aravalli hills. But later, the Rajputs established friendly relations with the Bhils. There are instances which show that many Rajput chieftains took and accepted the help and assistance of Bhils in their war against enemies. The classical example is that of Rana Pratap of Udaipur taking refuge among the Bhils of Aravalli hills. It is believed that Rajputs in early days used to intermarry and eat with the Bhils, who were regarded not as a menial tribe, but as lords of the soil.<sup>10</sup> The Bhils, when conquered by the Rajputs naturally wished to gild the chains they could not break. To trace a common, though distant, origin with the conquerors was to remove some portion of the taint of dishonour which arose from giving their daughters in marriage to the Rajput chiefs. And a degree of satisfaction was derived from assuming that the blood thus corrupted once flowed from a common fountain.



These two major ancestral stocks are generally believed to have contributed to the present Garasia population. One has been the indigenous population living in the Aravalli hills, The other has been the later immigrants in this area, the Rajputs of the Indo-Aryan speaking group. According to Sherring - 'the Garasias are said to be descended from Chauhan Rajputs who were in the country before the Sisodia conquered Chittor. They have lost most of their Rajput customs and are now a wild race, associating closely with the Bhils, whose daughters they take to wife, and now they live apart from more civilized people'.<sup>11</sup> It will not be true, however, to say that the Garasias have descended from Chauhan Rajputs only. In fact, the history of the region clearly and pointedly shows that nearly all sections of the Rajputs had been intermingling with the Bhils. By intermarriage with the Bhils, many of these Rajputs lost caste, only keeping the name of Rajput clans, to which their forefathers belonged. We have seen earlier that the Aravalli mountain, the abode of the Garasias had been a scene of great historical turmoil and upheavals right from the period of Rajputs to early Britisher rule. This happened on account of the large number of princely states in and around that region and frequent Mughal invasions on these princely states. Bloody feuds were the order of the day in those times. About the bloody feuds one gets a vivid description in an article published by M.S. Commiseriat regarding the brief history of Gujarat.

"Having got rid of domineering nobles, Mahmud (Mahmud III who reigned during 1546-1553) conceived the design of conquering Malwa. The Vazir (Minister) Asaf Khan, being consulted on the subject, said that he could direct the Sultan to a conquest not less important and nearer home. A fourth part of land in Gujarat, he urged, was held by Rajputs and Garasias as Watan or hereditary estates. If the king could resume this and transfer it to Muslims, he would acquire a jagir sufficient

to maintain one army of 25,000 horses. The wicked advice was at once acted upon and the Hindu landowners were forcibly ejected from their ancestral estates. This unscrupulous invasion of the sacred rights of private property at once raised a storm of bitter opposition and the feudatory chiefs of Idar, Sirohi, Dungarpur, Rajpipla and frontier districts rose in a formidable revolt. But the Sultan strengthened his military out posts and the insurrection was put down in the most sanguinary manner. The parties of soldiers stationed at Idar, Sirohi and other places were ordered to extirpate the very name of Rajputs and Kolis, from these places, excepting however, those who were the armed police of the country or such as were engaged in trade, and who were to be distinguished by a special mark on the right arm. Should anyone of this class be found without this mark, they were to be executed."<sup>12</sup>

Earlier Mughal invasions by Sultan Ahmed Shah I (1410-1442) upon Idar, Mewar and other feudatory States were also of such character. Even earlier than this, in the commencement of the year 1297, A.D. the generals of Alla-ud-din Khilji were sent with an army to effect the reconquest of Gujarat. Laying waste the country, they created a scene of anarchy in the region. In fact, the north-east region of Gujarat was invaded not by Muslims alone, and the army which should have defended the region had broken up into numerous divisions, eager, no doubt, to protect the ground which each independently occupied, but, as a whole, connected by no common interest and acknowledging no common leader. Even during very early period of Rajput dynasties, fight with each other was quite common.

Such a situation must have necessitated the intermingling of different streams of population particularly of Rajputs and Bhils. It has been narrated by Alexander Kinloch Forbes:

"At this time, the Gaikwad army used to come every three or four years, and when the people of the village heard of



their approaching which they did generally when about ten kos off, they caused the Trughayas to beat their drums and raise a cry of 'fly, fly, the army is coming! Upon which the people fled and taking shelter among the hills, concealed themselves there with the Bhils.."<sup>13</sup>

In another narration it has been stated..."informed by his scouts of what had happened, fled under the protection of two thousand horsemen....and lived as fugitives amongst the Bhils of Aravallis."<sup>14</sup> The fact of Maharana Pratap and his troupes taking refuge among the Bhils is too well known.

Thus, in an endeavour to gain peaceful life, the Rajput jagirdars and girasdars went to the length of adopting the way of life of the Bhils, living in the remote hills and forests. It is not difficult to imagine that there was a constant reflux of emigration on the part of the Rajputs to the hilly tracts, where the Bhils lived. In a legendary tale prevalent among the Garasias it is said that there was a king who ruled Rajgad (near Chittor). After his death, the King's widow deputed a Dungaicha nobleman to look after the affairs of the State as the deceased Kings' sons were minors. In return of his services to the throne the King's widow exonerated him against payment of revenue to the State. But the eldest son, when he became major and occupied the throne, did not see eye to eye with the Dungaicha nobleman. The new ruler demanded the unpaid revenue. On this issue, they developed enmity towards each other and ultimately the new ruler got the nobleman murdered. On hearing the news of the murder of his father, the nobleman's son, in order to take revenge, killed the King and then fled away from that State. As he was an absconder and at the same time, a murderer of a royal person, no princely states would give shelter to him. Ultimately he had to hide himself in the hills among the indigeneous people. His descendants are today known as Dungaichas (a clan name among Garasias).

Another legend runs as follows:

"Long ago there were two brothers of Parmar dynasty who used to rule over Mount Abu. Both of them were great worshippers of Mataji of Khedbrahma temple. Every year they used to ride down from Mount Abu and travelled upto Khedbrahma to offer their prayers in person to the deity. Once it so happened that one of them got badly thirsty. (the narrator warned to remember that journey in those days was very arduous and full of obstacles and hence it used to be a great feat for thick and dense forest). In order to quench his thirst he went in search of water after asking the other brother to wait for him at a particular spot. The thirsty brother, in course of his search for water, came across a house belonging to a person of the Bhil community. He found a beautiful maiden standing near the hut. She was the daughter of the owner of the house. He asked her for water and after quenching his thirst joined his brother on way to Khedbrahma. But he had lost his heart to that Bhil maiden and remained much tormented throughout the journey. On their way back to Mount Abu, he deliberately left the company of his brother and found his way to the house of that girl. On reaching there he met the father of the girl and asked for her to become his wife. The father gave his consent but on the condition that he (the prince) would have to stay permanently with him (the Bhil) as he did not want her only daughter to leave him for good. The prince was so much infatuated with the beauty and charm of the girl that he finally agreed to the demand of the girl's father and thus settled down amongst the Bhils. The descendants of this prince of Parmar dynasty later, in course of time, became whom we know today as Bhil Garasias.

The other brother went back to Mount Abu and alone ruled over the kingdom. Which he, after some time lost to invaders. He alongwith his family members became fugitive and finally took refuge in hills among the Bhils. His descendants, in course of time, became whom we know today as Garasias. As they main-

/ those brothers to cover up the distance through



tained their purity, they are higher in status than the Bhil Garasias."

Similar legends in different versions are prevalent among the different clans of Garasias. These evidences suggest that it was the safest possible way for such fugitives to escape the bloody feuds. Thus it can be visualised that they stayed among the Bhils, married Bhil women, adopted some of the Bhil totems and the Bhil gods and in course of time allowed their widows to marry again. Such evidences have been recorded. For instance... "Rumal received a chief of Sonaggera Chohans who came to Idar from Ghaler, having been driven out by the Mohammedans, to him the Row assigned the patta or fief of Gora Meerpoor. This Chohan family for some time intermarried with that of Row; but after a time they connected themselves with Bhil women and became outcastes".<sup>15</sup> "As such Rajputs were jagirdars or girasdars, they maintained their identity by clinging to the original clan name of their fathers. Those Rajput jagirdars, who took refuge in the hills and who had lost their estate and hence had no jagir, they too, would have prepared to get identified as Garasias as that was prestigious than to be called Bhils.

Sir John Malcolm and Grierson have also shared the view that the Garasias are descendants of Rajputs by Bhil women.<sup>16</sup> C.S. Venkatachar traces Rajput blood in them. "Forced by circumstances", he writes "to make an alliance with the denizens of hills, the Rajput did not hesitate to take woman from tribal land and this was the reason of disintegration of the Bhil, into various sections they own today".<sup>17</sup> Sir Grierson has also elucidated about the Garasias in following terms - "The clan of the Garasias are, in many cases named after Rajput. Instances are: Chauhan, Solanki, Parmar, Rathor, Dabhi, etc. At first sight this might appear to substantiate their claim to Rajput origin. Actually I suggest, the exact opposite is the case, for

the son of a man of Bhati gotra by a wife of Rathor Gotra may not marry a girl of the Rathor gotra. Thus the Garasias follow the ordinary Hindu customs and not the distinctive Rajput rule. It seems probable that these gotras arose from fugitive Rajputs who joined the Bhils, temporarily or permanently and had issues, legitimate or otherwise, by Bhil women and that the fruit of these union took, as a distinguished mark, the tribal (clan) name of the male parent.<sup>18</sup> Tracing the origin of the term Garasia, Sir John Malcolm states that 'the word is derived from the Sanskrit 'Giras' which signifies a mouthful and has been metaphorically applied to designate the small share of produce of a country which these plunderers (Garasias) claim'.<sup>19</sup> It was also known historically that Sultan Ahmad Shah I had originally assigned wanta or hereditary estate to Rajput chiefs with a view to conciliate them to his new dynasty. It might be inferred, presumably then, that those Rajput chiefs who were given wanta land or 'Giras' have been already on the lowest scale of social and economic level in the hierarchy of their own Rajput Caste structure. In the bardic chronicles, the term was constantly applied to the lands given for their subsistence to junior members of the chieftain families. The sons of Rajas and Ranas bore the appellation of Koonwar (Prince) and their sons the designation of Thakors provided they had succeeded to an estate. The sons of Thakore were also called Koonwar during their father's life. On his death, the eldest son used to become Thakore and the others Bhoomeas or Garasias. The term Bhoomea was applied to all possessors of landed property who were not Rajas or Thakores. Gradually, during the Mughal and British period they were referred to as Garasias in consequence of their being the ancient hereditary proprietors of the portion of territory they possessed, in which sense the word 'Gras' was used and it was equivalent to 'Asil' or 'Cudeem' (two mohammedan words which meant root, origin, foundation and ancient, old, former). Thus, of all the possessors of land among the Rajputs,



the Garasias were most inferior in gradation and it was not possible for them to scale themselves up with the Thakores, Jagirdars, Rajas and other officials of the feudatory states. In the event of turmoil and upheavals it could have been easier for them to throw their lot with the aboriginal population of the region, the Bhils. Not only Rajput male fugitives threw their lot with the Bhils but in all probability even the Rajput women rather than fall into the hands of foe fled into the hills and forests and took refuge among the Bhils. Bridget Allchin has also pointed out that 'In Western Central India the Bhils, who are now agriculturists have absorbed a great deal, both physically and culturally, from the many waves of invaders who have entered India from the north-west, or rather from the people displaced by each new wave of invaders'.<sup>20</sup> Majumdar was also of the opinion that 'the Bhils have clearly acquired agricultural techniques from more advanced peoples, possibly at the same time absorbing new ethnic elements. A clear example of this is to be found in the north-western Bhil groups, who have acquired many Rajput characteristics from fugitives of the Rajput wars who took refuge with them'.<sup>21</sup> Thus, there could be no doubt that in this region, super-imposition of the culture pattern of Rajput over the indigenous Bhil culture has taken place, which had been greatly facilitated on account of the racial intermingling between the Bhils and Rajputs. For the sake of status enhancement, the Rajputs, who were absorbed in the Bhil society kept their claim about their origin to Rajput caste and even stuck with their original clan name. In course of time, a large number of Bhils of other regions, where the racial mixing took place on a very small scale, and who were living in close proximity of the Garasias, also started claiming their descent from Rajput and gradually adopted the name of Garasias. This appeared to happen, particularly, in the region of present day Sabarkantha district. There have been a few evidences, suggesting that a large number of tribal population of

Sabarkantha district was known as Bhils during the British period. Some of these evidences are as follows:

- (i) There was no mention of Garasia population in Sabarkantha region in the census of 1901, 1921, 1931 and 1941;
- (ii) A.W.T. Webb has also mentioned that 'the Garasias are entirely confined to the contiguous states of Marwar, Mewar, Palanpur, Sirohi and Danta';<sup>22</sup>
- (iii) Grierson too, has pointed out - 'the influence of Marwari increases as we proceed northwards along the Aravalli hills where we find so called Girasias (while discussing the language of Bhils in the Idar State, he has never hinted at the presence of Girasia there),'<sup>23</sup>
- (iv) The Garasias of Danta taluka, even today, have close social and cultural ties with the Garasias of Rajasthan, while they have no such ties with the so called Garasias of Sabarkantha region;
- (v) The Garasias of Sabarkantha region have a number of clan names found among the Bhils which is not in the case of the Garasias of Danta taluka.

These evidences are sufficient to demonstrate that the so called Garasias of Sabarkantha region are largely Bhils. There are enough evidences on the other hand, of the presence of the Garasias population in the region of Danta taluka and its adjoining areas in Rajasthan. In the 1901 Census, the Garasias have been referred to as warrior or pseudo-warrior class and have been grouped together with Kathi, Khattris, Marathas, Rajputs, Thakors and others.<sup>24</sup> It has been stated that their main concentration was in Sirohi State, Danta State, and other regions of the then Mewar State. The early British authors like Col. Tod, Sir John Malcolm, M.S. Commissariat and others have always identified the Garasia as a distinct and separate ethnic group. In the volume on Mewar Residency of Rajputana Gazetteer a mention has been made of the Garasias at several places. At all places they have been treated as a different group from the Bhils.<sup>25</sup>



All these evidences suggest that the Garasias have been distinctly referred to as an independent group irrespective of their past association with Rajputs or the Bhils and they were mainly concentrated, during British period, in the Mewar Residency and in Danta State.

For the absence of the Garasia population in the region of present Sabarkantha district, as recorded in the former censuses, P.C.Dave has argued that the absence of specific mention of the Garasias <sup>as</sup> separate tribe in the census enumeration of Ravakantha and Palampur agencies, appear to be more due to the callousness of ignorant enumerators rather than due to the absence of Garasias in those areas.<sup>26</sup> This argument does not appear to be very convincing as it was highly improbable that in all earlier Census enumerations, such callousness could have been shown. Further, the British authorities themselves used to travel extensively in those areas, at the time of census operation to get first hand knowledge. It appears surprising that the Garasias in Sabarkantha region had escaped their notice. Grierson has also not recorded the presence of the Garasias in the them Idar State.

It seems, that in order to do away with the despised name of Bhils, some of the clans of the Bhils of Sabarkantha region must have invented the fiction of being Garasias to raise themselves in their own and their neighbour estimation. One could not deny the fact that superimposition of Rajput Culture patterns has taken place over the Bhil culture to a great extent. This was responsible for the tendency to treat their community name, Bhil, in a despised manner. Hence the clamour for being known as Garasias. In fact they feel it derogatory for themselves to get associated with the Bhils in any form. This kind of strong feeling is prevalent among all sections of the Garasias. On account of the intermingling of different streams of population in varying proportions in the different regions, there have arisen hierarchical divisions

among the Garasias. On the top of the hierarchy are the Garasia Rajputs (in some regions they were known as Chokla Garasias), who consider themselves descendants of pure Rajputs. Next in the hierarchy are the Dungri Garasias who also consider themselves descendants of pure Rajputs but as their ancestors had been eating buffalo-meat, they could not claim to be as pure as Garasia Rajputs. The third and last position in the hierarchy is of the Bhil-Garasias who are considered to be more or less like Bhils. However, to the Dungri Garasias of Bhiloda, Pall patta and Meghraj regions of Sabarkantha district, even the Bhil-Garasias, not to speak of Garasias alone, designate lower status than themselves. They call them (Dungri Garasias of Sabarkantha district) 'Kharakwasi' meaning thereby persons living in deep jungles and hills. They further allege that the women of the Dungri Garasias used to wear 'Penjani' (an ornament worn by women on between ankle and knee, right from the ankle to the knee. Even their dialect has been different from those of the people of Danta taluka. The members of the Bhil-Garasia group, in general who were not militant, like the Dungri Garasia, also do not like to be referred to with the prefix of Bhil. They also like to be referred to as Garasias only. In order to distinguish themselves from the Bhil-Garasias, the people of Sabarkantha region have adopted the prefix "Dungri". As such they are now known as Dungri Garasias. As they too were referred to as Bhil-Garasias in earlier times, and were therefore feeling it derogatory, gradually removed the despised prefix 'Bhil' from the name of their community. In order to have a distinct name for themselves, they put the prefix of 'Dungri' (meaning one who lives in hills) instead of 'Bhil' before their community name. It should be pointed out here that among themselves the Bhil Garasias refer each other as Garasias while Dungri Garasias refer to each other as Dungri Garasias.



These hierarchial divisions, maintain distance from each other just like Hindu castes. Neither inter-marrying nor inter-dining takes place between them. Due to the fear of pollution a Garasia Rajpūt would not accept even water from the hands of a Dungri-Garasia or a Bhil-Garasia. Drawing together the threads of the foregoing argument it might perhaps be stated that in course of time, these divisions might become indistinguishable from each other. It does not however, alter the facts of past history or the original separateness of the people of these groups.

#### PHYSICAL FEATURES OF GARASIAS:

The Garasias of Danta taluka are usually tall, but not very tall (average height being 5' 7") and well built. They have a complexion varying from olive to copper and dusty brown, and they possess a fine nose. On account of millenniums of race mixture, the physical characteristics of the Garasias do not conform to a common pattern. They approach the Rajput castes in some of the physical traits and are distinctly different from a typical Bhil. But even the Bhils have varying physical characteristics. However, the Garasias are long-headed and hence clearly show dolichocephalic strains. By and large they may be classed under the broad racial group of scytho-Dravidian, to which much of the non-tribal population of Gujarat belongs. The Garasia women are of light complexion, graceful, and compare favourably with their Gujarati neighbours. In stature, they usually show average Indian height and are lightly built. Their eyes are full, expressive and dark and their features are pleasant.

#### LANGUAGE OF THE GARASIAS:

The Garasias speak a dialect which is part of the Bhili language. Grierson describes Bhili as a language of the central group of the inner Indo-Aryan branch.<sup>27</sup> "The Bhil dialects" writes P.G. Shah "form a continuous chain between Rajasthani, through Gujarati, Khandeshi and Marathi. The Marathi influence is only of a superficial kind and the general character of the dialect remains Gujarati".<sup>28</sup> While carefully listening to the Garasia speech, it will at once appear that the dialect is a mixture of Marwari, Bhili and Gujarati. But the Gujarati character is less prominent in their dialect while Marwari or Rajasthani character is more prominent. Grierson has termed their dialect as 'Nyar-ki-Boli or Nayar dialect'.<sup>29</sup> There is a distinct influence of Marwari dialect. In some areas, their dialect is known as "Magra-ki-boli". Magra, in their dialect, means hill and Magra-ki-boli is therefore, the dialect spoken in hills.

To summarise, the mountain fastness of Danta had known days of bloody strife. The greatest sufferers of such bloody strifes were the Garasias and the Bhils who had to get pushed into more remote jungles in order to escape from the oppressions of Raja's, jagirdar's and feudatory officials. On account of this, the Garasia country has always been insulated to a very great degree against political and commercial India. The region continued its political and economic isolation from the plains, both from the north-Gujarat plains and from Rajasthan plains. Due to the uncertain political and economic situation during the Mughal and British regime, it was not uncommon among the Garasias to migrate from one place to another in search of peace and economic stability. Only after the pacification of whole region through the British protectorate, the Garasias got general security.



### CHAPTER III THE GARASIA VILLAGE

Our discussion now turns from the cultural area of which this study is broadly representative to the specific location of the research. As stated elsewhere the research reported here is in the nature of community study. Although no Garasia village could be understood in isolation, it can certainly serve as a useful focus for research. Any Garasia village properly understood, represents in a general way villages of a particular type and area.

As mentioned earlier, the village Matadham was selected for the intensive study of Garasia tribe. This village is situated at a distance of nearly 196 km. from Ahmedabad and falls under the police station of Ambaji. From Danta, the taluka headquarters, the village is situated at a distance of 28 km. in the north while Danta is nearly 44 km. north of Palanpur, the headquarters of Banaskantha district.

The village Matadham is nearly 5 km. south-west from Ambaji, the famous pilgrimage centre for Hindus of Gujarat and Rajasthan. Matadham is linked with Ambaji by a jeepable kachcha road which however, becomes difficult to negotiate during the rains on account of the two rivulets which otherwise remain dry. The convenient way to reach Matadham by a vehicle is to motor through Kumbharia village where the famous Jain temples and a Mahadeva temple of the 12th century are located. Upto Kumbharia there is an all weather metalled road at about the second mile stone from Ambaji. The village Matadham is linked with Kumbharia by a kachcha road, and is only at a distance of about 1 km. from there.

As there is no railway in Danta taluka, the nearest rail head for coming to Ambaji (and for that matter to the village Matadham) is at Abu Road in Rajasthan. Abu Road is nearly 27 km. in the north from Ambaji and it lies on Ahmedabad-Delhi meter gauge railway line at a distance of 186 km. from Ahmedabad. Ambaji is well connected with all the major cities of Gujarat and Rajasthan on account of the excellent road and rail transport services.

#### SETTLEMENT HISTORY

Historically, the Garasia villages can be seen as a microcosm; a great world represented in a small one. A village can be viewed as a part of the Arasoor region and its local history can throw further light on some of the historical events of the tribal villages of this region. The racial and linguistic history of the region has already been discussed in the previous chapter. While considering the history of a Garasia village, the history of the region should not be overlooked. However, it cannot be regarded as systematic history of anything. It is rather collection of statements about past events some of which have bearing upon the Garasia villages of this region. In these respects it is like many other brief historical introductions to traditional ethnographic studies which suffer from lack of historical depth owing to lack of data.

We have discussed earlier, about the racial and linguistic affinities of the Garasias and about their strange ancestors who finally secluded themselves in the valleys and jungles of Arasoor region in Aravalli hills. In this area, at least their wanderings were followed by a long era of peace. Here, in the primeval forests of Aravalli hills, the Garasia immigrants made clearances in the jungles and established their villages. Thus, in the heart of the deep forests, villages grew up, and day by day went on steadily multiplying. In this way the Garasias spread over the entire north-eastern parts of Gujarat.



The history of Matadham village is vague in the mind of its residents and is unrecorded elsewhere. No one remembers when the earliest settlers came to Matadham. The presence of the 11th century Jain temples and equally old Mahadeva temple in the immediate neighbouring village of Kumbharia testifies that as early as 10th or 11th century, there must have been a habitation in and around Matadham. Even the several centuries old step well supports the above contention. These works are believed to be the works of petty chieftains or Jagirdars who ruled small independent principalities or a group of villages in these hills before 15th century. The Jain temples at Kumbharia village were erected by the famous minister Vimal Shah in 11th century. These temples are one of the most superb marble shrines of Jain faith and are similar in construction and magnificence to the temples of Dilwara on the table-land of Mount Abu in Rajasthan. There is a legend which relates that "the Mata (Amba Bhavani) gave much wealth to Vimal Shah and he constructed here three hundred and sixty temples dedicated to Parasnath. Later on account of great anger against Vimal Shah Mataji consumed all the temples by fire, with the exception of five, which she left as witness to the legend".<sup>1</sup> This legend probably contains a certain amount of truth, in as far as it relates to the destruction of temples founded on the spot by Vimal Shah, through a volcanic agency which had evidently at some time or other been very active throughout the hills of Arasor.<sup>2</sup> Vimal Shah himself seems to have fully believed that his loss was occasioned by the vengeance of Amba Mata, for the inscription on the temple which he subsequently founded at Dilwara (Mt. Abu) contains stanzas in propitiation of the Goddess.

The purpose of narrating the above legend here is to show that the neighbourhood of the present Garasia villages happen to be a place which was a prominent seat of Hindu culture. The township of Ambaji, which is only about 5 km. from the village Matadham, is itself an old important place for the Hindus. In the west of Matadham at a distance of 5 km. there is a village Rangpur, which was a seat of an important chieftain of Danta rulers in the 14th or 15th century. All these evidences provide ample proof that the region where Garasia villages are located was once a throbbing centre of human activities since 10th or 11th century. But there is no historical evidence to show that the ancestors of the present Garasia villages had also participated in the human activities of this region during the early period. As we know, on account of several recurring bloody wars in the region, migrations of the population was an order of the day during the mediaeval period. Thus, although there is no direct evidence, it seems probable that people who were living in the village of Kumbharia and other neighbouring villages from 10th to 15th centuries might have deserted the area and migrated to some other places. The present Garasia population of the Matadham, Kumbharia, Jetwas, Siawa, Bara, Beri, Mama-na-Piplav, Dharda, Zamberi and other neighbouring villages occupied the area in the early 18th century. Very little is known of these people but as had been shown earlier they most probably came from Mewar and Marwar region. While discussing about their genesis in the earlier chapter, we have recorded that two major ancestral stocks are generally believed to have contributed to the present Garasia population, the indigenous Bhils and later immigrant Rajputs. In the process of the genetic mingling of these two groups, shifting of population from one place to another also took place in a big way. In some villages older people reported that their ancestors had at least moved to five places before finally settling in the present village. According to one informant of the village Siawa, his ancestors (original



settlers in the village) had originally migrated from Chittor side. From there they first went to Torna village, thence to Banaswade side, thence to Tinsara and finally to Siawa. Similarly, it was reported that the ancestors of the village Bhomkudi, Adepur and Jadi Simbal (Vijaynagar taluka) had initially moved from Patan side. They came to Panowra Patta (Rajasthan), from Panowra to Sirohi taluka (Rajasthan), from Sirohi region to Dhulia side (Banaskantha) and finally to present villages in Vijaynagar taluka. Claiming their original home land to be Patan, the Garasias of these villages want to associate themselves with Solanki clan who once reigned at Patan. However, they are certain that their forefathers had come from Panowra. About Patan they have just a vague image in their mind.

In the same way, the Garasias of village Bara, Bedi and Satranj and Mama-Na-Piplav are certain that their forefathers had migrated from Panowra side although they claim Chhittor to be their original home land. From Panowra some went to Chandrana, some towards Sirohi side and some to these villages.

Such migrations helped the new community to gain a better status in a new place. But as we have no written records of their successive migrations, it is a difficult job to trace their indigenous abodes. The fast disappearing ancient traditions of the Garasias may give us some clues for tracing their origin and migrations. But as these traditions are vague, such an attempt will lead to crude and conjectural reconstruction of their settlement history. Legends only have passed down from generation to generation, gathering additions as they passed from one mouth to another. In the process of additions, several tales have been invented to account for the cases of those things that was baffling for the limited native intelligence to find clearcut and authentic explanation.

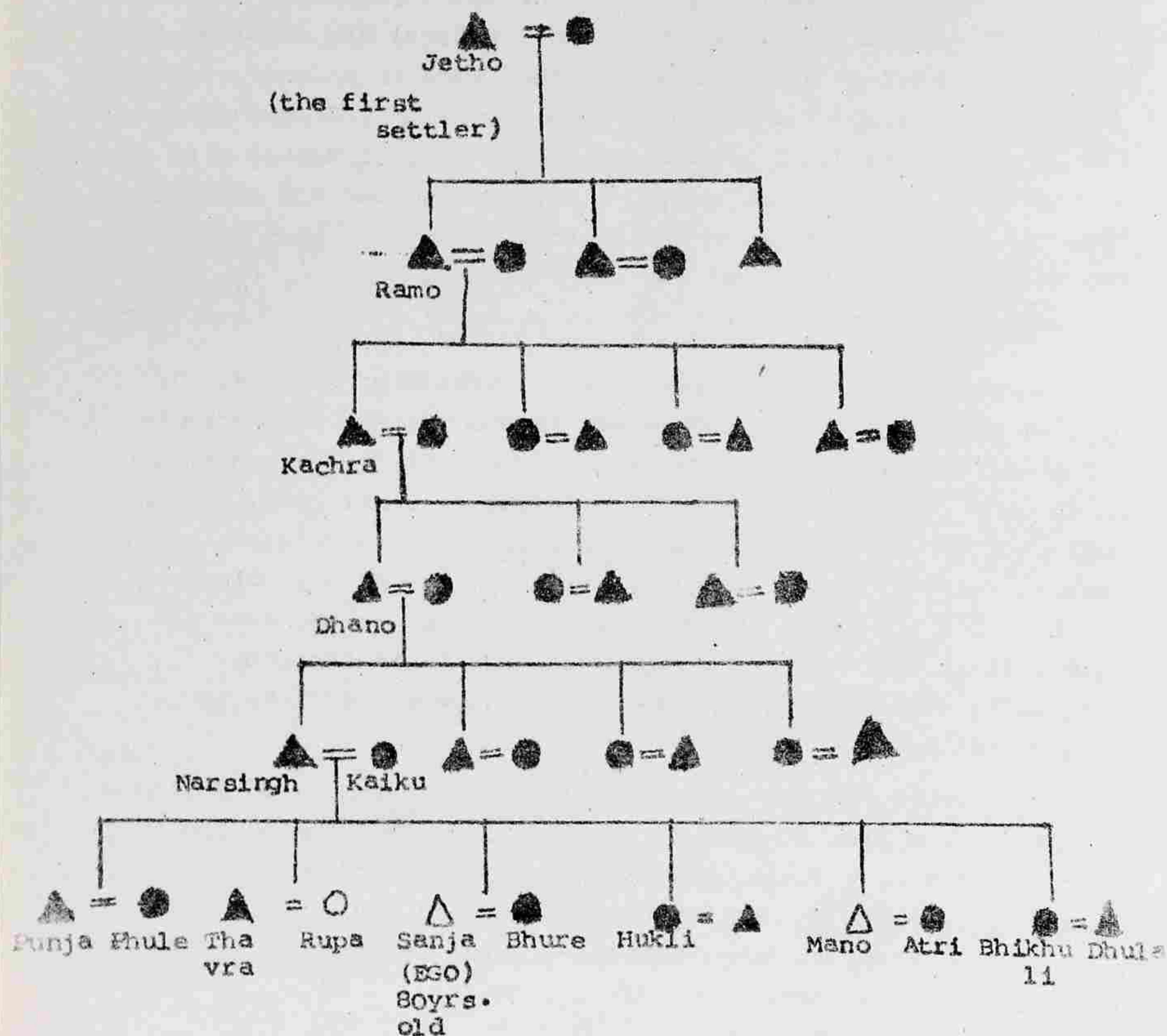
The old men of the village Matadham have some idea about the past of this particular village. Sanja Rathod, an old man of 80 years narrated to us the history of this locality. His statement was confirmed by other old men of the village. According to their statements this land used to have a dense forest and was inhabited by wild animals of various types. Of all the wild animals, wild bears, were in abundance which in course of time became the source of getting name for the village. Although wild bears are now no more found there, the old name persists. One Garasia family belonging to Rathod clan migrated here from Mewar region which is nearly 100 km. from the present village. That Rathod family soon there after brought another family of Rathod clan to settle there. They felled trees, levelled the land and made the forested area fit for human habitation. Gradually, they increased the area of cultivable land and settled there permanently. Later on people of other clans too came in succession and settled there.

Among the current residents of the villages, there is a general agreement that Matadham was founded by the ancestors of a Rathod family. Two brothers of the family first settled there. Thereafter came the ancestors of a family of Dabhi clan. The man belonging to the Dabhi clan was a relation of the original settler (who belonged to Rathod clan) by marriage. The family belonging to the Dabhi clan also migrated from a village to the east in Mewar. It is claimed by the villagers that their ancestors ultimately came from Chittorgarh side in Mewar territory, the present Udaipur district.

By a rough estimate many of the present day Garasia villages must have been settled some three centuries<sup>ago</sup>. The name of the first settler of village Matadham was Jetho Rathod who was the ancestor, in fifth generation of Sanja Rathod. Following is the geneological chart of Sanja Rathod, showing the name of the first settler in the village.



GENEOLOGICAL CHART OF SANJA RATHOD



Similarly, the village Siawa was first settled by one Rupa Kala Vansia, who was the ancestor in seventh generation of Deva Rupa Vansia.

In Matadham next to Jetho Rathod came the ancestors of Dhano, the present police patel of the village. It is not clearly known how near kins were the forefathers of Sanja and Dhano. Formerly the police patel used to be appointed from amongst the lineage of Sanjo Rathod (usually the eldest member) on account of their claim of being the original settler. But somehow or other, since one generation, the office of the police patel went in the line of Dhano's lineage.

Next to members of the Dabhi clan, were members of Parmar, Gamar, Pargi, Makwana who settled in the village. Lastly, members of Dungaicha, Solanki, Khokharia, Bhumaria, Angari migrated to this village. The Dabhis too have a pseudo-historical notion about their migration in the village. But members of other clans are clear about their migration. Members of a number of clans have been living in this village since one generation only. The pattern of housing in the village also suggests that the families belonging to Rathod and Dabhi clans were the earliest settlers as they live in close proximity to each other and occupy the plain and most fertile land of the village. Their houses are also first met when one enters the village from Ambaji. There is only one exception in the scheme of houses of Rathod and Dabhi clans and that is regarding the location of the houses of Dhano Rathod and his two brothers. Their houses are situated in the elevated table-land of the village which is known as 'Dhar'. Although the ancestors of Dhano and his brothers were amongst the earliest settlers, Dhano's father's father moved into the other region of the village in quest of more land for cultivation. They cleared the forest in the Dhar region and brought more land under cultivation. However, the original settler in their lineage had settled in the plain region of the village where the houses of Rathod and Dabhi



families are still found. The houses of the most families belonging to other clans, who settled recently, are situated in the Dhar region. Some of the later-settlers, of course, have also settled in the region of the origin settlers. But such families are mostly connected by marriage with families of either a Dabhi or a Rathod clan. For instance, the second house on the village street leading from Ambaji side, is that of Harsan who belongs to Makwana clan and who himself has migrated to the village from a nearby village. Harsan got married with a girl of the village who belonged to the Dabhi clan. The girl's father invited Harsan to settle in Matadham and offered him a piece of cultivable land in the village. When he migrated into the village, he was allowed to erect his house in the region of the original settlers. The land offered to him was also located in that very region. Similar is the case with families of other clan who are found in the region of original settlers, except in the case of a family belonging to Dungaicha clan. This family actually resided inside the boundary of Jetwas village which is the next village to Matadham on north-eastern side. But most of the land of this family was located in Matadham village. So in order to have better and close watch, this family finally erected a new house inside the boundary of Matadham village, near the family's agricultural land and settled down there. As such, excepting these cases, houses of most of the recent migrants are located in the Dhar region, on the fringe of the forest tract in the village. In this way, the situation of the houses, of the families belonging to different clans, give a fairly good idea about their successive migrations in the village.

Almost similar pattern of the situation of houses, of the families belonging to different clans, is found other Garasia villages. Thus in Matadham, the Rathods are the first set of immigrants and are inhabiting the village for the last six generations while the Dhabhis are the second set of immigrants

who are inhabiting the village for the last five generations. As the Dabhis also claim to be the original settlers, the office of the Patelship of the village revolve round three lineage; one that of Dhano Rathod's lineage, the second that of Sanja Rathod's lineage and third that of Nupa Dabhi's lineage. The office of Patelship is changed after gap of five years. The Talathi, in consultation with the villagers, select the man from these three lineages for the office of Patel. On the Talathi's recommendation the government issues order regarding the appointment of the Patel. Patelship is a honoured office among Garasias and a patel of any Garasia village takes as his right to entertain any official in the village. Due to this, no other person in the village likes to play host to any official lest he should invite the enmity of the Patel of the village.

Persons of other clans are inhabiting the village for the last three, two and one generation. The figures provided in the next Table gives exact idea about the length of residence in terms of generation of the families belonging to different clans in the village. It is evident from these figures that except the Rathods and Dabhis, nearly all the families of the remaining clans have migrated comparatively recently. The most recent immigrant is the family belonging to Angari clan who has now permanently settled in the village only a couple of years back, having migrated from a village in Palampur taluka of Banaskantha district.

The villages Matadham, Jamberi, Dhareda etc. were, before independence, under the rulers of Danta State. Bara, Bedi, Satranj, Mama-na-Piplav were under the rulers of Poshina State. So the villages of Bhombhadi, Adepur and Jadi Simbal were under rulers of Vijaynagar State. Siawa was under the rulers of Sirohi State. These princely rulers did not treat the inhabitants of there villages with consideration, only because from the point of view



TABLE I

Distribution of families according to clan  
and length of residence

Sr. No.	Name of the clan	Since how many generations living in the village						Percentage
		6 Gen.	5 Gen.	4 Gen.	3 Gen.	2 Gen.	1 Gen.	
1.	Rathod	13	-	-	-	-	-	25.50
2.	Dabhi	-	9	6	-	-	-	29.40
3.	Durgaicha	-	-	-	-	-	3	5.90
4.	Solanki	-	-	-	-	-	1	1.97
5.	Pargi	-	-	-	-	2	2	7.80
6.	Gamar	-	-	-	2	1	3	11.80
7.	Parmar	-	-	-	1	-	3	7.80
8.	Makwana	-	-	-	-	1	1	3.92
9.	Khokharia	-	-	-	-	-	1	1.97
10.	Bhumaria	-	-	-	-	-	1	1.97
11.	Angari	-	-	-	-	-	1	1.97
	TOTAL.....	13	9	6	3	4	16	100.00

of racial classification, they were considered inferior. In fact the rulers were indifferent to them as long as the Garasias did not claim racial equality with those of the ruling class but the officers of these ruling States did exploit and harass the inhabitants of these villages. However, independence was never an important issue in these villages although certain village elders had been cooed by one Moti Lal Tejawat for revolting against the rulers but nothing of consequence took place. If these feudatory chiefs were not popular their government was looked upon without disfavour. On account of the reorganization of administration by British Political Resident, the villagers were living in peace. The administration had become less meddlesome and was preferable to that old ruling Darbars. But in fact no government was

really approved by the people. After independence there were revisions in administrative procedures and in taxation policies and other laws affecting these villages. The forests and other uncultivated land adjacent to the villages, which provided a substantial part of the means of livelihood in the hills vested in the State Government. The right of use of forest produce and the right to cultivate land were sharply curtailed. The prohibition policy and the excise laws curbed the free use of mahuva liquor which was the most popular and favourite drink among them. These were the most resented and least obeyed of the many unpopular post-independence reforms. Other innovations, such as village panchayat (statutory) rule, community development work and attempts to set up village cooperatives were largely looked upon with indifference.

Both emigration and immigration are rare in the Garasia villages after independence. Only two men of Matadham, in recent years, have immigrated. One had gone to Vatva, near Ahmedabad in search of a job, and the other has gone to a neighbouring village to live with his in-laws as he was required to look after their agricultural interests. Last year few Bhat families had come to live in the village to work as labourers in a dam construction in the village. They were considered to be temporary residents.

#### THE VILLAGE SITE

Matadham is physically similar to nearby all Garasia villages in this region, except the two mountainous cliffs which divide the village into two parts, one known as Matadham proper and the other as Matadham Dhar. The former is the northern part while the latter is the southern part of the village and is the elevated table-land of the village. The fauna and flora are similar to any of the other villages of this region. The village area is almost entirely used for cultivation and dwelling sites excepting the forest tract on the southern side of the village which is the property of the forest department. Houses are



scattered and each dwelling unit (1-3 houses) is found on the cultivated plots and fallow land of the owner. Garasia villages are all remarkable for monotony of layout and haphazard location of houses. Perhaps there never is anything like 'layout'. The newly constructed dam is the only alien element in a typical Garasia village, if we look at the village Matadham from a purely topographical point of view. Towards the southern end of the village, another mountain cliff rises and stretches southward, eastward and westward. Beyond this is the Panchha village. Between Matadham and Panchha, the mountainous cliff is full of dense forest. It is the main source of supply of fuel, wood, leaves, fruits, etc. for the Garasias of this village. This forest is devoid of any kind of wild games which could be hunted. The only animals usually seen now-a-days are monkeys and rabbits. Previously, due to dense jungle, a variety of games were available. This forest tract was a hunting sanctuary of the rulers and aristocrats of Danta State. In those times, the villagers were not permitted to kill any game in the forest. The rulers were apprehensive that if permission was granted to them (Garasias) they would clear out that forest region of all games and thus, the rulers would be left with nothing to hunt. After independence, there was nobody to prevent the villagers from killing games dwelling in this forest tract. And within a decade, they, along with villagers of other adjoining villages actually cleared out the jungles of all such games. Many villagers testified that for ten years after the merger of Danta State, they had regular and abundant supply of animal flesh for consumption. Now their bows and arrows have become completely useless and as such the inclusion of non-vegetarian dishes in their diet has become a delicacy which they cannot afford too frequently.

Matadham is a medium sized village with 51 households and 234 people. When we say medium size village, we have in our mind the average size of village in the Garasia country. Of all other Garasia villages visited by us, none was having more than 100 households. Large villages like Siawa, Dhadera and Jetwas are having about 100 households. Its total area is 1679 acres. Most of the land of the village is either dry arable land given over to extensive cultivation of cereals, mainly maize, or else uncultivated and rocky pastures. Certain part of village land is also forested particularly that lying in southward, south-westward and south-east ward. Only 18.8 percent of the land is under cultivation. From any hill-top in the village an undulating plateau can be seen stretching away to mountains. This undulating appearance is deceptive, for the plateau in this region is cut by sharp valley and escarpments. Most of the houses of the villages lie on the slope of these escarpments. As the Garasias erect their houses just near their farms, the result is what appears to be a random dispersal of houses, but in fact the network of paths always makes it easier to get from one house to another. The village, like all other Garasia villages do not have any street plan. All but one of the village lanes are narrow and wind in and out among the houses through the cultivable land, in a seemingly endless maze. As the lanes or better to say, narrow strips of paths, run through the agricultural land, during agricultural season it becomes impossible for a new comer in the Garasia villages to find a way for approaching any particular house. In every Garasia village there may be a broad street or a pucca road may be passing through the village. The broad lanes or the pucca road connects the village with a bigger village or nearby town. Such broad lanes or pucca roads have been constructed by Government under programme of restoration of communication. There will be only a few houses located on either side of the street, although not very close by. But majority of the houses will be far away from the street and not in sight from any point



on the street. In fact the houses located in the upland of the villages are completely obstructed by high cliffs, which stretch somewhere in the villages. The rise of rocky land here and there completely obstruct a total view of an entire Garasia village and it becomes impossible to comprehend the actual spread of any Garasia village and house from any point in the village except when one goes to the top of the highest rocky hill.

#### SACRED GEOGRAPHY OF THE VILLAGE

The sacred geography of the Garasia villages consists of at least six religious centres. The most important is the temple of Bhairav, usually situated on a small hill top. In the villages of Bhombhudi, Adepur and Jadi Simbal, there are no such temples although the villagers agree that they have faith in Bhairav. In village Matadham, it is situated on a small hill top on the western side of the village in the plain sector, i.e. in the region of original settlers. On this hill-top there is a small one-room house in which the images of Bhairav and other deities are kept on slightly elevated ground by the three sides of the wall. The temple has a door which opens on eastern side of the house. The other important sacred centre is Khetlo which in Matadham, is located across the small rivulet, at the foot of mountain cliff on westward side, just near the old stepwell. This Khetlo is the sacred platform where 'Ghordev' is stationed. The Khetlo, too, is not found in the Garasia villages of Vijaynagar taluka. The villagers offer here flags in the name of Khetlo. Near this Khetlo, there is a newly constructed shrine of Mahadeva on a raised cemented platform. This has been constructed by a contractor, who had undertaken the contract of constructing the dam in the village. On another raised stone there is an image of Shitla Mata, the goddess of small pox. There are two other Khetlos in the village, one situated in the Dhar sector of the village and the other on the narrow pass in the central mountainous cliff which connects the Dhar sector with Matadham proper on

the eastern side. Besides these sacred centres, there is another shrine on the mountain top on the southwest boundary of the village, which is considered to be the abode of 'Sur Mata' who looks after the well-being of the villagers. The sixth religious site is a small enclosure on the open ground, just outside the courtyard of Sanjo Rathod's house. This is a place where the memorial stones of the dead ancestors of the Rathod clan have been placed alongwith images of some other deities.

A few yards away from the stepwell, on the bank of the small rivulet is the burial and cremation ground of the village.

Just across the house of Sanjo Rathod, on the other side of the main street of the village, is the ground where the holy fire is burnt during Holi festival. Ceremonial dances during the Holi festival are also held here.

#### OUTSIDE LINKS

The administrative headquarters and the urban centre for Matadham is Palanpur, villagers are occasionally required to go there for their official business and judicial work. But generally they go to Danta, which is the taluka headquarter and where the Mamlatdar's office, office of the Tribal Development Block, and the Judicial Court are located. However, the centre of all activities for villagers in the neighbourhood of Matadham is Ambaji which besides being an important religious centre is also the place where the talati, the gramsevek, the forester and village school teacher stay. Here the villagers also find such facilities as a police station, a hospital and post office. The entire economic activity of the villagers is carried out in the market of Ambaji. On account of the close vicinity of Ambaji, there is no shop of any kind in the village proper. The villagers prefer to walk down to Ambaji, even for a small purchase of 'bidi'. Thus the ties of Matadham with Ambaji are of a multifarious nature. It also provides entertainment and recreation to the



villagers. Just to sit in the market place for a while, in the company of friends, and spend time in gossiping over a cup of tea, is the chief source of recreation for the Garasias of Matadham and neighbouring villages.

#### EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

The village has a primary school, situated in the 'Dhar' sector of the village. The school is housed in a rented house. The house is owned by the police patel of the village. This house is in a very dilapidated condition and the children normally sit in the open under the shadow of a tree. The nearest middle school and high school is at Ambaji, while the nearest college is located at Palanpur.

#### DRINKING WATER-FACILITIES AND IRRIGATION FACILITIES

The village has altogether 16 wells, both pucca and kuchcha. One of the well is community well constructed by the T.D.Block which is located in the sector of Matadham proper near the ground where the Holi festival is celebrated. The wells are mostly used for the purposes of drinking water. The villagers never feel scarcity of drinking water in any month of the year. These wells are also used for irrigation purposes but on a limited scale. There is the newly constructed dam which would provide major source of irrigation in the near future.

#### HEALTH FACILITIES

The village itself has no dispensary. The nearest hospital run by the Government is at Ambaji. At Ambaji, private medical practitioners are also available. But villagers mostly rely on their indigeneous way of treatment unless the ailment becomes severe and beyond control of the local medicine men.



### COMPOSITION OF POPULATION

Matadham is populated exclusively by the Garasias who identify themselves as such and more specifically as Rajput Garasias. In this study, however, the name Garasia has been used to denote them. This has been done simply because that is the name mostly used by the people themselves and by their Hindu neighbours and because on present evidences, it seems to be a more defensible term, culturally and linguistically, than Rajput Garasias.

According to the Census carried out by us the total population of the village Matadham is 234. As mentioned elsewhere the village has 51 households. The Garasias are divided into several exogamous clans. In this village, as far as eleven clans are represented in the total population of the village. Out of the total population of 234, 82 are from the Dabhi clan, while 59 are from the Rathod clan. Although the Rathods are the original settlers in the village, demographically the Dabhis, who are the second set of immigrants, exceed them in number. The distribution of the village population according to each clan is given in the Table II.

TABLE II

Distribution of population according to clan and sex.

Sr. No.	Clan group	Male	Female	Total No.	Percentage
1.	Rathod	31	28	59	25.30
2.	Dabhi	43	39	82	35.10
3.	Dungaiha	5	9	14	5.90
4.	Solanki	1	1	2	0.80
5.	Pargi	9	9	18	7.60
6.	Gamar	12	14	26	11.10
7.	Parmar	11	7	18	7.70
8.	Makwana	2	3	5	2.20
9.	Khokharia	1	3	4	1.70
10.	Bhumaria	1	2	3	1.30
11.	Angari	2	1	3	1.30
TOTAL.....		118	116	234	100.00
P.C.		50.4	49.6	49.6	100.00

Out of 234 persons 118 are males and 116 are females. Sex ratio comes to 1000 men for 983 women in the village Matadham.

### AGE AND SEX COMPOSITION

In a community, social distinctions are made between men and women. This is true for Garasias also. Sometimes these distinctions extend through the whole sphere of social life, sometimes they are confined to certain aspects. Similarly, gradation in terms of age and maturity is also recognised in the Garasias as in many other societies. Most of them have never thought the necessity of remembering their age as exact counting of age has very little place in their social and economic set up. In view of this, an investigator has to face a number of difficulties in collecting exact information about the age of the villagers. However, an attempt has been made to collect approximate data about their age.

TABLE III

Distribution of population according to their age and sex

Age (in year)	Sex		Total	Percentage
	Male	Female		
Below 6 years	15	14	29	12.40
6-15 years	26	25	51	21.80
16-30 years	31	35	66	28.20
31-50 years	33	31	64	27.40
Above 50 years	13	11	24	10.20
TOTAL.....	118	116	234	100.00

It is evident from the above figures that younger members in the society are found to be few in proportion. A little more than 34 per cent of the total population in Matadham is to be found in the age group of 0-15 years. This percentage is generally found to be more than 40 in a growing society. If the proportion is less than 40 it would mean that the society is either stagnant or declining.



The age group 16-50 which provides the bulk of the working force is 55.6 per cent of the total population.

#### MARITAL COMPOSITION

The following figures give us an idea about the marital status of the inhabitants of Matadham. Study of the following Table reveals that the proportion of married men and women is quite high. All the adults in the village are married, as nearly 35 percent of the population is composed of children, below the age of 15.

TABLE IV

Distribution of population according to their marital status

Marital status	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Married	67	56.90	69	59.50	136	58.10
Unmarried	45	38.10	35	30.20	80	34.20
Widow	3	2.50	10	8.60	13	5.60
Divorce or separated	3	2.50	2	0.70	5	2.10
TOTAL.....	118	100.00	116	100.00	234	100.00

The percentage of such young persons (i.e. below the age of 15) who have married is also very insignificant. The custom of child marriage is almost absent.

#### EDUCATIONAL COMPOSITION OF THE VILLAGE

One of the most revealing facts about the village is the very low rate of literacy despite its proximity to Ambaji. Although the school had been running since 1954, it never attracted the Garasias of this village to send their children for schooling. On a close examination of the enrolment register of different years it was found that in its existence of 23 years

it could enrol only 76 students. In 1959, 1960, 1962-64, 1966-67 it was not having even a single student on its roll. It was virtually a defunct school. It was taken over Taluka Panchayat in 1963 but even then things have not improved. Only 5 men have attended schools while among women only 1 girl has been fortunate enough to attend the same. Only 3 men claimed to have become literate without schooling. Education of both the boys and girls is still not popular. During our field work, we found only one boy attending the primary school in the village. The figures given in the following Table show that the extent of illiteracy is extremely high for both men and women. Except one woman, all are illiterate. When asked why they did not send their children to school, Garasias parents gave their economic condition to be the main reason. In fact it is the lack of interest on the part of the Garasias which is mainly responsible for such rampant illiteracy in the village. The Garasias, on the whole, have

TABLE V

Distribution of population according to their sex and education. (The children below 6 years age have been excluded)

Educational status	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Literate without schooling	3	2.90	-	-	3	1.50
Have been schooled in primary standard	5	4.80	1	0.90	6	2.90
Illiterate	95	92.30	101	99.10	196	95.60
TOTAL.....	103	100.00	102	100.00	205	100.00

avoided education. In the neighbouring village of Jetwas, an Ashram school was started, but even this institution, which has met with much success in other tribal areas, had to be closed down on account of non-cooperation of the villagers. Perhaps, on



account of the stratification in the Garasia society on the basis of the sense of purity and pollution, parents do not like their children to mingle with children of lower strata, which cannot be avoided in any school. When the Ashram school at Jetwas was started some Garasia parents sent their sons to that school. In the Ashram school however, there was provision for 120 boys and girls. So in order to increase the strength, the school authorities brought children from villages of Hadad Patta. Upon this, the Garasia parents of Jetwas and neighbouring villages withdrew their children from the Ashram school on the ground that they would be polluted if their children shared food with children of Bhil -Garasias of Hadad Patta. The school-authorities, refused to listen to the argument of the Garasia parents. But it became impossible to run the schools, as all seats could not be filled by children from Hadad Patta. Again, they thought that if the school was to be run only for the children of Hadad Patta, why should not the location be changed. Ultimately the school was shifted to Machkoda village in Hadad Patta. Parents also feel that after receiving education children will lose all sense of 'maintaining the purity of their families'.

Almost similar is the situation in other villages. In Siawa, out of a population of about 1000 tribals, only about 10 tribal children were attending primary schools. However, a better condition prevails in the Garasia villages of Vijaynagar taluka. In one school at Bhambhudi (57 households) at least 30 children were regularly attending the village school there.

#### INCREASE IN POPULATION

Let us now examine the figures of births and deaths in the village during the last decade. As shown in the Table No. VI 58 persons have been added to the village population during the last ten years. The total number of deaths that occurred during the same period come to 21. Thus, the net increase in population, comes to 37. This may be called internal growth.

TABLE VI

The number of births and deaths during the last ten years

Year	Number of births	Number of deaths
1958	7	2
1959	2	3
1960	3	3
1961	7	1
1962	3	3
1963	7	3
1964	8	3
1965	8	2
1966	7	2
1967	6	1
TOTAL.....	58	21

#### VILLAGE POLITY

The village Panch is the main structural unit of the Garasia political system in the village. A Panch is composed of the elder and wise persons of the village, who are known for their impartial judgement in the interest of the village. Some elders, now-a-days, who have wide contact with the Government officials, are also associated in the village Panch organisation. This is not a fixed organisation with fixed membership. But whenever there is any social problem in the village, the affected party informs the elders and persuade them to take up his problem. A meeting of the Panch is called in which all the wise elders including the police patel are asked to attend. Such a Panch organisation mainly deals with cases of infringement of sexual laws of the society and disputes between two families. This Panch organisation takes the responsibilities of maintaining law and order and ensuring justice to different families. However, in recent times, the voice of the elders has become less effective.



In the Garasia villages of the Vijaynagar taluka, the Panch has organised itself under a registered body and is trying to induce reforms in the Garasia society. Although the Panch headquarter has been located at Bhombhudi, it includes villages from Panowra, Palampur and Serohi areas. The main aim of this Garasia Panch is to carry out reforms in the Garasia society by prohibiting certain social practices which they now consider as evil ones. For instance, the Panch has fixed Rs.210.00 as bride price to check the practice of demanding high bride price which is sometimes as high on Rs.1000/-. It has also simplified the marriage rituals by restricting dancing and singing on a large scale during such occasion.

However, these reformation measures have become successful in the villages of Vijaynagar taluka only. Other villages still maintain their traditional norms and practices.

## CHAPTER IV

### MATERIAL CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

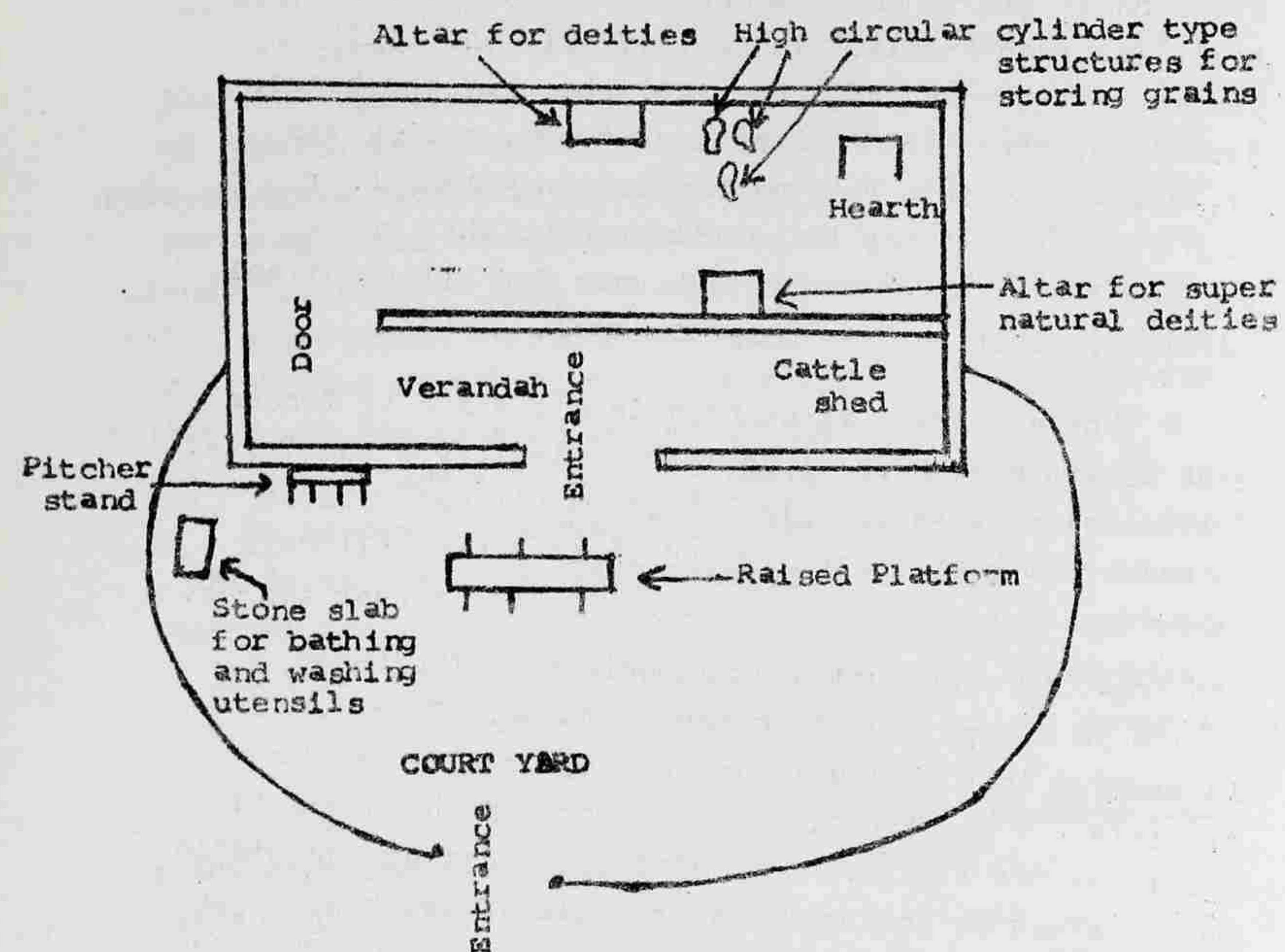
The Garasias had to put up a bold and strenuous struggle for existence in the hilly region of the Aravalli ranges. The Garasia villages have remained unaffected in so far as their material culture and technology are concerned. Although the Garasias have come into contact with people of higher material culture, their wants in fact have multiplied little and not much change is perceptible all round in their mode of living. The old traditional pattern is reflected, to a great extent, in structure of the houses, clothing, household articles, etc. Only in some places and certain sections like among the Garasias of Vijaynagar taluka and like Garasias of Vansia clan in Siawa village, the change is perceptible. The Garasias of Vijaynagar taluka are in direct contact with the people having higher material culture and the Garasias of Vansia clan have direct contact with the Garasias of the adjoining territories of Rajasthan. Perhaps on account of these two reasons these two sections of the Garasias have adopted many things which are not usually found among the Garasias of Danta taluka and that of Poshina Patta in Sabarkantha district.

#### The House and Courtyard

Ideally, a group of siblings, together with their wives and families, will occupy separate dwelling units surrounding a common courtyard. We designate this cluster of structures and accompanying courtyard by the term 'compound'. Each nuclear family typically maintains sleeping and cooking arrangements and eats apart from the others while it shares the courtyard and engages in



A ROUGH GROUND PLAN OF AN AVERAGE GARASIA HOUSE



a number of common activities within the compound. However, it is not necessary for the siblings to live together in a common compound. Each one may erect separate house with a provision of courtyard. Both these types of dwelling units are common among the Garasias. There are compounds which are occupied by only one family while there are compounds occupied by two or more siblings. The arrangement of the compound is almost uniform and always includes a house for each family. In case of only one family occupying the compound, there will be only one house. Sometimes, there is only one long house, having two or three rooms in a row, with a common verandah or even the verandah may be partitioned so that there becomes two or three separate houses for all practical purposes. There may be only one roof.

The courtyard is bounded in all sides by fences made of green bamboos along with their leaves and twigs. The Garasias of Vansia clan of Siawa village however do not erect such fences around their house, although other Garasias of the same village do erect such fences. The fence is constructed so closely that the house inside is almost invisible from outside. This fence is erected in a semi-circular shape, usually in the frontside of the house. The backyard of the house is sometimes not fenced. The fence has a gap on the middle or sometimes at one end near the wall of the house. In between the gap a movable bamboo door is fixed. This is particularly used when the entire family goes to the field or to the jungle or to the market, so that stray animals are prevented from entering the courtyard. In the centre of the courtyard, there usually is erected a



a 7 or 8 feet high wooden platform supported on four, six or nine wooden poles. It is known as 'Daglo' in the local language. It is used for various purposes, such as keeping hay for cattle, for drying grain in the Sun, etc. The platform is reached by a wooden ladder. The pillars which support 'Daglo' are known as 'Thamba'.

In the corner of the courtyard, attached to the front wall of the house, a wooden structure is provided usually three to four feet in height and two to three feet in length. It is known as 'Panchhi'. On this stand, earthen pitchers are kept for storing drinking water. Pitchers are always kept covered with lids. Washing of utensils is also done in close proximity of this stand, and hence drainage problem does not arise in a Garasia-house. As the houses are built on higher ground or slopes of small hills, water is automatically drained away on the slopes. The Garasias also take their bath near the stand. As the water is drained away in its natural course, the courtyard does not give an impression of filth. The floor of the house and courtyard are broomed twice or thrice in a day in order to give the house and courtyard a tidy look.

Walls of all the houses are built with mud and the roofs are covered with country tiles. The house is generally rectangular having one living room, with one door. Not a single window is provided for ventilation. Hence the interior of the room is quite dark <sup>even</sup> during day time. Walls are made of bamboo strips plastered with mud and cowdung, both the exterior and the interior. Construction of house is a simple affair. A frame of wooden pillars is fixed up first and then the bamboo planks are fitted in between the pillars to make the walls.

Over the walls a structure is built by wooden rafters and bamboos. Over this, the roof is covered with hand made flat tiles, 'adobe', which the villagers have been using since long. Not everybody is expert in making 'adobes'. If members of a household are not able to prepare them they get them prepared by somebody in the village who knows. The kinsmen particularly do help each other in making the adobes as this cannot be manufactured single handed. Clay collected from a pond, which is in drying state, is mixed with water and kneaded thoroughly into a smooth mud-paste. This mud paste is put into a rectangular frame for giving the flat shape to the tile. After taking out the paste from the frame, it is kept in the open for Sun-baking. As there is extreme heat in May, it is considered to be the proper month for manufacturing adobes. The Garasias of Vijaynagar taluka use country tiles which are made by the potter caste. They do not make such flat tiles by themselves. Some of the Garasias of Vansia clan of the Siawa village are also found to be using country tiles made by potters.

The houses have a gabled roof with heavy rafters that are hand cut. These beams form the frame for the tiles. Logs of wood are brought from the forest on the mountain sides and are later cut into beams by hand. The beams and rafters are generally of Khakhra tree. The main beam is called 'Pat' while the middle long beam in the room is known as 'Medor'.

But, the most important single material for the Garasias in the construction of houses is the bamboo. In the house the bamboo is used for every purpose say, for ceiling, walls and fencing the courtyard.



Horizontal beams (Athir) along the top of the room form a space used for storage. These horizontal beams are supported by four or six wooden poles which are known as 'Tir naya' and the bamboo frame which is put across the horizontal beam is known as 'Khatli'. There are no two-storied houses to be found in any Garasia village. The walls are generally plain without any paintings or carvings.

The general pattern of the houses indicates one room (Ghar) with a verandah (Paithar) on the front side. The living room is usually one step higher than the verandah. Sometimes the ground level of the outer fringe of the verandah is raised which may be used for sitting purposes. In some houses, having such raised ground level of verandah, screens made of long thin strips of bamboo are fixed on the raised ground. The screens touch the roof and thus the verandah is also converted into another room. If the verandah has such enclosures, a bamboo plank, serving the purpose of door is also fixed. This is mainly done to prevent animals entering inside the verandah either during night or when the family members are not within the house.

But houses are also found without verandahs. In fact in Matadhar out of 51 houses, 20 are only one room houses without having verandahs. In the following table, the details about the houses with verandahs and without verandahs and the number of rooms are given. One room houses are generally of poor villagers and who have recently settled in the village.

TABLE VII

Distribution of houses according to rooms and verandah			
Verandah	2 room	1 room	Total
With Verandah	8	23	31
Without Verandah	-	20	20
Total	8	43	51

As many as 84.3 per cent. of the houses have only one room. Only well-to-do households have two room houses. But every house which has two rooms are practically two houses with a common wall. This means that the Garasias do not construct such houses which may be inter-connected. Whenever an individual wants to add another room, he does so by extending the back and front walls of the already existing room and erecting a roof over the extended walls, after constructing the rear walls. Usually the second room is erected for allotting a separate unit to a married son or a married brother.

The floor space of the living room (including the verandah) is usually between 20' x 15' to 25' x 20', some may be smaller or bigger.



TABLE VIII

Distribution of households according to area.

Total area of the house.	Total area of the living space.						Total
	15'x14'	20'x15'	20'x20'	25'x20'	25'x25'	30'x22'	
20'x15'	11	x	x	x	x	x	11
25'x20'	5	5	x	x	x	x	10
25'x25'	x	1	2	x	x	x	3
30'x25'	1	3	x	3	x	1	8
30'x30'	x	1	1	4	3	1	10
35'x35' and more	x	x	2	3	x	4	9
Total:	17	10	5	10	3	6	51

One third of the total number of households are having an area of only 15'x14' as living space. On the other hand more than one-third of the total households have been occupying an area between 25'x20' and 30'x22' as living space.

The living room is used for all purposes. It is used for sleeping, storing grains and cooking. The cooking place is also inside the living room. No separate kitchen is found in a Garasia house. A semi-permanent mud oven is built in one corner of the room, generally towards the wall on the right side. In some houses ovens are not built but three big slabs of stones are placed at regular intervals in a semi-circular or triangular pattern. Firewood is put inside through the gaps between the stone-slabs. The cooking pot is adjusted on the three

stone slabs. Even if a house has got a semi-permanent mud oven, the households keep the above arrangement in the verandah for the benefit of guests.

The living room is also used for storing maize and other agricultural produce and other household articles. If the house has a verandah the household cattle are sheltered there in one corner. If there is no verandah, cattle share the living room with the family members, particularly during winter and monsoon nights. During summer, they are sheltered beneath the wooden platform raised in the courtyard. Both the living room and the verandah are used for sleeping purposes. Guests are usually received in the verandah.

The Garasia housewives keep the ground floor of the living room and verandah regularly polished with the mixture of cowdung and clay. As such, the floor is rarely found dirty and rough except in rainy seasons.

Inside the living room, towards the western and eastern walls, there are two raised mud alters which are dedicated to supernatural spirits. These are sacred centres inside the house.

Several wooden pegs are driven, at the height of 4 to 5 feet into the walls at different places. They are used for the purpose of keeping things hanging so that the articles remain out of approach from rats, dogs and small children.



## Household goods and furnitures.

### Furniture:

It is rather difficult to find an object worth the name of furniture in the houses of the Garasias, except one or two sleeping cots (Khatlas or Mocho) which every household possesses. The 'Khatlas' or 'Mocho' are made by the family members of each household for its own requirement. But usually not more than two mochos are kept in the house. As such the adults use the cots for sleeping while children sleep on the floor. A husband and wife usually share the same cot. Cots are generally smaller in length so that the legs of an adult person, if the body is fully stretched, hang outside the cot. The Garasias believe that only the dead lie on a full-length cot.

The cot has a frame with four legs. The open space is covered by the interweaving of thin strings made of Sabai grass. At one end it is left open where the people use strong and thicker ropes to tighten the woven strips. In former days, the open space between the frame was covered by inter-weaving of thin bamboo strips. A few households still possess such sleeping cots.

One or two mattresses, not very thick one, are also possessed by every household. These are spread over the cot while sleeping. Pillows are not used by them. Usually some piece of cloth is kept beneath the head which is used as pillow for resting the head.

## Household Utensils

All the families possess a number of household utensils. Among these the most important is Thali or the dinner plate of brass metal. There are two types of these plates. The bigger one with smaller elevated rim is used by adult males and females for eating purpose. The smaller one with higher elevated rim is used by children. They have also pots or cups - which they use for serving cooked pulse or vegetables curry. Brass lotas or spherical water jugs for holding water, are used for washing the mouth or the hand and feet. Only one or two sets of all these brass utensils are possessed by an average Garasia. As the Garasia's main staple diet is bread of maize, they manage to eat the bread by holding it on the palm of the hand. Surplus bread is stocked in a small bamboo basket. Only when pulses or vegetable curry or mutton curry is cooked, they use the brass thalis or pots.

For baking the bread they mostly use earthen disc (tawa). Some use iron tawa also. For kneading the dough they use a wooden plate which is known as 'Kathrot'. For cooking pulses, vegetables or meat, each household possesses one or two aluminium utensils. One or two brass glasses for drinking water are also possessed.

The earthen wares are made by the local potters. The common and useful wares are 'matla' (pitcher) and lota. Thus, who cannot afford to buy brass lota, use earthen lota for holding water. A household usually possesses three or four pitchers of various sizes for storing water in the house.



Women bring water from the well either in earthen pithers or in iron-buckets. Not all the households possess iron-buckets. Women place earthen pithers on a small straw pad or cloth-pad over the head which is known as 'Arhuni'. Nearly all the households possess the grinding stone (Ghanti). The grinding stone is kept raised over a big circular disc type structure, which is known as 'Thaliyo'. The flour, after being grounded, trickles down in this 'thaliyo' from where it is finally collected. A small broom known as 'Bali' is also used for collecting the flour.

#### Basketry

Basketry consists of bamboo baskets of various sizes and shapes. The most common is 'supda' or the winnowing fan to be found in every household. 'Topla' or large circular basket is used for carrying grains from the field to the house or for carrying other articles. It is also used for carrying manures to the field. Several small baskets are kept for storing baked breads, other edibles, fruits collected from forests, etc.

#### Other household possessions

For keeping the house lighted after evening the Garasias use kerosene oil tin lamps. Lantern has not yet come into vogue.

##### rain coats

Formerly ~~coats~~ made out of narrow strips of bamboo were used, but now-a-days mill-made umbrellas are used by almost all houses in the village.

Fancy goods such as a mirror, a comb, soap, perfumed oil can also be found in most of the households.

One or more knives (Chhari) of different sizes are possessed by every household. Rather, every male whether he is a boy or an adult always keeps a knife in his possession. For churning butter milk, some households possess a wooden churner which is known as 'khe'.

#### Agricultural Implements

Among all the agricultural implements the ploughshare (Har) and the sickle (Detru) are the most important for the Garasias. The iron ploughshare is fitted in the wooden plough. It is this part of the plough which tills the soil. This needs occasional sharpening. The blacksmith at Ambaji does it for them. The sickle is used for cutting paddy and grass. It is generally purchased either from the blacksmith or from the market at Ambaji.

The wooden shaft of the plough measures about 6' to 8' in length. At the other end is fixed a wooden piece. It is fixed by making a hole in the centre and the shafts are at right angles to each other. The wider end is slightly curved inwards. The iron blade is fixed to this part of the plough. At the upper end is an oval shaped wooden piece which serves as handle. The men behind the plough hold this handle and exert pressure as required at the time of ploughing.

Other agricultural implements are (i) Karab, (2) Samar, (iii) Iron-axe.

Besides these, who irrigate their fields, possess kosh (water moat). There are a few other smaller implements such as 'rap', 'mohre', etc.



For driving out the birds from their maize and bajri fields the Garasia use 'Gofan'. This is a circular leather belt with a wide leather strip in the centre for holding a stone piece.

#### Hunting Weapons and Fishing Implements

The principal weapons used for hunting are the bow and the arrow, the scythe, the sword and sticks of different sizes. The bow consists of a thin bamboo, string and the arrow consists of reed-shaft generally with a pointed iron-arrow. Now-a-days these bows and arrows have very little use for them.

The axe consists of bamboo or wooden pole about a yard and half long, and a sharpened iron blade which is fixed into the wooden pole by means of a hole at the other end of the blade. Every Garasia household possesses a sword. It is customary for an adult Garasia to carry the sword in a sheath, hanging on the side around the waist. The sword is carried as an item of personal decoration, although they point out that they carry the sword to protect themselves from wild animals or an enemy. But besides the sword, every adult Garasia carries a Rampuri knife with himself. This Rampuri knife is always found on the body of a Garasia, tucked inside the Dhoti on the waist. The knife is also kept in a sheath.

Besides these two weapons many Garasia households also possess a Rifle.

Fishing implement consists of bamboo traps of different kinds and sizes.

#### Musical Instruments

The Garasias have a great fancy for music and dance. The following couplet suggests Garasia's love for dance and music.

"Hene Hene Hamye Nasen Maru Morilu  
Un Nasun Tūn Nas, Nāse Māru Morila".

(On the tune of 'Morli' let us dance together).

On several occasions of religious performances, and marriage performance; dancing and singing sessions is a must among the Garasias. Songs sung in the praise of deities are sometimes accompanied by dancing. Seldom a song is sung without accompaniment of musical instruments. The most important musical instrument for them is Dhol (drum) which is elliptical in shape. The two narrow ends are covered with hide. Fingers and palms are used for beating purpose at the one end while at the other end, a wooden stick is used. It is hung on the neck at the time of beating.

Another popular and common musical instrument is the bamboo flute. Most of the young men possess flutes. There are two types of flutes. One is small in size and is played by blowing the hole at one end of the body of the instrument. This is known as 'vahal'. The other is bigger in size and girth of its body is also larger. This is played by blowing a hole made at the middle of the body of the instrument. This is known as 'Morli'. The Thali (metal plate) is also used as musical instrument at the time of dancing. The other important instrument is 'Nagara' which is a small drum, more or less circular shaped. The upper end is covered with strong tanned hide. It is hung on the neck and two



small sticks are used for beating. Another small musical instrument is 'Kudi'.

Besides these, there is 'Tali' (cymbals) which is used particularly at the Bhajan sessions. Another musical instrument, <sup>conch</sup> (Shankli) is particularly used when devotional songs are sung in the praise of Ramdeo Pir. Conch is a large circular shaped instrument. Only one side of a circular wooden frame is covered with hide. It is played by using the fingers and palms only.

At the Bhajan sessions held in honour of Dhula-na-pat (Bhagwan), the devotional songs are sung on the accompaniment of 'Temro' (Tambura). Temro is a 'Sitar' type musical instrument.

#### Dress

Young men and women in the Garasia community are exceedingly fond of finery. Even old men and women are fond of finery. Very young children upto 4 or 5 years are to be found, in many families, roaming about without anything on their person. This is more for economic reasons than anything else. Girls of 5 to 6 years wear frocks and drawers while boys of this age and upto 12 or 13 years wear half pants and shirts. Girls start wearing the dress of adult women after they become nearly 10 years old. Similarly boys discard half pants after they reach 12 or 13 years of age.

Men usually wear Dhoti for covering the lower portion of their body. Dhoti is a garment which consists of a length, (about 4 to 5 Yd.) of cotton

cloth wound about the waist, pulled between the legs and tucked in. Dhoti used by the Garasias is hardly 3-4 Yd. long. It just reaches a little beyond the knee. The upper garment is cotton shirt with collar or without collar. The shirt used by the Garasia is usually half-sleeve. Now-a-days, bush-shirts are also being used by some. Older men, however, still use the traditional dress for the upper garment. It is a kind of cotton jacket without cotton and button holes. At home, the Garasias usually put banayan type of loose dress as upper garment and underwear for the lower portion of the body. When they go to market or on social visits, they put on Dhoti or Dhotiu, as they call it, and cotton shirt. They may also wear 'Pugree' (turban). When working in the fields, the men often drape their heads with heavy cotton cloth. This is the cloth used to tie up the bundle of fodder they carry back to their courtyard. The cloth may be either white or even printed one. Usually elder men prefer white cloth. But now-a-days, the 'Pugree' has gone out of fashion and youngmen prefer going without any head dress. Well to do men use in their shirt a silver chain having buttones of the same material.

Garasia women clothe themselves more elaborately. Garasia men like a woman who dresses herself elaborately. The following couplet from a song clearly indicate this.

"Shobhat Shobhat Kapra Pere Sanwla Vileh wali Gujoran

"Dahre Pramane Sarlu Odho " " " "

"Kansuo Ghhatisi Parmane Pere " " " "

("The beautiful girl dresses herself with clothes which are pleasing to the eyes. According to the size of the



body, she uses 'Sarlu' and according to the size of her breast she wears bodice). The usual traditional dress, ghaghra, is worn by the women to cover the lower portion of their body. It is long full skirt type garment. With a cord, this is fixed around the waist while the lower portion dangles freely beneath the knee but above the ankle. This 'ghagra' is made out of 7 to 12 yards long cloth and hence, when worn, it takes numerous pleats. Such a ghaghra costs nearly Rs.30-00 to Rs.40-00. Usually the black or red colour is preferred for the surface of the cloth which may contain some prints or designs. Now-a-days the ghaghra is getting smaller in radius on account of its high price. But every woman possesses at least one piece of such ghaghra, having large radius, for wearing at the time of visiting relatives or melas. The ghaghra generally used as daily wear is made out of inferior quality of cloth and with only 5 to 7 yards of length of the cloth. These ghaghras are sold ready made in the market at Ambaji or by the shopkeepers in the mela.

For covering the upper portion of their body, women use blouse type garment, known locally as Jhulki. It differs from the common blouse in the sense that it is a bit longer in length and even the sleeves reach well beyond the elbow. It is more or less fashioned like men's shirts and worn with the shirt tail out. It does not contain button-hole or hook type arrangement for fixing it on the body. Just like the traditional 'bundi' of men, it contains knots at regular intervals on both sides of the front, to which hang a narrow strip of cloth. These are fastened with each other in order to fix the garment on the body. Jhulki is also

sold ready-made. Young women also use bodice beneath the Jhulki which is known as 'Kanchi'.

Women also wear a head cloth, for adult married women must keep their heads covered, as part of the custom. This head wear consists of a long piece of cloth, known as Sarlo or lugra, and which is usually 3 yards in length and 1 to 1½ yards in breadth. One end of sarlo is fixed at the waist, by tucking it inside the fastening of the ghaghra cord while the other end is thrown across the right shoulder after covering the breast-portion fully. The other end is finally draped over the head. The women observe purdah before elder men. There is no restriction in their movement but the veil must be pulled down before elders. Sarlo is also made out of good quality cloth. Usually black colour having prints or designs is preferred. Now-a-days young women use finer cloth material to use as 'sarlo'.

During winter, men and women use wrappers. Mostly they use coarse and thick 'Chaddars' (bed sheet).

### Ornaments

The Carasias love ornaments. In the following song sung by young women, their love for ornaments is aptly illustrated.

"Mawdi Sadi Re Sandeni Rat, Mawdi Ramwa Java De.  
Mawdi Tildi Ale To Pori Jaun, Mawdi Ramwa Java De.  
Mawdi Badore Onsli Maro Ja, Mawdi Ramwa Java De.  
Mawvi Nathadi Ale To Peri Jaun, Mawdi Ramwa Java De.  
Mawdi Sadi Re Sandeni Rat, Mawdi Ramwa Java De.  
Mawdi Dorido Ale Te Peri Jaun, Mawdi Ramwa Java De.  
Mawdi Kanduro Ale Te Peri Jaun, Mawdi Ramwa Java De."



(There is moonlight night, let me go outside to enjoy. If you give me Tildi, I shall wear that. Similarly, you give me necklace, nosering, a chain and an ornament worn around the waist).

Both men and women are fond of ornaments, but, of course, against women's fondness, men's fondness is nothing. Among the common ornaments used by men are (1) silver rings or copper rings for ear lobes which is known as 'marki' and (2) silver bracelets which are worn on the wrists of both hands. But use of ornaments by men is now becoming out of fashion. In Matadham, hardly 4 to 5 men were found wearing ornaments.

Among the ornaments used by women the following are common (1) silver bangles, (2) silver bracelet known as 'Caduni', (two types), (3) silver anklets (two or three types), (4) silver chain like ear ring, known as 'Jumra' (5) an elaborate silver ornament which, when worn fulfills the purpose of ear ring for both the ears and one end also hangs on the forehead between the parting of the hairs and is called 'Damni', (6) silver ornaments worn in neck, and known as 'Hansdi', (7) silver chain worn in neck and known as 'Har', (8) silver ring worn in fingers, known as 'Vinti' or 'Shathpan', (9) nose-pins worn in one nostril and known as 'Kanta', (10) ring like silver ornament worn in earlobes and known as 'Vella' and 'Dodna', (11) silver ring worn on the second toe of each foot, known as 'Anguthia' and (12) hollow silver bracelets, known as 'gajra'.

All these jewellerys are not possessed by everybody. Again, married women have many of these, but married girls do not possess such jewellery.

The woman's ornaments, if provided by her parents or purchased from her own earnings are her own personal property while those provided by her husband are the family's property. She cannot dispose such ornaments of latter category according to her sweet will. If she sells out those ornaments given by her husband or husband's family members, it is no less than a crime of theft and for this she may be even divorced. When a Garasia woman pays a visit to her relatives or goes to mela, she puts on all the ornaments she has with herself. Besides, silver ornaments, women also wear large number of lac bangles on wrists of both the hands. White bangles of lac on the wrists of a woman indicates that she is a married one while coloured one (red or black) indicates to the contrary. Small girls below the age of 13 years are found to be wearing white lac bangles, but as soon as they attain puberty, they are given coloured lac bangles.

Women wear their hair in one braid down the back. The braid is usually lengthened with a string braid. Black eye shadow is the only common make up which the women regularly wear. Some of the younger women use cheap lipstick, powder and nailpolish. Women regularly comb their hair and their whole person gives an appearance of tidiness. Men, too, usually keep themselves clean. The Garasias do not bathe regularly. Twice or thrice in a week is the normal routine for taking bath. Soap is used for cleaning the body dirt and hair. Men usually get **their** beard shaved regularly twice a week. They walk down to Ambaji and get their beard shaved at the saloon there. They get their hair cut also at appropriate time. Men do not like to grow their hair long.



### Tattooing.

Both Garasia men and women are fond of tattooing. However, the Garasias are not clear about the purpose of tattooing. They just do it for decoration. Men usually get the tattooing done on the fore arm, wrist and on the back side of hand. Women get tattooed on foot, arms, wrists, both sides of the cheeks, forehead, chest (just above the hollow of the two breasts). The design usually preferred is just dot marks arranged symmetrically. Men sometimes prefer the design of a flower or a figure of scorpion. Garasias of this village get their bodies tattooed at Ambaji. The charge depends on the extensiveness of tattooing to be done. It ranges however, between 25 paise and Rs-1-50. The Garasias do not do tattooing by themselves.

By their dress and ornaments, one can safely conclude that the Garasias have not lost their distinctiveness. Even the Garasias of Vijaynagar taluka, who happens to be more acculturated have not much changed in the way their women dress themselves. Of course among their men, changes are very much visible, such as, many of them dress themselves in the fashion of their Hindu neighbours.

### CHAPTER VII

#### GARASIA ECONOMY

The main occupation in all Garasia villages is agriculture. Although the Garasias are primarily agriculturists, they also depend on forests for their living. Writing about their way of life, Lieut. Col. Erskine has said, "...they were the rude pioneers of civilization, clearing the wild and more unhealthy regions of wood and forest, bringing the land into use and preparing it for the occupation at a later date..." It is true that the pioneers of Garasia villages have cleared with great difficulty thick forests for cultivation. But most of the agricultural land is rocky. Consequently the produce is not sufficient to see them through the year and they have to supplement their food from other sources. People actually live on their produce for three to four months. For the remaining part of the year they have to find out other means of livelihood such as selling minor forest produce and bamboo or offering labour for road works, or such other works. Factors which account for poor crop return are poor soil, vagaries of weather, use of primitive implements, lack of use of manures and lack of irrigational facilities.

An ecological approach is essential for understanding the geographical structure of the Garasia villages, as ecology plays an important role in determining the economic structure of the community.



### Soil

Soils and their nature are of paramount importance in agricultural economy. The soil of the Garasia country is generally poor. Matadham village also has not been endowed with good agricultural soil. The soil in general is sandy and void of moisture. But on the northern and eastern sector, the percentage of sand in soil is rather low. The southern sector, particularly the Dhar sector, presents a very hard soil, rather difficult for ploughing and cultivation. It is rocky in most part except in some places. In the western and south west sector the land is more fertile, on account of being less sandy and a bit loamy. Similarly, the valley on the northern side, just below the central mountain cliff, possess better soil and hence more productive in comparison with other soils in the village. On the whole because of its good soil drainage, the capacity of soil to retain moisture is very poor. Thus, in general the village consists of sandy loam soil having scattered blackish patches in the valley region.

### Climate and Temperature

The climate of the village is generally warm but nevertheless healthy. In summer season it gets extremely hot. The maximum temperature in summer goes up to nearly 110°F. in May, the minimum comes down to nearly 54°F. in January. There are three distinct and well marked seasons: summer, monsoon and winter. From December to January winds blowing from the north-east to south-east carry cold and damp air. March and April offer a pleasant, temperate climate. Midsummer is often intensely hot.

The rainy season begins in the second week of June and the rainfall is heaviest in July and August. September also passes away with few showers. Just before the withdrawal of monsoon, there is a short spell of intense heat. The figures for the annual rainfall, recorded at Danta, the taluka headquarter is given for last ten years. Thus, the average annual rainfall is 784 mm.

TABLE IX

Annual Rainfall in Danta during 1958-1968.

Sr.No.	Year	Annual Rainfall (in mm.)
1	1958	1,035
2	1959	1,620
3	1960	641
4	1961	1,238
5	1962	521
6	1963	672
7	1964	831
8	1965	624
9	1966	447
10	1967	1,258
11	1968	733

### Drainage

In general, the whole of Garasia country is undulating. Even the plains, which are nothing but table lands are slopy in one direction or other. Thus, inspite of sufficient rainfall, during monsoon, water drains out from most part of the cultivable land, except the deeper low lands. As the soil is sandy, moisture cannot be retained for a long time.



### Landscape

The village bears the chief characteristics of the Arasoor region. It has already been mentioned that the region is hilly and have several rocky exposures. The rocky portion of the village does not remain unused. People make use of such parts for other purposes like shrines of Bhairav temple, Khetlo, dwelling, etc., etc.

The village slopes from south to north. The southern sector is upland which generally slopes northwards. Beyond the central mountainous cliff there is sudden depression and we find some plots of low land there. On the north the land rises again to constitute the boundary line with the neighbouring village.

### Natural Vegetation

Along with the increase in population there was increasing pressure on land. The decreasing fertility of the cultivable land was also being felt every day. So there was a desire for more land. As a result of which trees and bushes were cut and land was prepared for cultivation. This resulted in the destruction of the natural vegetation of the village. Only on the uplands are to be found some trees, like mango, neem, tamarind and so on. At some places in the sector of original settlers, some trees of date palms are still found right in the agricultural field. Most of these trees, as reported by the villagers, were planted by them. There is natural pasture for cattle, in south-ward mountains where the forest is comparatively much thicker. However, during summer, cattle have to be stall fed. During the rains, shrubs and grass grow in abundance on the uplands and in the forest.

### Land Use

In the village economy land is important, being the principal source of livelihood and in the village society the size of land holding determines, to a certain extent, the social status of a person. The figures given in the following table amply demonstrate the position of agriculture in the economy of the village. The figure shows that the land under cultivation accounts for only 18.8 percent of the total land in the village, while the rest 81.2 is under forest. Large part of the land under forest department represents rocky exposures and stony waste and cannot be reclaimed for cultivation.

TABLE X

Classification of land in the village.

	Area in acres	Percentage
Land under cultivation	316.33	18.8
Non-agricultural Land including land under forest	1,362.7	81.2
Total	1,679.00	100.0 %

However, there are certain plots under forest department which could be brought under cultivation if reclaimed. Of the total land under cultivation, nearly 78 per cent are under direct ownership of the villagers, while nearly 22 per cent are not under direct ownership of the cultivators. This means that the 22 per cent of land has been brought recently under cultivation for which permanent settlement has not yet been done. Such land which are released by the forest department in the



economic interest of the villager is known as "Ek Sali", as the right for cultivation is granted on yearly basis.

TABLE XI

Distribution of cultivable land according to authorised and unauthorised occupation.

	Area in acres	Percentage of the total cultivable land.
Land under direct ownership	246.39	78 %
Land not under direct ownership	69.34	22 %
Total:	316.33	100 %

The fact that such a large percentage of cultivable land is being cultivated on "Ek Sali" basis, points out the growing need of villagers for more cultivable land. The important role of forest in the village economy is reflected by the very large percentage of land under forestation. Particularly towards the Dhar Sector and in the south-west region, the forest is dense.

The entire cultivated land of the families in the village lies within the village boundary. That means no individual of the village owns land in any other village. The agricultural land is divided into several plots, varying in size from less than quarter of an acre to 3 acres.

On account of hilly area, the fragmentation of holding is not to the same extent as it is found in the plain areas. This may also be due to the tradition of

this society of not distributing land amongst brothers in legalized manner but continuing to cultivate it jointly even though brothers may live separately.

Cultivated land is categorised by villagers in several ways in relation with its productivity. Probably the most important distinction is made between land which is irrigated and that which is not. The former being called 'piyat' while the latter 'bin-piyat'. Most cultivable land in Matadham is unirrigated. The figures given in the next table show that only 9.5 percent of the total cultivable land is under irrigation.

TABLE XII

Distribution of irrigated and unirrigated cultivable land

	Area in acres	Percentage out of total cultivable land
Cultivable land under irrigation.	30.35	9.5
Cultivable land unirrigated	285.38	91.5
Total	316.33	100.0 %

The other type of distinction is between rocky land and plain land. The former is called 'Pathrah' while the latter is 'Garha land'. The acreage under plain land is too small, probably less than 30 acres.

There is not much difference in wealth and land ownership by households. There are no big land holders, in the sense of 'landlords' of the plains, and there are no tenant farmers. The biggest land holding recorded in Matadham is 20.15 acres. In fact there are <sup>only three</sup> households having more than 15 acres of land. The smallest holding



owned by one household is 1.3 acres. There are 10 households who own less than 2.5 acres of cultivable land. As will be seen from the figures given in the table a large majority of the households,

TABLE XIII

Distribution of cultivable land according to Acreage and Households.

(Total household considered is 50 out of 51 as 1 household has no land).

Size of the holdings (in acres)	Number of households		Total Agri-cultural land		Average size of land in each category
	No.	Percent.	No.	Percent	
0. - 2.5	10	20	18.31	6.3	1.35
2.5 - 5 Acres	19	38	73.03	24.3	3.34
5 - 7.5 Acres	8	16	50.24	16.9	6.13
7.5 - 10 Acres	6	12	52.09	17.3	8.28
10-15 Acres	4	8	48.35	16.0	12.09
More than 15 Acres	3	6	56.36	18.9	18.39
Total	50	100	300.18*	100	6.03

i.e. 86 per cent. of the total households have less than 10 acres of land. If we make further breaking of the figures, 58 per cent of total households have less than 5 acres of land. On further analysis of the above table it is found that the average size of holding per household is only 6.03 acres. If we include the one household which does not possess any land in the village, the average comes to 5.36 acres only. 86 per cent. of the households

\* Earlier it has been recorded that the total cultivable land in Matadham is 316.33 acres. The rest 16.15 acres is owned by Garasias of Kumbharia village.

owing less than 10 acres, own among themselves 194.27 acres of the total land, and their average comes to only 4.52 acres. As the cultivable land in this region is of extremely poor quality, even if a household possesses 20 acres of land, it will be insufficient for its livelihood.

Those households who own more than 10 acres of land (there are 7 such households, forming 14 percent of the total households) are not in a better position, as nearly all of them are settled in the 'Dhar' sector of the village where the land is much less productive on account of being very sandy and rocky in nature.

Before independence, it was possible for any agriculturist to extend his holding by adding more plots of land by clearing the forest land and thus cultivating previously uncultivated land. What was needed was only human labour. But as complete land survey has now been done it has become impossible for anyone to add new land by clearing any strip of forest land. Now the forest department can release land for cultivation, if it feels necessary in the economic interest of the villagers. But the ownership of such land remains with the forest department. It has been pointed out earlier that as far as 69.34 acres out of 316.33 acres have been released by the forest department on 'Eksali' basis.

The Garasias cannot expand their holdings now even by making purchases of new agricultural land as transactions have been almost completely restricted by

Government legislation. Without taking the prior permission of District Collector, nobody can purchase the land of a tribal person.



There is very little of land cultivated on tenancy basis in Matadham village. Occasionally some elderly or dependent persons who cannot till all their land will rent out some portion of the land to others on crop share basis. But on all such occasions the land is rented out to a member of his or her own lineage.

#### Occupational Structure and other Economic Activities

Agriculture is the mainstay of the village. It is also the predominant occupation in the village. People are genuinely peasantry and are earth bound in the strict sense of the term. The influence of the agriculture is reflected in every aspect of their culture and for a comprehensive understanding of their culture, we have to examine it in context with its agriculture. Of their total annual income the villagers derive as far as 60 percent from agriculture.

According to 1961 census, as much as 57.4 percent of the total population in the village constituted the working force which meant that they were engaged in one or other kind of occupation. Only 42.6 percent were in the category of non-workers. If we compare these figures with the figures of the taluka, district and State we find that the percentage of workers in the total population is highest in Matadham village. This is quite natural of a tribal village where both men and women and even adolescent children form the working force. Of the total workers in the village Matadham 62 percent were males while 38 percent were women. This shows that the Garasia women contribute to a good extent in earning the livelihood.

TABLE XIV

Distribution of population of Matadham village, Danta Taluka, Banaskantha District and Gujarat State according to workers and non-workers (source 1961 Census).

	Total workers (figures in percentage)	Total Non- workers (figures in percentage)	Total
Matadham	57.4	42.6	100%
Taluka	45.4	54.6	100%
District	45.3	54.7	100%
State	41.1	58.9	100%

for the household. In fact, earning livelihood is such a hard and industrious job in this region that unless all available hands in the household are not put into operation, it is difficult to meet both ends. Even though the percentage of workers is higher in Matadham in comparison to the taluka, the district and the State, the per capita income of the village is lowest. Again, on State level, many workers earn their livelihood through pursuing other occupations while in Matadham large majority of the workers mainly pursue the occupation of agriculture. On account of the extremely low productivity of land, income from agriculture remains low, though higher number of workers are engaged in it. The role of women as workers is, economically, of marginal utility. If some other avenues, such as household industries or small scale industries are made available to them, perhaps their income can be increased.

The figures given in the <sup>next</sup> table show that as far as 84.6 percent of the workers were engaged in agriculture where as at the district level and the State level only 71.51 and 53.32 percent were engaged in agriculture.



TABLE XV

Distribution of workers of Matadham, Banaskantha district and Gujarat State, According to their Occupation

Sr. No.	Occupation	Matadham	District	State.
1.	Agriculture	84.6	71.51	53.32
2.	Agriculture labour	0.7	6.23	14.77
3.	Mining, quarry, livestock, hunting, fishing, forestry	14.0	2.14	1.24
4.	Household Industries	-	7.44	6.56
5.	Manufacturing other than household industry.	-	0.77	6.33
6.	Construction	0.7	1.26	1.06
7.	Trade & Commerce	-	3.53	4.85
8.	Transport	-	0.79	1.88
9.	Service	-	6.33	9.99
-----				
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

The next important occupation in the village Matadham is connected with hunting, forestry, livestock and allied activities. In this category 14.0 percent of the total workers are engaged whereas at the district level and State level only 2.14 percent and 1.24 percent respectively are occupied in these activities. This shows the important role of the forest in the life of the Garasias of this village as well as of other villages since the whole Garasia Country is more or less in the forest region of Aravalli ranges. Other categories of occupations remain almost unrepresented in Matadham. The percentage of persons engaged as agricultural labourer is only 0.7 of

the total workers in Matadham village while at the district and State level, the figure is 6.23 and 14.77 respectively. Although agriculture is the mainstay in the village there is hardly any scope for persons being engaged as agricultural labourer. The reason for this is not far to seek. As the amount of cultivable land is very small in the village, the villagers still pursue agricultural operations on more or less traditional style and mainly produce Kharif crops, it is enough for the household members to remain employed in the agricultural activities. Where is the scope for outsiders to be employed as labourers? Besides in the traditional Garasia life, cooperation plays a prominent role in their economy. Assistance is always given for major tasks such as preparing land for the crops or house building or work which must be done quickly. No one, unless he has urgent reasons, would refuse to comply with a call for assistance. It is a small task, a few close relatives are asked. In bigger tasks, the neighbourhood group also lends hand. These mutual assistance groups are formed within the village and within each of the geographical sector, although close relatives from other villages, may also be called. Due to this important tradition of cooperation, a Garasia household does not need to employ labour for agricultural operations.

Role of Forest - Thus, Matadham depends on its field and forest for a living. The main source of immediate cash is firewood and minor forest produce, collected from the neighbouring forest. The villagers collect gum, honey and Khakhra leaves from which they prepare leaf-cups and leaf plates. Such leaf cups and plates are always in good demand at Ambaji on account of continuous flow of pilgrims. The villagers have also good market at Ambaji



for fire wood. Besides these, the bamboo which is extremely used in the house construction in this region, is also a saleable commodity at Ambaji. The villagers during the summer season bring full load of bamboo, and prepare bamboo planks for use in ceiling or as screens. These are sold away for Rs.4 or 5 each. Selling of these bamboo-planks has to be done secretly as it is illegal to bring bamboo other than for one's own household use.

A head-load of fire-wood is sold between 50 paise to 75 paise. In case of leaf-cups and leaf-plates, they get 10 paise each for 20 leaf-cups and 5 leaf plates.

Besides these, the villagers also collect fruits from the forest which they consume as well as sell. Fruits such as Bor (plum), Kathi and tamarind, 'bilu', 'tibim' (t:baran) are collected from the forest and are consumed by the villagers themselves. Mahua fruit is sold at Ambaji. Similarly plums (ber) and other fruits collected from the forest are sold at Ambaji.

The villager also work as forest labourers. Although many individuals can find work as wage-labourers, the Garasias of this village show aversion towards such labour work or rather towards all types of labour work. Particularly adult men refrain from getting engaged as labourers. The household may send a female member or an adolescent boy for such work if the household is in dire need of cash for buying food. On account of such an attitude the contractor, who was constructing a bund in the village, had to import 'Bhat' labour from Abu Road. This explains why only 0.7 percent of the total workers were engaged at construction.

Men and women and children over 12 years of age go to the forest. To reach a place high up in the hills they may have to hike almost a mile from the centre of the village. The steep, narrow paths made by these wood and bamboo cutters traverse the mountain. All adult persons carry a short hand saw and a heavy bush knife or sickle. Women sometimes carry a large basket if they are going to collect fruits. Mahua fruits are collected during mid-night hours or during dawn of the day in the hot season. A flock of a species of bird visit the jungle during night and eat away fleshy part of the Mahua fruit and drop the remaining seed portion on the ground below. This is collected by the villagers to extract oil from that. As the birds come only during mid-night hours, the villagers have no choice other than to go to the forest during those hours otherwise it will be too late.

#### Illicit Economic Activities

Mahua liquor is distilled by some dozen households in the village which they sell within the village or at Ambaji. A bottle of pure mahua liquor fetches Rs.3.00, while one, adulterated with water, fetches Rs-2.00 only. Nearly same is the price for the country wine prepared out of mollasses. It should not be understood that it is a flourishing industry in the village. In fact, these households occasionally distil illicit liquor, say at a regular interval of a fortnight or two. One or two bottles they keep for the household consumption. Hence it is difficult to say that preparing and selling illicit liquor brings regular and steady income to these households. Whenever there is immediate need of cash and there is no other way to get it, such households take-up preparing



of illicit liquor. It was observed in a household that the husband and the wife wanted to raise some cash (nearly Rs.10.00) in order to make a bus journey to a destination beyond Abu Road. They brought mollasses and other ingredients to be used, costing Rs.3.50 on credit from a shopkeeper at Ambaji, and put the things in a pitcher for fermentation. After three or four days, they distilled about 6 bottles of liquor. They sold 5 bottles for Rs.15.00 after keeping one bottle for their own consumption. After paying back the shopkeeper, they made a net profit of Rs.11.50, the amount they needed for making the journey. In this way, certain households earn some income from this source, but at any rate, it is not a steady income as the villagers have to do that illegally on account of the prohibition law.

Another publicized illegal activity of a few households is the pursuit of prostitution. Although it is difficult to authenticate this activity, there are number of men in the village who confirm that both unmarried and married women of a number of households earn money by prostitution at Ambaji where such women get ready customers. Such cases have been reported from other villages also. Some Garasia women of Siawa village (near Abu Road) also indulge in this profession. It has been brought to notice that customers often come from Abu Road for these women. As the Garasia women enjoy much freedom and have little or no sexual inhibitions, perhaps they might be offering their bodies to infamous use for economic reasons. The tribals of Hadad Patta, although admit that the Garasias of Matadham are superior in status, actually look down upon them on account of the economic dependency of the menfolk on the earnings of their womenfolk. They

(the tribals of Hadad Patta) allege that the most degrading aspect of this state of affairs is that the Garasias of villages around Ambaji do not seem to mind the least. It is very difficult to know about their earnings from prostitution, as nobody would accept that openly.

#### Agricultural Operations

Agriculture is a family enterprise - those who share the hearth share in the agricultural operations. There are two annual crops and harvests which govern the work of villagers and influence the yearly cycle of all activities in Matadham. There are 'maize harvests' in first or second week of October, just after the rainy season and 'wheat harvest' in early summer (March-April) before the hot, dry period. These correspond to the kharif and rabi harvests of the plains.

#### Rainy Season Crops

Soon after first or second shower, the agricultural field is ploughed thoroughly and is left for a week or two. Sometimes a week or two before the first ploughing, land is manured with cowdung and other farm compost. Shortly after the long spell of rain begins, the field is ploughed once again before planting maize and bajri seeds. Maize being the staple food, it is grown in a large area. Land is ploughed by means of wooden ploughs drawn by a pair of oxen. As the villagers generally have inferior quality of plough and weak oxen, ploughing is not done very intensively. However, the sowing of maize can be performed with little preparation of the soil. Seeds are sown by broadcasting or by planting them into the furrows as land is being ploughed. Towards the end of the long spell of



rain, grass shoots up and then the crops must be weeded. Weeding is done in a maize field with the help of a sickle. By August when all the weeding is finished, there is little to do but wait for the crops to ripen. In October, the harvest begins.

Along with the maize, lesser millets like bunti and kodra are also sown. Pulses like 'urad' and 'tur' are also sown along with the maize. Other crops of this season include chilli, hemp and cucumber. Bajri is being cultivated since last eight or nine years. In Siawa village, the cultivation of bajri and jowar has been started only last year.

#### Winter Crops

While the maize harvest is in progress, ploughing the harvested fields preparatory to planting the principal wheat crop begins. Stalks of the previous crops are cleared. Many a time, the plot in which winter crop is to be raised, is left fallow during the rainy season and hence in that case, it is not necessary to clear the dry maize stalks and plough the maize harvested field. A week or two after ploughing, wheat seeds are sown. Immediately after, the field is again ploughed. The fields are ploughed and seeded between mid-October and mid-November. During December and January, fields are irrigated once or twice. October and November are two of the busiest months for those households who undertake cultivation of winter crops. December, January and February are comparatively easy months. By mid-March preparations are made for the fast approaching "wheat harvest". Harvesting is a period of intense activity. Rain and hail may fall anytime, so it is important that the ripe crops be gathered promptly.

Load after load of grain is hauled to the threshing floor, where it is stacked in high rectangular piles. For threshing, stalks are spread on the ground and bullocks are driven round and round in a circle over it, their plodding feet separating the grain from the stalks. Grain is then winnowed from the chaff. The period following the rabi harvest marks another respite from field work and heralds the beginning of a season for festivities and marriage.

Besides wheat, 'jav' (barley) and 'chino' are also sown in dry lands by some households. Some households who have better irrigation facilities sow gram in this season. Even wheat is also mainly produced by only those who can muster facilities for irrigation. Oilseeds are also grown in this season by some households.

Practically no cash crop is grown in the village but several households produce some seasonal vegetables such as pumpkin, ladyfingers, beans, etc. In the Garasia villages of Sabarkantha district, cotton and groundnut are cultivated although not on a large scale. In Siawa village too, cotton and ground nut are cultivated on a small scale.

#### Cropping Pattern

It is abundantly clear by now that maize is sown in large area as it is the primary crop for the Garasias. Next in importance are bajri, wheat and pulses. An examination of the table will reveal that as far as 221-14 acres out of the total land, during the period of 1966-67, was under maize cultivation. While under wheat and oilseeds cultivation, there were 27.15 and 30.38 acres respectively.



TABLE XVI

cropping pattern in the village (figures for 1966-67).

Sr. No.	Crops	Area (in acres)	Percentage out of total land.
1	Maize and Bajri	221.14	70.00
2	Wheat	27.15	8.6
3	Pulses	30.38	9.6
4	Oil seeds	15.15	4.7
5	Inferior grains	12.27	3.8
6	Gram	8.33	2.6
7	Jowar	0.10	-
8	Under fallow	2.21	0.7
Total:		316.33	100.0 %

Other crops such as gram, inferior grains and oilseeds account for 9.21 acres. Pulses have been sown in 9.6 acres of land. Only one household has started cultivation of jowar on 0-10 acre piece of land. Jowar is not a traditional crop for the Garasias.

Thus, the very cropping pattern in the village shows that maize which has remained a traditional crop since time immemorial still occupies the foremost place in the agricultural economy of the Garasias. No cash crops such as cotton, groundnut, etc. have been introduced in the village, although only 10 miles away in the village of Toraniya and Hadad it was observed by us that the so called 'Bhil Garasias' of those villages did extensive cultivation of these crops. Thus, it can be said that the Garasias of this village are still toeing the traditional line in their agriculture.

### Manure

As has been mentioned earlier, only cowdung is used for manuring the fields. Chemical fertilizers have not been used by the villagers although they are very well aware about the efficacy of that. But they are very much sceptical about the use of chemical fertilizers, as they feel that by its use, the productivity of the land will further diminish. They also feel that manuring is not necessary for maize crop. Again, many villagers complained that it was beyond their means to buy chemical fertilizers. Manuring is done in the field manually by the household members.

### Irrigation

It has been recorded earlier that only a small portion of the cultivable land i.e. 30.15 acres out of 316.33 acres, had been brought under irrigation. Irrigation is mainly done by wells. The number of wells in the village is only 16. Water is taken out of the wells with the help of either persian wheels or moat. Besides, irrigation by well, an artificial tank has been constructed by erecting a bundh. The construction was still in progress at the time of our investigation in the village. When the canals get ready, perhaps more acreage in Matadham would come under irrigation. At the present only wells are being used for irrigation. As has been pointed out, only 16 wells are there in the village. One of the wells has been constructed by T.D. Block as community well for the purpose of drinking water. The water of this well is not used for irrigation. Thus, only 15 households own well for the purpose of irrigation. Thus, by and large, they depend upon monsoon for their agricultural economy. However, the Garasia of Vijaynagar taluka have constructed a good number of wells and about a dozen households have



installed oil engines in their well. Due to this, they are able to raise winter crops every year.

#### Seeds

The Garasias of Matadham still use what is called "Deshi" i.e. indigenous seeds. The use of improved variety of seeds, such as hybrid maize, has not been adopted by them. In other neighbouring villages in Hadad region or in village lying on Danta-Ambaji road, cultivation of hybrid maize was observed. One of the reasons why they do not use improved seeds is that they have to buy it by paying cash amount from the government. They do not have cash with them at the time of sowing. So they buy on credit their seeds from merchants who keep only indigenous seeds. Another reason is that the government machinery has not made sufficient propaganda for it in this village, rather in the villages of this region. The third reason is that still the villagers much depend upon forests for their living, although not to that extent, as they used to do previously. On account of this, development of agriculture does not seem to be in the offing.

#### Agricultural Implements

Same is the story regarding agricultural implements. The agricultural technology in this village as in other Garasia villages of this region, is the basic wood, bamboo and iron complex inherited from the neolithic days and supplemented by animal and human power. A detailed list of agricultural implements has been provided in earlier chapter on Material Culture and Technology.

#### Animal Husbandry

Although cattle are owned by most of the households in the village, the same do not occupy important place in their **subsistence economy of the** Garasias. The primary value of cattle is not economic but social. No man is counted truly wealthy who does not possess a sizeable herd. Cattle are still regarded as the soundest form of investment. They multiply themselves and can readily be turned into cash in an emergency. Whenever they fall in dire need of money, they dispose of one or two cattle to meet the emergency.

A census of cattle and poultry in the village was taken by us and it was found that altogether there were 474 heads. The figures given in table below shows that on an average each household has 9 domestic animals including chickens.

TABLE XVLL

Number of village cattle and chicken

Sr. No.	Type of domestic animal and bird.	Total number	Average per household.
1.	Oxen	97	1.9
2.	Cows and Buffaloes	92	1.8
3.	Heifers and calves	56	1.1
4.	Sheep and goats	179	3.5
5.	Chickens	43	0.8
6.	Others	7	0.17



For the Garasias, the most important of his cattle are bullocks. The usual way to designate how much land a man owns is by how many oxen he uses to till it. In Mathadham according to the figures given below, there are 24 'two bullock' households, 11 'four bullock' households and 5 'one bullock households', while 11 households have no bullocks. If a household fails to buy a bullock before the agricultural season starts, it can borrow the same from any household of his own lineage.

TABLE XVIII

Distribution of Households according to Bullocks and Cows and Buffaloes :

Number of Bullocks	Number of Households	Number of Cows and Buffaloes	Number of Household
4	11	1	12
2	24	2	9
1	5	3	5
Nil	11	4	1
		5	2
		6	1
		7	1
		13	2
		Nil	20
97	51	92	51

Besides bullocks Garasias tend cows and buffaloes. At least 31 households have one or more cows and buffaloes while 20 households do not own any.

tended mainly

The Cows are tended mainly for the purpose of getting oxen.

There are 29 households tending sheep and goats, mainly goats. The largest number of goats in one family was 30, while the lowest, of course was 1. But they have a prominent place in religious sacrifices and the entertainment of guests. Diviners usually specify the use of a goat of a particular sex and colour for scarifices aimed at curing **diseases or propitiation** of gods and godlings, and such orders are always obeyed. A man of above average means shows respect to his visiting - in-laws or matrilineal kins by cooking goat meat for them. At the end of the harvest, households usually celebrate by slaughtering a goat to eat.

Chicken are not raised by many households in Mathadham. Only 15 households have raised chickens. Even in these households, the number of chickens was very small. The Garasias, in general, do not appear to be much interested in poultry. Their chief complaint is that government officials, whenever they visit the village, demand **poultry** birds for their meals. Again, no account of nearness to jungle, wild animals in former days used to devour the birds. This also discouraged them in raising poultry.

Cattle and goats are also important for the purpose of getting manure. Goats' excreta is considered more valuable manure than others. The Garasias are not fond of milk and milk does not form an important item in their daily diet. But households do prepare



ghee from the milk for selling out in market. In this way, some households do earn income from dairying.

#### Division of Labour By Sex and Age

Men and Women are equal partners in daily economic activities, both agricultural and forest work. Only a few occupations are clearly differentiated by sex. Ploughing and levelling of fields and erection of house roofs are done exclusively by males; housework such as fetching water from wells, plastering the floor with mud and cowdung are some of the works exclusively allotted to females. Some agricultural work is considered too heavy for women, for example preparing the fields and ploughing; nevertheless, women and younger girls often do this work along with men and boys if time runs short. These are some women who prepare their farm land without the help of their husbands.

In forest, women produce as much as men except that they do not handle the large logs of wood needed in construction of houses. Even pregnant women make trips to mountains for collecting minor forest produce.

In the agricultural operations, both men and women sow seeds. In special activities, such as house building, a more distinct division of labour can be observed. In any building activity, men do structural work and women carry materials. Same division of labour is found on road building, community projects (sponsored by Panchayat), fencing the courtyard or preparing country flat tiles for roofing. In general, however, no special comment is made if either a man or women performs work usually done by the opposite sex.

Men and women work in the fields and forests from ages 15 to 60. When they approach 60, men like to retire. If possible they hand over their responsibilities as family heads to their eldest sons. From then on, they prefer to stay home more and more. They can still help with less demanding work or doing odd jobs around the house. Approaching old age, most men become economically useless and in other ways contribute little to the society. For old women, quite the contrary is true. Even grandmothers, who are well over 60, seem strong and active. Most of them go to the fields to harvest and to weed maize crops. They also look after youngest children, thus freeing their mothers to work.

Thus, women, too, are given equal opportunities to work with men.

#### Daily Routine

Life in Matadham as in any Garasia village, is moving with the slow and ever recurring round of the seasons. By day life tends to move according to the sun and at night to the constellation. A man will raise his arm toward the sky and say he will meet you when the sun has risen that far. Village day begins before dawn when cocks start raising their shrieking cries. This signal calls sleeping villagers from their cots to start the day's work. Women first get up, put on their blouse (for they sleep in the semi-naked state) and come into the courtyard. Nearly at the same time, men also leave their cots and their first task is to feed their cattle. Women start their day with grinding maize in the grinding stone. After finishing grinding, they go to complete their toilet. They go into the field or nearby forest. By this time men do milking, if there are milch cattle in the household. Cattle are brought into the court-



-yard. Women come back and start churning curds. In the meantime, men go for toilet. By this time children also leave their cot and after finishing their toilet come back to the house. Women do not stop at this hour to wash their faces or arrange their hair, for they must start the fire for preparing breakfast which mainly constitute of a porridge made from corn flour or unleavened breads of corn flour. In fact children get up and eat when they want. A boy or boys responsible for cattle herding must let the cows out of the courtyard and take them to pastures before 8.30 a.m. In case there is no son in the family, a daughter is sent for grazing cattle. Sometimes, older men are also given the charge of grazing cattle. Men, children and women splash cold water in their faces in the morning, but washing is not considered a necessary part of the routine, except by adolescent girls. After breakfast or even before taking breakfast, men and women go to the fields during agricultural season. In the dull seasons, they will go to the forest for collecting bamboos or wood or leaves. Between 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. women come back and their first task is to fetch water from the wells and store it in all the earthen pitchers. After this they get down for cooking the midday meal, which consists of bread of maize flour and chutney's of chillies and salt. After finishing the cooking they store all these in a basket and leave the basket near the hearth. In case there is a grown up girl in the family, she will do the cooking between 10 a.m. In that case it 11 a.m. is not necessary for elderly women to come back to cook the meal. They will come back leisurely for taking their lunch. As there is no fixed time for midday meals, family members come back one by one

and help themselves in taking out breads and other side dishes. After meals men will go for an afternoon siesta or if some visitors come they will chit-chat with them. Meanwhile, women will be doing some other household chores. After the siesta, men and women may go to the field again and if it is not an agricultural season, they may go for a visit to Ambaji. If there is no work then they may also go to Ambaji in the morning and come back at meal hours. Adolescent boys and girls make a daily trip to Ambaji after noon hours. Some older men of the village also make a daily trip to Ambaji, sometimes even twice. By evening hours, men and women come back from Ambaji. Cattle-grazers come back by 4 p.m. They also come for lunch during midday leaving cattle in the forest. After taking lunch they go back to attend to the grazing cattle. If the adult persons have not to go to Ambaji and there is no agricultural work they will prepare bamboo planks or leaf-cups or leafplates. For selling these they will go to Ambaji, probably after midday meal.

As night falls, men feed and water cattle and women start preparing dinner. Some vegetable curry or pulse or occasionally mutton curry is included in dinner. The main diet remains the unleavened bread of maize flour. Dinner is taken together by all members. If any visitor is present at the time of dinner, he is also served. After finishing dinner, they sit together for gossiping or if mahua liquor is to be distilled, men and women both retire to some secluded place. During first week of June, when mahua fruits are to be collected, couples retire to bed early so



that they can go to the forests during midnight hours. From there, they come back when the sun has risen in the morning. Soon after coming back they first finish their usual daily routine and only then go for a sleep to compensate the night's loss of sleep. They continually go from five to eight days for collecting mahua fruits.

Children go to bed early. After children, couples retire. All upper clothes are taken off for sleeping. Husband and wife always share the same cot while children may sleep in a separate cot or are huddled together on the floor at some distance from their parents. In case there are two married couples one may sleep inside the room and the other on the verandah. In summer season, both may <sup>sleep</sup> outside in courtyard, but at a little distance from each other.

#### Production and Income

Having discussed the economic pursuits of the Garasia of Matadham village, let us now turn our attention to the amount of produce which they derive from agriculture and their annual income from agriculture and other activities. The figures of the yields of various crops per acre are given in the next table.

TABLE XIX

Size-wise yield per acre of different crops.  
(in kilogram)

Size of holding (acres)	Maize	Oilseeds	Wheat	Gram	Pulses	Inferior grains.
0.2.5/	114.8	88.0	90.0	-	97.1	-
2.5-5	103.7	140.0	140.9	120.0	206.1	106.6
5-7.5	104.1	274.2	130.0	69.3	80.0	138.1
7.5-10	73.2	53.3	114.3	-	100.9	139.4
10-15	74.2	46.7	103.4	53.3	112.0	-
Above 15	65.0	80.0	50.00	-	71.1	120.0
Total	92.5	116.7	75.3	86.8	112.5	133.3

On an examination of the Table, it appears that, larger the holdings smaller is the produce of maize per acre. In fact the per acre yield of almost all the crops is much lower in the households having more than 15 acres of land. It is to be remembered that the households having larger holdings are located in 'Dhar' sector where land is extremely poor whereas households having smaller holding are concentrated in Matadham proper sector where land is more fertile. Hence in the smaller sized holdings per acre production of maize and other crops is higher.

On comparing these figures with the figures of production of these crops per acre at the district and state level, it becomes clear that yields in the village are extremely low.



On examination of the figures given in the Table XX it is found that the per acre yield of maize which is the staple diet of the villagers and to which 70 pc. of the total land in the village is devoted is much lower than the district and state yields.

TABLE XX

Crop-wise yield per Acre at the level of Matadham  
Baraskantha district and Gujarat State (1966-67)  
(in kilogram)

	Maize	Oilseeds	Wheat	Gram	Pulses	Inferior grains.
Matadham	92.05	116.7	75.3	86.9	112.5	133.3
Baraskantha dist.	362.0	166.0	627.0	218.0	91.0	140.0
Gujarat state	472.0	278.0	512.0	218.0	122.0	306.0

Similarly per acre yield of wheat is also lower than that at district and state level. The gap in the yields of other crops is not so wide. One can very well realise from the above that agriculture in Matadham is in a very backward condition. It does not require high sense intelligence to realize that no agricultural development has been effected in this village. It is well known that maize is produced mainly, in hilly area where the cultivable land is of poor quality. But the district and state yields per acre are very high while at the village Matadham they are very low. This indicates that if inputs, such as use of chemical fertilizers, use of hybrid seeds, good irrigational facilities etc. are put into use, the yield in

Matadham is also bound to be better than what is at present.

But, we have already seen that none of these inputs are used in the village. How can the yields be higher?

### Annual Income

As has been pointed elsewhere in this report, the major source of income is agriculture. The figures given in the Table XXI show that the annual income per household comes to Rs. 710.7, of which Rs. 422.4 (59.1 percent) are from agriculture. Next important sources

TABLE XXI

Annual income per family from various sources.

Sr. No.	Sources	Annual Income per family (in rupees)	Percentage out of total income.
1.	Agriculture	422.4	59.4
2.	Animal Husbandary	50.5	7.1
3.	Wages for working as labourer	107.1	15.1
4.	Sale of minor forest produce	97.4	13.7
5.	Others	33.3	4.7
Total		710.7	100.0 pc.

are construction work and forest labour where the villagers work as labourers to earn wages. Income from the sale of forest produce is also quite sizeable which shows the important role of forest in their economy.



Let us now examine the figures of annual income according to the size of holdings of different households.

The figures given in the Table XXII shows that lower the size of holdings, lower is the annual income of the households. One thing is apparent that irrespective of the size of holdings households in each group have

TABLE XXII

Distribution of Annual Income According to sources and different size of holdings (in rupees)

Sr. No.	Size of holding (in acres.)	No. of families.	Sources					Total income per family
			Agri.	Animal husbandry	Labour Income	Income from minor forest produce.	Others	
1	0 - 2.5	10	205.2	30.7	146.2	91.0	64.0	537.1
2	2.5 - 5	14	363.0	43.2	85.1	98.7	30.5	620.5
3	3 - 7.5	8	531.9	70.6	123.7	116.3	60.0	702.5
4	7.5 - 10	6	484.2	64.1	137.5	87.5	-	773.3
5	10 - 15	4	699.0	36.8	11.2	92.5	-	839.5
6	More than 15	3	879.0	116.7	80.0	96.6	-	1172.3
7	Landless	1	-	-	285.0	65.0	-	350.0
Total:		51	422.4	50.5	107.1	97.4	-	710.7

derived more or less same income from the sale of minor forest produce. Further, it can be seen on a close examination that income received from the labour work is higher among households having no land or very small holdings. Further, income from animal husbandry also contributes substantially to households of all the groups.

### Per-capita Income

Figures regarding per-capita annual income in the village Matadham, is given in the next table. It is seen that higher the size of holdings, higher is the per-capita income.

TABLE XXIII

Distribution of Households, according to size of holding, size of family and per capita income.

Sr. No.	Size of holdings (in acres)	Average size of household	Annual total income per household (in Rs.)	Per capita annual income (in Rs.)
1	0 - 2.5	4.4	537.1	122.1
2	2.5 - 5	3.8	620.5	163.8
3	5.0 - 7.5	4.9	702.5	185.1
4	7.5 - 10.0	6.7	773.3	116.0
5	10 - 15	4.7	839.5	176.6
6	More than 15 acres	6.0	1,172.3	195.4
7	Landless	2.0	350.0	175.0
Total		4.6	710.7	154.9

But size of the family also affects the per capita income of the groups. This is seen in the fourth group where although the size of the holding is between 7.5 to 10.0 acres, the per-capita annual income is Rs.116.0 only, lowest amongst all the groups. It is because the average size of the family happens to be the highest in this group. Per capita income of the landless family is seen to be higher than some other groups only because of its family is very small.



Let us now finally examine the level of annual income of all the households. Figures in the Table XXIV show that highest number of households in Matadham fall in the annual income group of Rs.501-750.

As many as 25.5% of the families have an annual income less than Rs.500/- while only 17.6% of the families have an annual income higher than Rs.1000/-.

#### Household Expenditure

Foremost item of expenditure in the economic life of the Garasia is food. Of the total household expenditure, 76.5 percent is for food, out of which 57.7 percent is on cereals alone. From the figures given in the Table XXV it is clearly indicated that the Garasias of this village take very simple food. Even many of the items, such as use of sugar, tea, etc. must have come recently and that too, the villagers have imbibed the habit on account of regular daily visit to Ambaji where in groups they ordinarily sip tea at wayside tea-shops. The expenditure on meat is extremely low, as compared to the past, when the villagers were great hunters and meat dishes were regular item in the diet. But since meat is costly, and games have become rare in forest, the consumption of meat is much less.

After food, the next important item is clothes on which a sizeable expenditure is incurred by an average Garasia household. The reason is not far to seek. The Garasias, particularly women, are much fond of finery as it has been pointed out elsewhere in this report. Women's ghaghra costs nearly Rs.40 to Rs.60.00 depending on its length and quality of cloth. Every Garasia women must

TABLE XXIV  
Distribution of Households according to Size of Holdings and Annual Income.

Sr. No.	Size of holdings (in acres)	Rs.0 to Rs.250.	Rs.251 to Rs.500.	Rs.501 to Rs.750	Rs.751 to Rs.1000	Above Rs.1000	Total
1	0 - 2.5	-	5 (50%)	4 (40%)	-	1 (10%)	10 (100%)
2	2.5 - 5	1 (5.3)	4 (21.0)	12 (63.1)	1 (5.3)	1 (5.3)	19 (100%)
3	5 - 7.5	-	1 (12.5)	1 (12.5)	3 (37.5)	3 (37.5)	8 (100%)
4	7.5 - 10	-	-	2 (33.3)	4 (66.7)	-	6 (100%)
5	10 - 15	-	1 (25%)	1 (25%)	-	2 (50%)	4 (100%)
6	More than 15 acres.	-	-	1 (33.3)	-	2 (66.7)	3 (100%)
7	Landless	-	1 (100%)	-	-	-	1 (100%)
Total No.		1	12	21	8	9	51
		2.0	23.5	41.7	15.7	17.6	100



TABLE XXV

Percentage of Household Expenditure on Different Items and Per-Household Annual Expenditure.

Sr. No.	Item	Percentage of Household Expenditure	Annual Household Expenditure per Household (in Rs.)
<b>I. Food.</b>			
1.	General	57.7	339.9
2	Vegetables	1.8	12.6
3	Meat and Fish	1.9	12.9
4	Milk and Milk Products	4.7	32.7
5	Sugar	0.8	5.4
6	Molasses	2.6	17.6
7	Oil	2.7	17.9
8	Tea	0.9	6.1
9	Condiments	3.4	23.1
	Total:	76.5	527.9
II	Smoke and tobacco	3.3	22.6
III	Fuel	0.9	6.4
IV	Clothes	14.4	100.4
V	Social ceremonies	1.7	11.4
VI	Education	0.1	1.1
VII	Others	3.1	21.7
	Grand Total:	100.0	691.5

must atleast have one such ghaghra. Men also possess adequate clothing and if a Garasia is seen away from his house, he will be seen in his best clothes. And it is really sometimes difficult to guess from his attire that he is a poor man.

## Indebtedness

The total amount of debt in this village comes to Rs.8772/-. Out of this total debt, only Rs.80/- has been taken for productive purposes, otherwise all the debt has been incurred for household expenditure, social ceremonies etc. This is reflected from an examination of the Table XXVI. It shows that nearly two-thirds of the debt money has not been borrowed in cash but in kind. Again out of the total debt of Rs.8772, only Rs.80 has been borrowed from money lenders. The major borrowing is in kind and for household expenditure and social ceremonies for which no official agency offers credit.

TABLE XXVI

Distribution of the total amount of debt according to cash and kind.

Type	Amount of Debt
1. Cash (in Rs.)	Rs. 2827
2. Kind (value in Rs.)	Rs. 5945
3. Total	Rs. 8772

The figures given in the Table below speak clearly that meeting the household expenditure has been the main purpose for incurring debt.

TABLE XXVII

Distribution of amount of debt according to sources of incurring debt and purpose for the same.

Sr. No.	Source	Purpose					Total
		Household exp.	Social ceremonies	Agri. exp.	Purchase of imple-ments.	Other	
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1.	Money lender	7297	845	-	-	550	8692
2.	Govt. agency	-	-	-	-	-	-
3.	Coop. society	-	-	80	-	-	80
4.	Friends and relatives	-	-	-	-	-	-
5.	Others	-	-	-	-	-	-
	TOTAL	7297	845	80	-	550	8772



TABLE XXVI

Distribution of amount of debt according to sources of incurring debt and purpose for the same.

Sr. No.	Source	Purpose					Total
		House- hold exp.	Social cere- monies	Agricul- tural expenses.	Purchase of Imple- ments.	Others	
1	Money lender	7,297	845	-	-	550	8,692
2	Govt. Agency	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	Co-op. Society	-	-	80	-	-	80
4	Friends and relatives	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	Others	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total:		7,297	845	80	-	550	8,772

Of the total 51 households, 47 are in debt. As such the amount of debt per indebted household comes to Rs.186.6, out of which Rs.60 is cash debt while Rs.121.5 has been taken in kind. As large majority of the households are in debt, which has been taken to meet the household expenditure it can be safely concluded that for the Garasias it is difficult to meet both ends on account of the poor resources of income. However, no Garasia agriculturist has to sell off any piece of his land on account of indebtedness. But some of them had to mortgage the produce of the land to the moneylenders. This cripples their economy for a longtime. Mortgage of the produce of land is arranged privately and for that no written document is prepared. The money lenders are fully aware of the honesty of the Garasias in this matter and they exploit it to the fullest extent. But it is difficult to know how much profit the money lenders accrue by such dubious method.



### Conclusion

The subsistence of each household is based, essentially on one crop. Cooperative arrangement and participation of the whole household easily handle labour problem. However, land availability limits the production of maize to such an extent that it is often difficult to feed the family, much less to buy other food items which supplement maize in the diet and even more numerous items of clothing and household equipment. Very few of the necessities of life are made at home or obtained free. Opportunities within the community to supplement family income are limited. Industry is non-existent and animal husbandry is of little importance. It is difficult to make both ends meet in Matadham village.

One can either remain poor, or leave the place in search of earning more money elsewhere. Many Garasias of the village have chosen the former alternative. Hence to bring development for them, it is essential to develop the region and to offer them opportunities right at their door.

### CHAPTER VI

#### SOCIAL ORGANISATION:

From the point of view of social life, the whole of Garesia country behaves as a cultural area, as there is homogeneous social code to which all clan groups subscribe. As such Matadham village shares the social structure of the Garasai society. Family, clan kin<sup>g</sup>roups and community are the most significant social units. When a Garasia speaks of 'we' he generally means all the people of his community. Every Garasia belongs to a patri-lineal clan which is believed to have originated from a legendary ancestor. Now-a-days the chief function of marriage and prevention of incest, is the It is, to all intents and purposes an exogamous unit. It seems possible that in former times, the clan represented a geographical unit as is evidenced from the fact that majority of the families in the villages once, belonged to only one clan. In the neighbouring village of Jetwas, till recently, nearly all the families were belonging to only one clan. But now a days this situation is no more true. And it is note-worthy at this point to mention that adult Garasias are much more conscious of being members of homesteads, lineages and clans than they are of their community membership. The patrilineal descent of the Garasia homestead is the nucleus of an extensive system of patrilineages which play an important part in the organization of Garasia social life. As with the descent group of the homestead, only men are full members of this system, and descent is traced through the male line to a common ancestor. Several related homesteads whose male members are descendants of one grand father recognize themselves as a single group on particular occasions. The clan is a large patrilineage which was



ten an independent political military unit in the distant past and it is also the largest exogamous unit, requiring its members to marry outside the group and the maximal group within which kinship terms are used. Thus the proximate Garasia lineage system is made of kin groups increasing in exclusiveness and generational depth from homestead group to clan, all based on the principle of tracing descent through the male line to a common ancestor.

The lineage groups in Matadham village are not intact lineages for the most part but fragments of kin groups whose other members either remained in older settlement or moved to different areas during migration to new areas that began in the medieval period. But not much solidarity is maintained with members of the lineage who have remained in the original village or living in distant villages. In fact group solidarity is noticeable only among the members of a particular lineage who are residing in the village itself. In this respect, the group people may be considered as minimal lineage.

The social organisation of the Garasias is based on bilateral kinship relationships. Lineage considerations are of secondary importance. It is with the range of this patrilineal and matrilineal kinship that reciprocal duties, rights, obligations and privileges are observed. Nevertheless, the key social unit is the nuclear family. The social organisation of the Garasias is marked by monogamy although keeping two or three wives is not unknown among them. The Garasias are endogamous and are divided into several exogamous clans. Matadham village members of 11 clans are found to be living in the village. The names have already been

mentioned earlier. In the village Siawa the following clans have been found: (i) Vansia (the original sellers), (ii) Duraricha; (iii) Mali; (iv) Gorina; (v) Pargi; (vi) Kokharia; (vii) Parmar; (viii) Chauhan; (ix) Kharadi; and (x) Raidara. While in the villages of Satrang, Bara, Bedi and Mama-Na-Piplav, Parmar, Kharadi, Angari clans have been living. In the village of Dhareda, Dungaicha, Parmar, Nana Dungaicha, Solanki; Nana Parmar, Angari, Paliya and Gamar, have been found. In the Garasia villages of Vijaynagar taluka, the clans found are: (i) Chauhan; (ii) Damor; (iii) Dhranji, (iv) Gamar; (v) Khokharia; (vi) Bhagora; (vii) Bhumbhari; (viii) Pichhra, (ix) Dungri and (x) Kharadi. Thus, altogether we came across 24 clans among the Garasias. However, Dave<sup>1</sup> in his book on Garasia has mentioned 28 clans divisions among the Garasias. In our treatment in the following lines, we would consider only those clans which are found in the villages covered by us.

No information could be obtained about the association of the clans with any totem. What is the significance of the name of the clan? The villagers are not clear about this. They point out that they are actually descendents of Rajputs and once were Rajputs but on account of living closely with Garasias (not with Bhil) they have come to be treated as tribals. They thus mean to argue that even their clan names have some link with the name of gotras among Rajput community.

The clan among these Garasias is a patrilineal kin group and as pointed out earlier is an exogamous unit. Any case of intra-clan marriage has not been & recorded by us. Even the villagers too have pointed out that never such a thing has happened in their village. The Garasias seem to be very particular about this



social norm. The girls and boys of a clan are considered to be brothers and sisters because all members of a particular clan are descended from a common ancestor, real or imaginary.

Not all the clans enjoy equal status. It is surprising that sense of pollution, which is the backbone of caste stratification among the Hindu, is manifest in Garasia Society too. On account of this, the Garasia tribe can be divided in three moieties, higher, middle and lower. The higher moiety comprised of Parmar, Dungaicha, Solanki, Angari and Kharadi. In the middle moiety are Vansia, Raidra, Damor, Chauhan, Rathod, Dhabhi, Gamar, Pargi, Khokharria, Bhumbharria, etc. while in the lower moiety are Mali, Gorina, Makwana, etc. In Matadham village there was not a single clan falling in the lower moiety except Makwana. Majority of the clans found in Hadad Patta such as Bumbadia, Begadia, Damor, Taral, etc. are treated in still lower level. Further, if a number of either middle level clan or upper level clan marries a girl of lower level clan, he is treated as lost to his original clan. He is denoted as an inferior man of his original clan. As such he is called for example, Nana-Parmar or Nana Rathod. He falls down to the lowest level.

These distinctions in the status of clans are not imaginary but real. A member of a clan in the upper moiety would not take either cooked food or water at the hands of a member of a clan in the middle or lower moiety. Besides this, marriage alliance between a boy of a clan in the upper moiety and a girl of a clan in middle or lower moiety or vice versa would not be approved. Member of middle moiety would observe similar observances towards members of the clans of lower moiety.

The higher was hypergamous to the middle and so the middle to the lower but in course of time the higher moiety stopped taking brides from the lower one. Consequently these three sections of the Garasia have become an endogamous group. Even among the middle moiety, certain clans such as Vansia, Raidra, Chauhan and Damor <sup>of</sup> treat themselves higher level and have formed together an endogamous group. They will not either give daughters to higher moiety or take brides from other clans of middle moiety.

It is true that the clans of higher moiety (Dungaicha, Parmar, Solanki, Angari and Kharadi) consider themselves superior to the rest of the Garasias with whom they even do not exchange 'Chilam' (an earthen tobacco pipe). In the genealogies given here of two Garasia, one of Parmar clan and another of Rathod clan, the endogamous character of the moieties is amply illustrated.

#### Geneology of Pema Parmar of village Bara.

- Note: 1. Only the name of the clan of the spouse is given.  
 2. = Male; 0 Female  
 3. If Dead this sign is given.



From the above genealogy of Rathod Clan, it appears that Rathods have been taking bride from Parmar clan. But in fact, no Parmar would give his daughter to a person of middle moiety. These marriages should be either exceptional love marriages or instead of Parmar the name of the clan should be Nana Parmar who are at lower level.

Apart from these observances no other kind of social distance is maintained. In fact, the members of the society know their position in the hierarchy and behave accordingly. One can sit together, one can go inside the house of each other. Even, if water is brought fresh in the bucket from the well, it is accepted by members of higher moiety from that of lower moiety. However, it has been reported by a Dungaicha Garasia that in former days no Dabhi or Rathod would have dared to sit with Dungaicha on the same cot. Usually they used to sit on floor. This may be an exaggeration as the persons of higher moiety are always hard at work to prove their superiority over others. In their concentrated attempts to identify with the Rajputs, they have adopted a new appellation 'Rajput Garasias'. It is much more convenient and easy to establish rapport with them if the field worker addresses them as Rajput Garasias.

### Kinship

The Garasias are patrilineal and patrilocal. Although an individual belongs to the father's clan, lineage and sub-lineage, he is also concerned with the clan and lineage of his mother. The rules of exogamy apply to maternal relations as well as paternal relations. But in fact, the Garasias generally know less about the ancestors in clan or lineage of mother's side than about

their ancestors on father's side. Be that as it may, the life of the Garasia is conditioned by the membership of two clans and lineage, paternal and maternal. But the paternal kin predominates in all sphere of social life of the Garasias.

Besides the agnatic kin, affinal kins have a significant position in the field of kinship. Links through women in marriage are as important as links through men. This is a significant merging of affinal kins with kins of common blood as far as the fulfilment of kinship obligations are concerned. Thus, the Garasias kinship is an undifferentiated category into which kins of all kinds are merged, the predominant position is enjoyed by the paternal kins i.e. cognates. In seeking help or assistance, the kins from paternal side are first approached. In the matter of fulfilling customary obligations, the rules of kinship system in Garasia society expect the kin from paternal side to act first. For example, it has been observed by us that in the construction of a new house or making hand made flat tiles, an individual has received assistance from kins of paternal side. If a woman's husband dies, she will receive all due care from the kins of her deceased husband. Children without parents do not become destitutes in Garasia society. On account of a strong sense of fulfilling kinship obligations, nobody in Garasia society is insecure.

Thus, clan relationship is regarded more vital to society than any other relationship. But kins of all kinds, paternal, maternal and affinal are recognised and definite relationship terms are employed. Relationships are reckoned between groups rather than individual and collateral lines are not always kept distinct from the lineal.



In an individual life, the kins fulfil their customary obligations on the occasion of birth, naming, marriage, sickness and death. But kinship ties are maintained closely among near kins. There is strong evidence that beyond the immediate range of kins, individual even do not remember the name of their relatives. This is particularly true in the case of persons of second generation in the village. In the first generation, some persons do remember whereabouts of a large number of even distant relatives. During our stay in the village, Thavra's wife's brother's son had visited Thavra to enquire about their welfare. He has come after three years and that also because Thavra's youngest son was confined to bed. Regular visits by kins are maintained among the immediate and most near kins. Even affinal kins visit regularly only when the wife is alive. After her death seldom they visit except on important events in the family when it becomes a moral obligation for them to pay a visit. Married daughter, married sisters alongwith their children do visit at regular interval to enquire about the well-beings of the members of the family. In one family of Rathod clan, the wife's younger sister and her mother had visited them. The wife's sister who was a newly married girl had been accompanied by her husband. The wife's mother and sister stayed overnight but the husband went back in the evening. The family members pressed him hard to stay overnight but as he has not obtained permission from his parents, he refused. It is considered very improper and shameful on the part of newly married boy to visit wife's relatives and stay with them without the prior permission of parents.

Besides, once or twice in a year, the Garasias visit all important kinsmen. They make ceremonial visits to maintain contact. The occasion of Mela provides suitable opportunity to strengthen the kinship ties.

The villagers of Matadham village, being close to Ambaji town, are in a position to meet all important kinsmen at Ambaji - as they tend to come to Ambaji for having a 'darshan' of Mataji often.

The family analogy affects the rules of behaviour among members of a clan group. One's real father and mother are called 'Bapa' and 'Ayi' respectively. All adult men of one's father's generation within the clan are called 'Kaka' and the clan women of the parental generation are called 'Kaki'. In like manner, clansmen of the grand-parental generation are called 'Grand Mother' or 'Grand Father' (Mota Bapa and Moti Ayi) and those of one's own generation are considered, if not called, 'brother' and 'sister'. Nieces, nephews and other clan's persons of that generation are called 'my child' and those of the grand-nephew generation are called 'grand-children'. Thus for a given individual, the entire clan is made up of several generational layers, to each one of which he applies one or two terms derived from relationship in the immediate family.

Thus Garasia kinship terminology, like other tribal groups of Gujarat<sup>2</sup>, is characterized by a preponderance of classificatory terms. The same relationship term is used for most though not all relatives of the same generation and sex. Many of the kinship terms have been borrowed from their Hindu neighbours. As for example, the term 'Bhatriza' for brother's son, the term 'Sarhu' for wife's sister's husband, the term 'Fui' for father's sister, and so on.

The following are the kinship terms used by them.



Sr.No.	Relationship	Term of reference	Term of address.
1.	Father	Bapo	Bapa or Dada
2.	Mother	Aai	Asi or Ma.
3.	Elder brother	Dada or Bhai	Dadaj Baba
4.	Elder brother's wife	Bhabhi	Bhabhi
5.	Younger brother	Bhai	Bhai or by name chhora
6.	Younger brother's wife	Vahu	Eh ! or Vahu
7.	Elder sister	Bon	Bai
8.	Elder sister's husband	Banevi	Banevi
9.	Younger sister	Bon	chhori
10.	Younger sister's husband	Jamai	Jamai
11.	Father's father	Bapa	Doha or Motabapa.
12.	Father's mother	Moti Asi	Dokri or Moti Aai.
13.	Father's elder brother	Babo	Baba
14.	Father's elder brother's wife	Babi	Babi
15.	Father's younger brother	Kako	Kako
16.	Father's younger brother's wife	Kaki	Kaki
17.	Father's sister	Fui	Fui
18.	Father's sister's husband	Fuo	Fyo
19.	Mother's brother	Mamo or Mama	Mama
20.	Mother's brother's wife	Mami	Mami
21.	Mother's father	Nana	Nana or Doha.
22.	Mother's mother	Nani	Nani or Dohi
23.	Mother's sister	Mahi	Mahi
24.	Mother's sister's husband	Maha	Maha
25.	Wife's elder brother	Dada	Dada
26.	Wife's elder brother's wife	Bon	Bon
27.	Wife's younger brother	Sara	Sara
28.	Wife's younger brother's wife	Bon	Bon
29.	Wife's elder sister	Bon	Bon
30.	Wife's elder sister's husband	Sarhu Bhai	Sarhu bhai
31.	Wife's younger sister	Sari	Sari
32.	Wife's Younger's husband	Sarhu	Sarhu
33.	Wife's father	Huhro	Huhro
34.	Wife's mother	Hahu	Hahu
35.	Father's brother's son	Bhatriza	Chhora or by name.
36.	Father's brother's daughter	Bhatrizi	chhori or by name
37.	Sister's son	Bha ez	chhora or by name
38.	Sister's daughter	Bhamez	Chhori or by name.
39.	All male elder siblings	Dada	Dada
40.	All male younger siblings	Bhai	Bhai or by name
41.	All female siblings	Bon	Bon

Sr.No.	Relationship	Term of reference	Term of address
23.	Mother's sister	Mahi	Mahi
24.	Mother's sister's husband	Maha	Maha
25.	Wife's elder brother	Dada	Dada
26.	Wife's elder brother's wife	Bon	Bon
27.	Wife's younger brother	Sara	Sara
28.	Wife's younger brother's wife	Bon	Bon
29.	Wife's elder sister	Bon	Bon
30.	Wife's elder sister's husband	Sarhu Bhai	Sarhu bhai
31.	Wife's younger sister	Sari	Sari
32.	Wife's Younger's husband	Sarhu	Sarhu
33.	Wife's father	Huhro	Huhro
34.	Wife's mother	Hahu	Hahu
35.	Father's brother's son	Bhatriza	Chhora or by name.
36.	Father's brother's daughter	Bhatrizi	chhori or by name
37.	Sister's son	Bha ez	chhora or by name
38.	Sister's daughter	Bhamez	Chhori or by name.
39.	All male elder siblings	Dada	Dada
40.	All male younger siblings	Bhai	Bhai or by name
41.	All female siblings	Bon	Bon



## Rules of Behaviour

There are definite rules concerning the individuals behaviour toward persons in each of the generational layers. The parental generational is made up of persons in whose presence he experiences sexual shame. Just as he must avoid physical immodesty and sexual discussion in the presence of his real parents so must he practice such avoidance with respect to his 'kaka and Kaki'. The avoidance rules for classificatory parents are not quite as strict as those within the homestead group, since a mah's father's brother may be of his own age or younger, contrary to the implications of the paternity relationship. In such a case, serious avoidance does not begin until one of the parties has married, and it becomes stricter as they get old. Hence, though behaviour toward kinsmen of the parental generation is patterned after customary behaviour toward real parents, avoidance is not expected to be as intense in the case of classificatory parents.

Several incidents, occurring in Matagham village where everyone belongs to the same clan, indicated that sexual shame between adjacent generation is not merely a matter of formal etiquette but a feeling experienced by individuals. A mahua licour party discussion of venereal disease and adultery was abruptly stopped by a group of men when classificatory daughter of some of them arrived on the scene. When a middle aged woman was describing supernatural punishment for adultery to the investigator, her real daughter and a classificatory daughter-in-law giggled for a while, then retired to another place and warned away other visitors of the generation.

Sexual exbarassment is more intense between persons who are not only of adjacent generational layers but also of opposite sex. Feeling of sexual shame, however, can be avoided by conformity to the avoidance rules for persons of adjacent generation. With kin of parental generation on the same cot, see others naked, engage in joking insults, discuss sexual topics freely or argue freely.

The rules governing relationship between kinsmen not of adjacent generations require less restraint and involve less embarrassment, they lack the element of sex avoidance and respect which characterize classificatory parent - child relations. This lack of restraint is particularly striking in relations between an individual and his real or classificatory grand parents. He may discuss sex and insult them jokingly.

With kinsmen of one's own generation, classificatory brothers and sisters, one may shake hands, and argue. Sexual shame as such is not felt with these generational equals, but cross-sex avoidance is nevertheless practical, at least in public situations. For example, a young man sleep with his male-same generation kind, discuss sex topics with them, using obscence epressions. All of these are prohibited with female kin of the same generation and clan, who are barred as sex objects by the incest taboo. Despite the fact that this taboo is frequently violated by young adolescents, boys are afraid to treat such girls in a familiar way in public because of possibility of discovery by some one of his parental generation. In general however, it is within the same generation in a clan that relationships of the greatest intimacy and freedom are carried on.



To summarize, the Garasia lineage system is a set of organised social groups based on common descent through the paternal line and on varying degrees of common locality and mutual interest. Lineage structure and growth are explicitly conceived of in terms derived from the family homestead, which is the nuclear unit of the system. Each lineage up to and including the clan is stratified into generations whose relationships are explicitly patterned after, though not identical with, customary relationships in the family. Sex avoidance and unilateral respect between adjacent generations while less restrained behaviour is possible for persons of alternate generations and those of the same generations.

However, although affiliation with a patrilineal descent group and kinship ties with kindred influence certain aspects of life, over and above these ties is the identification with the community which is drawn together by bonds of economic and social interdependence.

#### FAMILY

No Garasia thinks of himself apart from his family. Ideally the basic residential, social, religious and economic unit in Matadham village and also in other Garasia villages, is the patrilocal extended family. This consists of a man, his wife, his sons and their wives and children plus unmarried daughters. Of course, this unit is not supposed to occupy one house. Preferably, they occupy separate houses for each nuclear family consisting of a man, wife and children. All members share in the family occupation and in the production obtained. All may not eat from the same hearth. In fact, each nuclear family has its own hearth. The eldest active male is the family head but course

the final responsibility and authority for the family well-being rests upon the eldest man in the nuclear family. Upon his death, the wife becomes the titular head although, if there is a grown up son in the family, he acts in her stead. In fact some times he assumes the final responsibility of the well being of the family.

The family among the Garasias as among other people is the central focus of interest and motivation. As mentioned above, it is a domestic unit with patrilocal residence, patrilineal descent, patronymic designation and patriarchal authority. The domestic pattern of family, in general, is nuclear type. Of the households in Matadham village 26 (51.0) are of nuclear type, 18 (35.2) are of joint family and 7 (13.8) are extended type. Considering together, the figures of joint family and extended families it can be observed that number of nuclear type of families is almost in the same proportion.

The average size of the family among the Garasia of this village is 4.6. It means that the family size is considerably smaller. In fact, a contrary notion is prevalent among the non-tribals of the area that there is high birth-rate among the Garasias. In fact, our observations and discussions reveal that fertility rate among the Garasia women is lower. The figures of birth rate, collected by us for a period of ten years also indicate this phenomena. Over a period of 10 years only 62 children were born in the village of which only 9 died in infancy. Altogether 21 individuals died during the period of 10 years. Thus the annual increase in population by new birth has been only at all the rate of two percent annually which is not at all very high. This fact substantiates that the fertility rate among the Garasias is not very high as compared to other tribals and non-tribal groups.



TABLE XXVIII  
Number of Members in family

Number of family	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Number	6	10	13	8	7	3	1	1	2	51%
Percentage	11.8	19.6	25.5	15.66	13.7	5.9	1.97	1.97	3.9	100%

As may be seen from the figures given in above table, majority of the families have 2-6 members in family.

76.1 percent of the total families have such a size of their family while only 12.8 percent of the total families have more than 7 members. Significantly, 11.8% of the total families have only 2 members.

#### Intra family Relations

Patterns of interaction among members of the patrilocal family depend in large part upon interplay of age, sex and relationships role. Among the Garasias, males take precedence over females, age over youth, consanguineal over affinal relationship.

As has been stated, the eldest active male is the household head. This man is in the relationship of father or elder brother to other adult males in the family. He is responsible for all decisions in the family, and he is the final authority whether it be in matters of growing which crops on which lands or performing worship. The father is not always the authoritarian family head as ideally described. The relationship between a father and grown up son is based on mutual affection and friendliness. The father may be sitate to rebuke an adult son.

In most instances the family head acts in family matters after consulting with other males and often his wife as well, but this is not necessary nor prescribed. When an old man becomes senile or inactive or when he dies, he is replaced by the next in line. An old and inactive man tends to be ignored or actively resented by other family members and he himself often resents their attitude towards him. Old men, like old women, find occupation around the house in caring for children or doing domestic tasks. After the death of the household head his widow may be referred to as the head, but in reality the authority passes to the next eldest male if he is an adult.

Among brothers in a family, age takes precedence. Although younger brothers are expected to obey and respect their elder brother there is no domineering attitude on the part of elder brother towards younger brothers. This rule applies to parallel consins as well as to real brothers.

Before proceeding further, it will be well to emphasize that Garasia women enjoy a great degree of freedom. They come and go as they please around the village and to Ambaji and talk to whomsoever they please except strangers. They are not confined to separate living quarters and they are not subject to seclusion. Therefore, their subordination to men must be recognized as subordination within a context of relative freedom. One indication of this is the ease with which divorce and remarriage are effected. If a woman is unhappy she can always turn elsewhere or go back to her parents.

The wife exercises considerable influence over her children and household and command important voice in the affairs of the household. She also exercises considerable influence over her husband. The relationship of wife <sup>to</sup> husband is ideally one of service and respect.



The husband is referred to by his wife as simply 'man'. A woman shows her respect by catering to her husband's wishes. She will keep his house, cook his meals and do the necessary household work in the fields and forest. Essentially the relation between a man and his wife is based on companionship.

The wife may inherit her husband property in the absence of an issue. But in every case, her dress, ornaments and articles made or purchased by her or given to her as gift for her own use, are her own personal property, with which she may deal as she pleases. She has full access to family income although the controlling authority lies in the hands of husband. The wife shares in the economic and social activities of the husband. As the women enjoy much freedom, it is believed that the Garasia men never remain sure about the sexual habits of their women. As such they always take wife whenever they go, whether to forest or to Ambaji or to any relatives in distant villages.

The Garasias are fond of children. Birth of a child in the family is always a welcome affair. Although practically no distinction is made between boys and girls, the birth of a male child is preferred. The local midwife gets double amount as reward of her service at the time of birth of a male child than what she gets on the occasion of female child.

Having children and especially a son is important. The son not only helps with work but inherits father's property and carries on the family line. If no son is born to a man he often designates his son-in-law to fulfill these roles. The son-in-law must then come to live in the house of his wife's parents. For all practical purposes he becomes their son. Although he manages the property, the right of inheritance passes to his wife i.e. to the daughter.

If the daughter has no sons, the land does not revert to her husband's lineage but stays in the lineage of her father.

The mothers continue to be the chief socializer with the grandmother and older siblings in importance. From child's point of view, the mother retains the closest bond with him throughout childhood, regardless of grandparent's prominent role in his early life, and even though in terms of time which the child spends with others, the mother gradually assumes less importance.

#### Community and Neighbourhood

The local community is defined here as the largest unit of contiguous homesteads which recognize the reciprocal obligation to participate in religious ceremonies and some economic activities. Ordinarily, natural features such as groves of trees or upland region (Dhar sector), and plain region (Matadham proper) define some of the boundaries of this group. Community members are members of the same clan, though they may be of different lineages, and as part of the village relationships. Each community is made of several neighbourhood. A neighbourhood is a cluster whose members belong to the same lineage and who work and visit with one another more frequently than they do with other members of the same community. The women of one neighbourhood, tend to form a single cooperative work-group. Although the neighbourhood is the territorial unit within the community, its boundaries may not be marked with any natural features. Homesteads at the boundaries of two neighbourhood may be more closely related to one by descent but work with the other. Homesteads bordering other communities of the same clan may shift their orientation from one community to another, causing uncertainty as to the exact boundary. Neither the community nor the neighbourhood has any formal organisation or institutionalized leadership.



### Social Solidarity

Although the people of Matadham village cooperate in work, recreation, and ritual and although their relations are conditioned by kinship regulation, they value homestead privacy and autonomy over neighbourhood solidarity. The village community as a segment of a continuously settled area, with no formal political organisation of its own, does not inspire special loyalty in its members. The settlement of dispersed homesteads has no public place or building as a spatial focus for group sociability. Accidental meeting of persons from different homesteads occur along village paths and at Ambaji market but prolonged gatherings occur only at private residences and tend to be small. Despite the sub-division of the community along neighbourhood and lineage lines there is no factionalism, partly because the community has too few joint activities around which factions might crystalize. Individual homestead groups frequently, develop antagonism with one another and sometimes back off relations, but such quarrels arise within neighbourhood and lineage fragments rather than between them. The result is that there are no strongly cohesive groupings of homesteads in Matadham village.

### Political Organization and Social Control

The Garasias did not have a centralized political organisation in the past. Political integration was at the clan, sometimes even at local community level and there was no permanent governmental offices. Each clan or community had its authority system in which elders and wealthy individuals had more power than anyone else.

Leadership in traditional Garasia society was not institutionalized in a set of permanent position with fixed powers. An early report states, "the chiefs have

extremely little power and are far too numerous<sup>3</sup>. In fact, however, these were not tribal chiefs or clan chiefs in the usual sense but on non-hereditary local leaders who assumed power and performed some political functions. The indigenous authority system of the Garasias is best understood by beginning with the extended family homestead, where the lines of authority were most clearly drawn.

The traditional Garasia homestead was an internally self governing unit. All disputes and rule violations arising within it were handled by the homestead (backed up by the ancestor spirits) unless he called in an outside authority. The powers of the homestead head vis-à-vis his wife or wives and sons were great. Unless he was a man of little **forcofulness**<sup>or</sup> discretion, his order regarding the economy and marital affairs of the homestead were commands which had to be obeyed. He had supernatural and economic sanctions to use against recalcitrant sons.

Cases of conflict or rule violation involving of more than one household were brought to the attention of 'lineage elders'. This term did not refer to a council with a definite membership but to a group of homestead heads and other elders whose membership would depend on the case being heard. The lineage elders had the power to curse an unidentified thief or arsonist or someone who refused to comply with their order to pay a debt. In many cases the elders did not have to render decision themselves but were able to allow the litigants to take an oath which would be enforced by the ancestor spirits. Ordeals, that is supernatural tests by which the accused can reveal his innocence or guilt, were also used by the elders in certain cases and also freed them from the necessity of making judgements themselves.



After the coming of British Political Resident in this area of the Garasias, the institution of police patel was introduced in each village community and thenceforth, the community was indirectly controlled by the police Force. This system got strengthened after independence and became a forceful one to enforce social control in the village. This is not to mean that the old system has completely disappeared, rather, in the present, the lineage elders, instead of taking supernatural sanction in the decision, take the police sanction in enforcing social control of law and order now, is in the hands of the police. The policemen play the role of judge and jury. They are given high status by the villagers and command respect.

However, the informal control by the lineage leaders still has some place in the community but has lost the force. In a recent dispute between two homesteads the village elders were called to take decision. The accused had the offence of bringing his notorious son-in-law to live with him who quarreled with everybody and used obscene abuses in his dealings with members of neighbourhood group. The council of village elders sat along with some members of the neighbourhood group of the accused homestead, who had made complaint to the village leaders. The traditional rules of behaviour in the Garasia community were discussed by the elders and it was finally decided to ask the accused to remove his son-in-law from the village and send him back to his own village. Some men were sent to inform the accused about the decision but instead of complying with the orders of elders he rebuked them and asserted his right to do what he liked. In this way he defied the decision taken by the elders. Ultimately the elders threatened him with bringing this case to the notice of the police and seeing that the son-in-law was prosecuted criminally.

This shows that the traditional authority system has weakened to some extent. But there are not many villagers who defy the decisions of elders. So, although, not much serious notice is taken of the authority of lineage elders, the villagers, out of a deep sense of mutual obligation and duty toward the members of lineage group, do not embarrass the lineage elders by not accepting their counsel and decisions.



## CHAPTER VII

THE RHYME OF LIFE

One of the major aims of an individual in a society is to satisfy his biological needs, but he is also haunted by spiritual needs. From cradle to the grave he is to undergo some ceremonies which are religious and at the same time social. The Garasias believe that merely sexual intercourse will not necessarily lead to conception. Unless there is some ancestral spirit longing to be reborn into the family, a woman may not conceive.

PREGNANCY

Garasia husbands and wives share a strong desire for ~~er~~ offspring. Precreation is considered essential to marriage and parents want as many children as possible. An unusual delay by <sup>a</sup> newly married woman to conceive is viewed with serious concern by a husband and wife. Childlessness is one of the standard supernatural punishments which may be due to a curse by the ancestor spirits or supernatural powers on a man who has failed either to make appropriate sacrifices, or ignored omens, or sworn a false oath. Witchcraft too is suspected when a woman becomes sterile.

The male contribution to the child's heredity, that is, appearance and temperament, is considered to be greater than that of the females. A pregnant woman is not treated specially and is not subject to any restriction. Women continue to do arduous physical labour until they no longer feel capable of it. Although illness during pregnancy is a valid excuse to refrain from work, all women observed in Matadham performed normal domestic and agricultural tasks until about a week before delivery.

BIRTH

Men are not called in at child birth unless an emergency develops and even then their role is a limited.

one. The husband is supposed to stay out of the house in which his wife is in labour. When a woman feels the labour pains and contractions the village midwife is called to attend. Usually she is member of the lineage group who is expert in effecting safe delivery. Under normal conditions when the child is delivered, the midwife cuts the umbilical cord with a knife and puts ashes on the navel. This woman cleans the substance from the child's mouth and wash the whole body with water. At the birth of male-child the village midwife is paid Rs.1.25 alongwith five kilo grams of maize and five cooked breads. While at the birth of a female child she is paid only Rs.0.65 besides two and half kilo grams of maize and five 'rotlas'. On the 5th day or thereafter the name giving ceremony of the child is performed. The mid-wife is again called to perform this ceremony. Elder members of the lineage group are also called. A simple ceremony is performed in which the mother worships the sun god and the child is given a bath. Every body present there is given some jaggery. The midwife then, give a name to the child which usually is the name of the ancestors or the name of the ancestors or the name of the day on which the child was born. If the elders gathered there accept the name, the child is given that name. In case somebody objects, another name is suggested by the midwife. The Garasias do not perform any tansure ceremony for their children.

There is no weaning ceremony or initiation ceremony performed among the Garasias. A Garasia child grows into adolescent and the next import<sup>-ant</sup> event which comes in his or her life is his or her marriage.

Sex and Marriage

The Garasias believe that sex is good and normal. Warm, vigorous / direct phallic enjoyment is as necessary as food. Of course, this does not mean that sex is the primary interest of these



people; but sex must not be underrated. They believe that woman's sexual organ is like earth which must be regularly ploughed by the man's sexual organ and be irrigated with semen in order to keep the woman fertile. Celibacy is unheard of, continence is never practiced. Sexual anaesthesia is uncommon among the Garasia people. On account of such an attitude towards sex, bachelorhood and spinsterhood is not known among the Garasias. Soon after the girls begin to menstruate, they are considered ready to be 'ploughed'. Similarly when the boys become adolescent, they become fit to 'plough'. As strict privacy is not maintained between husband and wife in the act of cohabitation, the sexual consciousness is developed very early among Garasia boys and girls. The child has every opportunity of watching the act of cohabitation of his or her parent. The Garasias believe that the children simply pick up such knowledge in the ordinary casual way. When the girls and boys come of age, they indulge in sexual activities while they go to forest for grazing cattle. In the village they do not find much opportunities on account of the location of houses in scattered manner.

Thus, for most Garasias, sexual activity begins long before marriage, although pre-marital liaisons are not approved by older people and must be carried on privately. Young people are particularly afraid of having their sexual activity come to the attention of their parents or other persons of parental generation. But parents do not pay much attention to the sex-play of their children. In a sense, it can be said that pre-marital sex relation is tolerated in the society although parents disapprove it.

From the age of 14 or 15 onwards, boys are active in seeking heterosexual affairs, concentrating their efforts at first on girls in their own community. Since such girls may happen to be of their own clan and sex relations with them constitute incest in the eyes of elders, these affairs are extremely surreptitious and fraught with anxiety. Hence, such affairs are mostly carried on in the forest.

When a youth reaches the maturity of 17 or 18 years, he turns to girls outside his own village for relationship. By this time the boys have more confidence in themselves than they did when they were inexperienced and are therefore ready to approach girls in market places or at places of work or even in the forest.

But such sexual relation between the boys and girls are never a serious affair. Such pre-marital liaisons are often quite brief; a couple may have intercourse on one or two occasions and thenceforward seek different partners. A young man who repeatedly seeks coitus with the same girl will have his actions interpreted as encouraging her to elope with him. She may also attempt to persuade him to marry her legitimately (i.e. with payment of bride price).

As the boys and girls have adequate knowledge of sex by the time they reach adolescent age, they tend to marry as soon as they can. If we accept this fact, it may be explained that why in Garasia society the young men and women do not wait for their parents to arrange their marriage. The moment a boy and girl enter into some sort of amorous relationship they elope away and finally he brings his would-be-wife at his parent's residence.



MARRIAGE

The Garasias believe that their lives are continued in the lives of their children and that so long as generation succeeds generation the ancestors are perpetuated. They believe that marriage is a union between a man and a woman so that children born to them are recognised legitimate offspring of both parents. The Garasias regard marriage essential for every young man and woman of the village. In case their first wife is barren, usually they bring a second wife. Hakji's brother Kona, (who now has settled in Panchha village with his in-laws) has married eight women, one after another. At present two wives are living with him. He divorced the other six on account of barrenness. He has only one son from his eighth wife. It may be that Kona himself might be having biological defect for producing children. The point here is that in absence of issue from a wife, the Garasias do not hesitate to marry other women. Of course, they marry second or third time for other reasons too. Fatuation of another woman, need of another helper in economic activities and desertion of wife are other factors which may drive a Garasia to bring another wife. Hamira, who is barely 20 years old has married four girls, by this time, one after another. At the moment he is living with his fourth wife. All the former wives deserted him soon after marriage.

Marriage of a son adds another working member to the family. The Garasias marry among their own people. Marriage is always preferred outside the boundary of blood relationship. The Garasias kin may be classed under three categories (a) Agnates, (b) A woman and her husband's elder brother or elder cousins or husband's father and uncles and a man and his wife's elder sister's or elder cousin sisters, and wife's mother and aunt and (c) Non-agnates

including cross cousins but excluding above.. The Garasias cannot marry a girl in either group. (a) or (b) but marry only a girl of group (c).

Generally they do not marry in the same village. However, this is not forbidden. Several cases in the villages covered are there where a boy has married a girl of his own village.

The figures given in the next table would show that nearly all adult members of the village are married.

TABLE XX IX

Distribution of population by marital status

	Male	Female	Total
Married	70	72	142 (57.7)
Unmarried	49	37	86 (34.9)
Widow or widower	3	10	13 ( 5.3)
Separated from spouse	3	2	5 ( 2.1)
Total:	125 (50.8)	121 (49.2)	246 (100%)

The figures given in the following table would indicate the area in which generally marriage alliances are made. 82 cases have been considered here. These are the persons of the village whose marriage alliances have been considered. It is clear that majority of the alliances were made outside the village within a distance of 15 miles. Taking a wife from the same village is also not uncommon.



TABLE XXX

Distance in which marriages are contracted

	With in the village	Within 5 miles	Within 6 to 10 miles	Within 11 to 15 miles	with in 16 to 20 miles.	Total
Male	20	15	12	23	3	73
Female	-	4	2	1	2	9
Total	20	19	14	24	4	82.

Two types of marriages are prevalent among the Garasias- they are (1) arranged marriage and (2) marriage by elopement or love marriage. It is the latter type which is most prevalent. Young boys and girls who usually meet in the fairs and market places make selection of their partners and then decide to elope. After one or two days of elopement, the boy brings the girl to his father's residence. The girls parents are duly informed and bride price is negotiated with them. In the negotiation of bride price, important kinsmen from both sides sit together. After coming to a settlement, a date is fixed for the payment of bride price. The bride price may even be paid in three or four instalments. Bride price is also paid in the presence of important kinsmen. Usually the bride's parent demand the same amount which they have paid or intend to pay for their own son's marriage. The amount of bride-price ranges from Rs. 250 to Rs. 1000. Sometime as much as Rs. 1500 is also taken as bride price. In case a man elopes with another's wife, he was to pay double the amount which the grieved husband has paid as a bride price. For Instance, a

to resident of Panchha vaillage paid Rs. 2200/-/the grieved husband whose wife he has seduced. After paying the bride price before the kinsmen, the woman becomes his legal wife. In such cases marriage is celebrated much later on. Sometimes it is not celebrated at all. But in no case these are treated as illegitimate alliances.

Sometimes, the boy may, bring the girl straight to his father's residence without spending a day here and there and she is accepted by the young man's family, as if she were his wife. She elopement infuriates the father of the girl who has been cheated of the bride price. He makes inquiries and finally contacts the boy's family for settlement of the bride Price. In case the girl's parents are not willing to hand over the daughter to the family of the boy's with whom the daughter has eloped they demand an exorbitant amount as bride price. They cannot put other obstacles in their daughter's marriage with a particular boy. But such cases seldom happen. And even in such cases, kinsmen from both sides negotiate and finally settle a reasonable amount of bride price.

When a boy brings a girl to his father's residence to keep her as his wife, the father sacrifices a goat in the name of their ancestors and certain portion of raw meat is distributed among all kinsmen in the village and other villagers too. This act is a kind of announcement made to all relatives that his son has brought a wife.

In case of a widow, the bride price demanded by her relatives is half the amount which has been paid at the time of her first marriage. "In former days," said Suaja, (an 80 year old man) "the bride price was fixed." It was Rs. 16-00 for a girl to be married for the first time and Rs. 8.00 for the widow. But since last 50 years, the amount of bride price is soaring.



Most of the middle aged men of the village have paid Rs. 100-200 in silver coins as bride price. Today, the bride price is normally fixed around Rs. 500.00.

The age of marriage is between 13 to 19 for girls and 19-21 for boys. Figures given in the next table would indicate the age of marriages of boys and girls. It can be seen that majority of the girls got married before 19 years while boys before 21 years.

TABLE XXXI  
Age at first marriage.

	within 15	16-19 years	19-21 years	22-24- years	25-30- years	Total
Male	2	4	39	4	2	51
Female	19	19	17	2	11	58
Total	21 (19.3)	23 (21.1)	56 (51.4)	6 (5.5)	3 (2.7)	109 100%

The ideal girl is one who can manage the house well. She should be efficient in all the household work. She should be loyal to her husband and should not have extra-marital relationship.

The ideal husband is one who takes proper care of his wife. He should provide food and clothes to his wife and regularly visits fairs for the happiness of his wife.

#### Marriage ceremony

As pointed out earlier, marriage by elopement is common among the Garasias. Arranged marriages have become rare. Even in the former case the couple should undergo the usual marriage rites. But majority of the

Garasias in the villages covered under this study have been found to be leading a married life without undergoing the usual marriage rites prevalent in the society. Even in several cases of arranged marriages, the marriage rites have not been performed. The bride is brought after making the payment of bride price and performance of marriage rites is postponed to a later period when the economic condition of the bridegroom's family would be sound enough to incur the heavy expenses involved in a boy's marriage. However in many cases the economic situation of the boy's family never improved and the performance of marriage rites never takes place. As the lineage members too get involved in expenditures (each of them has to present one coconut and a rupee to the bridegroom), they, too, do not bring about pressure for the performance of the marriage rites. But this is not a significant cause. The significant reason is the heavy amount needed by a boy's father to meet the expenditure on marriage ceremonies. If the marriage rites are to be performed, the bridegroom's father has to manage the following things :

	Price:
1. One Ghaghro ..	Rs. 40.00
2. One Lagra ..	Rs. 15.00
3. One Hansdi (Silver) ..	Rs. 150.00
4. One pair of Vella (Silver)	Rs. 50.00

Besides, he has to give Photi to all important lineage members who bring the coconut and a rupee each. This costs the bridegroom's father nearly Rs.75 to Rs.100. Apart from these, there is expenditure in providing marriage feasts to his lineage members and other villagers. Nearly, as a rough estimate Rs.150 is needed for such feast. Thus, altogether an amount of nearly Rs.500 is needed to celebrate the marriage functions, leaving



aside the amount of bride price which itself is much higher in view of their poor economic resources. Due to this it becomes impossible for the Garasias to observe the marriage ceremonies. Many old persons in the village Matadham, Bara, Bedi, Dhareda, Zambra and Siawa have not undergone the marriage rites. In Siawa, it has been found that members of the Vansia clan are particular in observing the marriage functions.

This is one factor which has brought a notion of superiority among them over other Garasias although traditionally they are held in the middle moiety. Perhaps, the economic conditions of the Vansia clan people of Siawa village are better and they are in a position to meet the expenses. But even these people agree that formerly marriage by elopement was much in vogue and in more than seventy five percent of marriages, brides were brought by elopement. But now its incidence has decreased to a great extent and arranged marriages with observances of full marriage rites are on increase.

In case if a couple have not been able to observe the marriage ceremonies, their relationship is not considered illegitimate although certain social stigmas are attached to them. To a man, who has not undergone the marriage rites, the right to sit under a 'Mandva' at a marriage ceremony is lost. Further, he is also forbidden to carry the bier of his dead father and to perform the last funeral rites. Similarly, a woman, whose marriage rites have not been performed although living as a wife to a man, is forbidden to touch the feet of her elders-in-laws as is customary for a daughter-in-law in the Garasia society. This is a symbolic refusal to the woman of her status as daughter-in-law in the family. Such a woman is also prevented to anoint 'haldi'

(turmeric paste) to any person sitting in 'Pithi' (a part of marriage rites). The offsprings are not considered illegitimate.

Thus, arranged marriage in which the all marriage rites have been performed is the most respectable form of marriage in the Garasia society. In case a bride has been brought by elopement and afterwards the marriage rites have been performed, this form of marriage is also considered respectable. But as we have seen, due to heavy economic liabilities involved in marriage functions, an average Garasia skips over the marriage ceremony. For such a Garasia man and woman the term 'Kunwara' and 'Kunwari' is used which literally means to be unmarried.

Usually, the marriage ceremony ought to be solemnised before the birth of first child. However, in several cases it is solemnised even after the birth of several children and in several cases it is never solemnised.

In arranged marriage, the boy's parents have to be in search of a proper wife for their son soon after he attains marriageable age. Information about prospective bride is sent to them, usually, by women relatives married in other villages. One's sisters, real or cousin, and daughters or brother's daughters who are married in other villages (they are known as 'kuwansi') usually, act as match makers. They inform the boy's parents about the availability of a suitable girl. After getting such information, the parents find out whether the girl's family is related to them or not. If they find out that with the girl's family, marriage alliance can be made, they inform their near kins in the village about their intention to bring a girl from that family.



After receiving the elder's approval, message is sent to girl's parents through the Kuwansi about their desire. The girl's parents would discuss the matter with the elders of their kins. If they do not have any objection, the girl's parent communicate their consent to the boy's parents. On a settled day, the boy's father alongwith five elders of their immediate kins, would visit the girl's parental house to have a look at the bride and to negotiate about the bride price. In looking to the bride, the boy's father wants to ascertain whether the girl is physically perfect and of sound health. For bringing a bride in the family is not only a matter of social significance but of economic significance too. If the would-be-bride has any physical defects she would not be able to carry out household and farm duties efficiently. She may prove to be an unnecessary drag on the family. The boy's party spends a night there. The bride price is also fixed between the five elders of boy's relatives and five elders of girl's relatives. The girl's parents entertain them with mollasses, bread and mahua liquor and at times, with tea also. The boy's party return next morning to their village. After a few days, the girl's father alongwith five elders of his kins, make a ceremonial visit to boy's parental house. They too, have a look at the boy to ascertain whether he is a proper match for their daughter. They also observe the economic situation of the boy's parent in order to find out whether the girl would live happily. The boy's parent too, entertain the girl's party with mollasses, bread and wine.

After these reciprocal visits, the boy's party once again visit the girl's parents to settle the

auspicious day for celebration of the marriage ceremony. The fixation of the auspicious day is also made before the five elders of both parties at the girl's father's residence. The boy's party comes back on the same day.

Three days before the appointed day of marriage, the bride-groom and the bride are **anointed**, with turmeric powder mixed with water, over the entire body. This ceremony, known as 'Pīthī mē bēsē' is celebrated at the respective houses of the bridegroom and bride. The kinsmen and villagers are invited and before **anointing**, the important dieties are propitiated. Among the deities propitiated on this occasion are , Khetlo, Bav Singh, Vir, Bhairav, Budio and Gaur. Ancestors are also worshipped on that occasion. Invited guests are entertained with 'Ghughri' (a dish prepared by boiling the maize corns in water with mollasses). For three days, the **anointing** of the body goes on. The first person to **anoint** the 'haldi' on the body of the bridegroom is the mother. After the mother, the sisters, the brother's wives etc. **anoint** the body. Only women of the lineage group do the **anointing**. Similarly it is the mother of the bride who first **anoints** her body with 'haldi' to be followed by other women.

In the morning of the day of marriage, the bridegroom's kins and friends assemble at his residence to form the wedding procession. The wedding procession starts in the morning hours for the village of the bride. Women and children also accompany the wedding procession. Throughout the journey, women go on singing and dancing. The bridegroom is given new



dress to wear, usually, a new dhoti, a new shirt with collar or without collar. He also wears a head-dress, known as 'pugree'. These clothes are brought by the bridegroom's maternal uncle or his mother's parents. At the waist, he keeps a sword hanging on a belt tied around the waist. Women and men generally put on their best garments. Women, particularly, adorn themselves with all the jewelleries at their disposal. The wedding party carries its food supply. A goat is also taken along to be slaughtered in the bride's village for the meat-supply. For their food they prepare 'rotla' (thick bread) and carry them with them. During mid-noon they reach the bride's village. If the distance is not far-off, they may reach earlier. After reaching their destination, they camp in the shadow of a large tree located nearest to the bride's house. The bride's people arrange for some charpoys on which they spread quilts. The elder people of the bride groom's party then take some rest. A few water-pitchers full of water are also kept around.

Sometimes after the arrival of the wedding procession, the women of the bride's party come out of the house and welcome the wedding party by singing some wedding songs. Next to this women of both the bride's and bridegroom's join in wedding dance. This goes on for perhaps half an hour. After this ends up, the bridegroom marches up to the house of the bride and near the entrance, he puts down his sword at an appropriate place and then comes back to the place where his people are camping. Now the goat is - slaughtered in the name of ancestors and the sacrificial meat is cooked. Certain portion of the meat is sent to bride's house. After they cook meat, the bridegroom's party finish their day-meal.

Early in the afternoon of the same day, the marriage rites are performed. In the middle courtyard of the bride's house, four earthen pots (small ones) are kept at four corners in square or rectangular fashion. Inside this, the bride and bridegroom sit together. The bride and the bridegroom are seated on wooden 'pirha'. The bride is dressed in new dress - 'Ghagra', 'Jhulki' and 'Sallo'. The colour of the bride's dress is invariably selected red. The bride's dress is brought by the bridegroom's parents.

Two elder persons, each from bride and bridegroom's side, who are well versed in performing marriage rites, conduct the marriage ceremony. They enchant the appropriate mantra after preparing a sacred fire-place, known as 'havan Kund'. A coconut is broken before doing the havan. One corner of the 'Sallo' worn by the bride is tied jointly with one corner of the dhoti worn by the bridegroom. When this is done both the bride and the bridegroom are required to take three rounds around the sacrificial fire. The bridegroom remains ahead followed by the bride. After making these rounds they again sit back at their respective places. Now the bride is asked to tie down sacred thread round the right wrist of the bridegroom. Red coloured threads are passed through the whole made in a round nut and thus it becomes the sacred thread. When this is finished, the two marriage performers put pieces of mollasses in the hands of the bride and bridegroom. The bride and the bridegroom are asked to stand up on their feet, facing each other. They are separated by a curtain by the two performers who hold the corners of the curtain. Then the bride and bridegroom make fake movement of their hands in which they hold pieces of 'gur',



towards the mouth of each other as if they are trying to feed each other. This is done three times. After this, the newly married couple are blessed by all the elder men and women. First to bless them are, of course, the two marriage performers.

As the marriage rites are performed, there is some dancing in which men and women of both parties join together. Dancing continues till the marriage rites are over. This dancing is widely confused riotous performance in which the men of one party have all liberty to tease the women of the other party either by pinching different parts of their bodies (usually the men pinch the buttocks of women) or by using obscene words. During the marriage ceremony, a large variety of songs are sung.

After the marriage rites are over the guests are offered 'rotla' and 'gur', powdered together (Churma). After this, the bridegroom party comes back to its camping place. The bridegroom too comes back. The bride goes back to her parent's house. After sometime elders of the bridegroom's party again visit the bride's house. The elders of the bride's party join them. They sit together in the courtyard. The bridegroom's father spreads a big piece of white cloth or coloured cloth. On this, he puts the money for the bride price which he himself has brought. Usually, half of the fixed amount is given at this time. The rest half is paid after a year. The bride's father collects the piece of cloth with the money. If he does not collect, it is understood that he is in no mood to accept that much money. Of course, it very rarely happens. In such a situation, the bride's father is entitled not to allow the bride

to be taken away by the bridegroom's party to their village. As the payment of bride price is made before the elders of both sides, the amount is thoroughly verified on that very occasion.

After this is over, all the bridegroom people assemble at the bride's house to take away the bride with them. Again singing and dancing continues for some time. When this is over, the bride is handed over to the bridegroom's party and the wedding procession starts on its return journey to their village. In case a girl from the bridegroom's village is married in the bride's village, she comes forward and catches hold of the hands of the bridegroom. Such a married woman is known as 'Kuwansi'. This is a symbolic invitation to the bridegroom's people (her parent's village people) to accept her hospitality for the night. This is accepted and the party along with the bride goes to her (kunwasi) husband's residence. They stay overnight there. She and her husband are given new clothes as present from the bridegroom's parents. Next morning the party comes back to their village. The marriage of the newly married couple is consummated at the residence of the 'Kunwasi'.

When the wedding party comes back to its village, the relatives and friends go back to their respective houses. There is no ceremony to be performed after their return. Before the bride enters into the house, she catches hold of the thumb of her mother-in-law's feet. This means that she is asking for her mother-in-law's blessings for her married life. After blessing her, the mother-in-law announces that a particular cow or buffalo or calf



will be, henceforth, owned by her daughter-in-law. In addition to that sometimes the bride brings a cow or calf or buffalo as a present from her parents also. After this, the bride touches with her finger the thumb of her father-in-law and other elders. When she enters into the house, she is taken to the granary and is asked to put her hand inside the pot in which grains are stored. This is a symbolic gesture which means that the new member of the house should never find the pot empty without grains.

After five days living in her new house, she is taken back to her parents house. Her parents and brothers come to fetch her. After a fortnight or month, she is again brought back to her husband's house. Her husband, usually, goes to bring her. After coming back, she begins her new life at her husband's house which ultimately becomes her own house.

#### Marital Life

Women enjoy better freedom in the Garasia society. As long as they are unmarried perhaps they are subject to little authority. After they get married, the authority of their husbands imposes certain restrictions on their movement. But even then husbands cannot force their will upon their wives. And thus, women continue to enjoy freedom but they have to watch themselves from their husbands, if they want to have extramarital relationships. Women are free as men, perhaps in some way freer for men sometimes have to bear the responsibility for their acts, which women rarely have to do. In a recent case in village Matadham, Dhana Rathod eloped away with another man's wife. Dhana's legal wife, Gorli, waited for sometime

for Dhana to come back. At last Dhana came back after one month and had to face the 'Gram-panch' which fined him Rs.60-00. After a couple of days Dhana's wife Gorli eloped away with Amarsingh of the same village. They had not come back even after a fortnight. But even when they come back, it would be Amarsingh who would be penalized not Gorli.

Thus, although extramarital relationships are not tolerated in the society, such instances do happen frequently. A woman is free to desert her husband if she finds another man who is ready to pay the compensation to her husband.

on account of the freedom enjoyed by women, husbands keep steady and regular watch over their wives. In fact, husbands seldom leave their wives alone for a longer time; whether they go to jungle, or to bazar or to meet some relatives they will take their wives along with them on every such trip. Men complain that our women are real rogues. Thus, men in Garasia society remain very suspicious of their wives as they would be indulging in adultery. Sexual satisfaction of the wife assume much significance for the husband so that she does not remain sexually starved which may drive her to another man. In discussion with adult men, it was learnt that women greatly hanker for sexual coitus on every night. Some informants revealed that they have to do the act of coitus even up to three times in a single night. Even if they feel to have no desire they have to become prepared on the provocation of the wives, otherwise, failure is considered to be shameful. When asked why women so much hanker for repeated sexual coitus the informants simply said 'our women are notorious'. On further discussion about the way in which they cohabit with their wives, it could be



known from their version that the role of sex-play in helping the women to achieve sexual orgasm was not known to them. As a result, the man starts sexual copulation with his wife without undergoing the sexual process of arousing adequate passion in her. If it can be taken as true, many Garasia men must be failing in bringing their wives to the stage of sexual orgasm. In consequence, this may be the reason for desiring more and more coition by women during a single night. And also, perhaps this may be the reason for the frequent cases of one's wife elopement with another man. The Garasia women do not harbour inhibitions in matter of their outlook towards sex as women of other Hindu communities do.

On account of lack of adequate knowledge of bringing excitement in the women, the Garasia men start sexual copulation soon they lie down beside their wife. They neither tickle their bodies, nor caress the sensitive parts of the women's body before the actual act. They do not know anything about kissing. They do not fondle the breasts of their wife as they believe that mammary being the source of supply of milk for the child, it is meant only for the toddlers to touch, fondle and suck the breasts.

#### DIVORCE

In majority of cases, the marriages remain stable. Economic consideration is major factor for keeping a check on the rate of divorce among the Garasias. For if a husband divorces his wife on account of infidelity, he loses the bride-price which he had paid to obtain her in marriage. Further he will have to pay another sum in case he wants to get another wife. Without wife a Garasia cannot

live longer, not only account of gratification of sexual desire but chiefly because a woman is needed to do household chores and to assist him in the agricultural operation. Without a woman in the house, his agriculture will suffer much as many of the farm-works are done efficiently by women only.

If without obtaining divorce, a wife elopes with another man, the husband is entitled to get double of the sum he has paid as bride-price, as compensation from her paramour. This puts a check on many men to elope away with another's wife although clandestine sex-affair might have been existence between them. If they are caught, her lover is penalised Rs.60-00 or Rs.80-00 which the elders of the village (Panch) spend in enjoying a good feast together with the family of the grieved husband. The husband then, takes back his wife. A man is permitted to have as many wives as he desires, but usually monogamy is the rule in the Garasia society. They suffer economic strain on account of eloping with another's wife and finally keeping her as his wife. But such cases do happen frequently. The Garasias men easily fall under the spell and charm of a woman.

In the recent case of elopement, as stated earlier, the Patel of the village eloped away with the wife of the Bhopa (priest) of the village and remained at large with her for about more than a month. When the absconders came back to the village, the Panch decided to penalise the Patel, with a fine of Rs.60-00 to be paid to aggrieved husband and the panch also presented a petition to the Government for his removal from the office of village Patel. While this was going on the man again eloped away with the same woman for the



second time. Immediately the elders notified the Government that another man has been selected by them for the office of Patel to which the Government finally agreed. The couple has not returned when the research team left the village. However, it was informed by the leaders that if the aggrieved husband was again prepared to take back his wife, there was nothing for them to do except penalise the accused once again with a fine of about Rs.60-00. In case the husband refused to take her back the woman is free to either settle with the accused as his wife or establish her own independent homestead. If she settles with her lover, the man would have to pay double the sum of bride-price the husband has paid earlier.

Women are divorced usually on account of barrenness. If after four or five years of marriage she fails to procure a child the husband gets entitled to divorce her or to bring another wife. On being divorced she will go back to her parent's house or her brother's house. If she is young and is prepared to re-marry she will have no difficulty in finding another husband. In case she has lost her young age, she may accept the position of second wife of a man without claiming any bride price. Such a man gets extra hand to work in the field.

Women too, are entitled to divorce their husbands. But this is very rare as in such a case the women's parents will have to give back the money which they had taken as bride price. Since one hardly desires to pay back the bride price the parents of the women persuade her to live with her husband. They try to settle the issue amicably. The only real

course for woman to divorce his husband is to desert him and to find another man who may accept her as his wife.

It is the paying of compensation that really effects divorce among the Garasias. But as we have seen earlier, quite a number of the Garasia men in the village Matadham have brought second or third wife after driving away the former wives. This suggests that although considerable economic strain befalls on a family, the Garasias do not mind such a situation on account of their amorous instinct or their love for more sex fun in the life.

Polygamous marriages in the Garasia society turn out to be successful. The two or three wives of a person live in harmony. The person concerned tries to keep all the women happy. Although he might be sleeping with his youngest wife, he does not forget to appease the sexual desire of his elder wife or wives. The elder wife knows that her position has been belittled but they reconcile as she knows that this is the go of life in their society.

#### DEATH

The Garasia sentiment about death is one of fear for its unseen malignant cause and of deep sorrow for the dead. They seem to be more afraid of the cause of death than of death itself. Their belief in the over all control of God over the issues of life and death is little more than a pious fancy. Even in death caused by accident, or snake bite or killing by a wild animal, they firmly believe that it is some outside agency which sent the snake or wild animal to cause death. So they say that death is usually the wrath of a malignant deity. Death is not taken casually; on the contrary it occasions elaborate ritual and expression



of intense emotions. The degree of ceremonial elaboration and emotional expressiveness varies with the social status of the deceased. The funeral of an infant is humble, with little wailing and few people attending. When a middle aged man dies, however, kinsmen come from far and wide and expression of grief is profuse. Funerals of others fall in between these two extremes, with more elaborate funerals for married persons than unmarried, for men than women and so forth.

The Garasias believe that when a person dies, soul returns to the place from where it came but they are not sure of its ultimate destination. They have a vague notion that after death the soul goes direct to the mountain God, known as 'Tumbi Dev'. Uniting thus with God, the soul too becomes powerful and can cause both good and harm to the family. Some Garasias believe that soul mingles with the 'Pawan' (wind). As such, dead ancestors must be propitiated properly on suitable occasions. The soul may remain in a wandering state if the due ceremony for the final release of the soul is not performed by the living family members of the deceased. As long as the soul lives in the wandering state, it remains restless and may cause harm to the family, although, essentially the dead ancestors are benevolent in nature.

It is not the custom of the Garasias to place the dying person on the ground to breath his last. When death occurs, a son or a brother, who is the chief mourner performs the rite of removing his clothes and covering the body with a piece of new cloth usually of white colour. Before doing this, villagers and nearby friends and relatives are informed. Those involved most directly in the mourning and ritual pollution which results from the death of a man are

the male lineage members - those who trace descent to a common ancestor. Those involved for a married woman are member of her husband's lineage. The sib and clan are also important at this time. They all gather at the house of the dead person. While the clothes are being removed from the body of the dead person, the wailing of women, which usually begin while the person is dying, becomes louder, sometimes, sobbing and sometimes crying in a stylish sing-song. They sing improvised eulogies of the deceased and attribute his death to the ill will of others. In case of a woman, all the clothes and ornaments are removed by mother-in-law, mother or some elder women of the family. During this time the men remain outside and women gather round the corpse and raise their voices loud in weeping and wailing.

While the rites of removing the clothes is going on, some men of the lineage prepare a bamboo bier which is known as 'Tingtha'. The corpse is taken out of the house, and is placed on this 'Tingtha'. In bringing out the corpse, the body is carried with its feet in the direction of the door which means that the lower part of the body is first brought out. The head comes out last. The tingtha is placed in north-south. The head is kept towards the south side while the feet is kept towards the north side. On keeping the body on tingtha, it is tied down. Then it is carried to the cremation ground which is located near running water. Only men attend the cremation ceremony, as many as wish to attend. This group always includes household and lineage fellows (husband's lineage fellows if a wife has died), other members of the clan and other intimate friends of the household. Women join the funeral procession for a short distance, but come back soon. It is forbidden



for women to go to the cremation ground. While the funeral procession is marching towards the cremation ground, the mourners go on shouting "Rama!" "Rama". On reaching the cremation ground the body is generally bathed by the chief mourner. The body with the new clothes is put on a layer of wood and then covered with more wood. The first log of the pyre is put by the chief mourner. After putting the corpse on the pyre, every mourner puts a coin, which may be either five paisa, or ten paisa or twenty five paisa or fifty paisa. After this, the sister's son and the brother of the deceased move around the pyre three times. They are followed by some other mourners. While moving around they utter requests as well as warnings in the name of the deceased not to come back to haunt them. They go on sprinkling water on the corpse and the pyre by pipal leaves. The water is carried by them in cups made of palas leaves. After this rite is over, the chief mourner lights the pyre with a faggot. After fire is lighted, small logs of wood are placed by all the mourners, which they have brought from their home.

On the pyre the body is kept in such a way that the head is placed towards south while the feet is placed towards north. Straw is stuffed in the open places of the pyre. The chief mourner lights the fire near the head of the body and others assist, lighting elsewhere. The fire to light the pyre is brought from home in an earthen pot which is carried to cremation ground usually by the chief mourner of the nearest kin. The fire is brought in the form of burning cow-dung cakes. The fire-carrier marches ahead of the funeral procession.

Special precautions are taken at cremation to ensure that nothing of the body remains for ghosts to

use or torment sexually or otherwise. It is believed that actually ghosts rather than flames consume the body during cremation. No remains of the body are left especially of women, lest the ghosts utilise them for their own sexual enjoyment and to ensure that the spirit of the deceased will not be bothered by other ghosts. The spirit of a dead person wanders till the Shradh (Nāt) ceremony is not performed. No matter how well loved the person was in life, his spirit is feared in the village until the Shradh (Nāt) ceremony is performed.

After cremating the body, the mourners take bath in the river and thence come back to the house of the deceased. Some persons start preparing 'Makai Thuli' (porridge of corn) and feed all members of the funeral party. Some offer mahua liquor to the mourners.

On the next day, the chief mourner goes in the company of a couple of relatives to the cremation ground and collects the bones. These bones are buried at a place near the cremation ground and over it a memorial stone is erected. This memorial stone is installed within a year of the death of the deceased. The memorial stone is known as 'Sura'. In case of a person who has met accidental death 'Sura', is erected at the place where the persons met his death.

#### Transmigration of Soul

On the night of the cremation, a small earthen pot, filled with milk is placed at the corner of the entrance of the house. Around it ashes are spread over. Over the earthen pot, an earthen lamp is placed and which is lighted. These things are covered by a big basket. All these are left in that condition for



the entire night. Very early in the next morning the members of the family search for the supposed footprints in the ashes to know in what form the spirit of the deceased has taken rebirth. If the footprints resemble that of a human being, they believe that the deceased will have its rebirth in the same village and as human being. If there is a **print**, indicating snake movement, it is presumed that the deceased will have its rebirth as snake and so forth. It is firmly believed that spirits of the deceased will come to drink the milk kept in the earthen pot.

#### Purification From the Death Pollution -

On the third or fifth day the chief mourner and other mourners shave their moustache. This is followed by a ceremonial feast of 'Ghughri' (corn boiled in water) given to the close relatives. Ghughri is also distributed among children. Some 'Ghughri' is also kept at the cremation ground in the name of the spirit of the deceased person.

The family remains in sorrow for twelve days. On the twelfth day, all the relatives, and friends, even from far off villages visit the chief mourner's house. On this very day 'Nat' ceremony is held. The ghosts are fed with 'Khichdi' or 'Lapsi'. The eldest son of the deceased is declared as the next head of the family and relatives tie down 'pugree' around his head to mark the declaration.

Usually on this very day the 'Sura' (memorial stone) is erected.

In case of the death of children, the body is buried. Some Garasias reported that in rainy season many a time the corpse of even an adult person has to

be buried on account of non-availability of dry woods. Women died during child birth are also cremated and nothing particular is observed in their death ceremonies. Similarly, pregnant women are also cremated in usual manner.

When a very old person or a person who earns the reputation of a holy man dies, he gets a special treatment after death. Such a person is known as Bhagat or 'Sadh'. The Sadh, however, has no social function in the Garasia community. Ordinary mortals are cremated at the village burning place. A Sadh or Bhagat, is, however, buried instead near his own house. In Matadham formerly one Jalma Dabhi has been buried in this way as he was considered to be a Sadh person. During our stay in village Matadham, Sanja Rathod had become gravely ill and was about to die any day. As he too was considered a Bhagat, because of his long life, (he was nearly 100 years old), his lineage people had decided to give him a special treatment after death. The dead body of the Sadh is buried in sitting posture and a pucca Samadhi (a small memorial) is built at the place where he is buried. For one decade or two he may be worshipped by those of the village who remember him and thereafter the Samadhi falls to pieces. This has happened to the Samadhi of Jalma Dabhi in the village Matadham. The Sadh's funeral is the occasion for all-night hymn singing by his <sup>lineage</sup> fellows and other villagers. The burial of a Sadh person is very special and dangerous occasion. The corpse of such a person can only be carried by Bhopas or such other Bhagats in the village and only they remain by the prepared grave when the moment of interment comes - all the rest of the villagers retreat to a safe distance, the locality being so dangerously charged with devilish presence.



## CHAPTER VIII

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE AND THE SUPERNATURAL WORLD OF GARASIAS.Religious Beliefs

The Garasias believe that the fate of the individual and his community depends on their relationship with unseen supernatural forces, which affect human affairs. The supernatural is almost as pervasive in the minds of the Garasias as is the nature though to an observer it may be less readily apparent. Difficulty of anykind - crop failure, ailing animals, economic reversal, mysterious loss of property persistent family troubles, disease, sterility, still birth, hysteria, death is attributed ultimately to fate and more immediately to the mechanisation of one or another of a host of supernatural beings. It is necessary then not to offend supernatural beings, otherwise the mystical powers punish by inflicting sickness, death or other natural calamities. They must be propitiated at the appropriate time so that they do not get offended or if they have already got offended, are appeased by such propitiations. The Garasias have come to employ magical and religious rites in order that their life activities may run smoothly and the desired goal may be duly attained without any hitch. The Garasias know that magical and religious observances will not prevent calamities and they cannot control nature by means of ritual only. But the rituals are the means of keeping good relationship with the supernatural beings and thus fortifying themselves against external dangers. Thus, for the Garasias, the religion has two important aspects: belief in a supernatural power and an endeavour to propitiate or please it. The religious life among the Garasias, is primarily concerned with the maintenance of proper relations with the supernatural beings who have

power over the life of the members of the family, of the village and of the community. Their displeasure is easily aroused by neglect and is quickly evident in several kind of difficulties, notably illness, which beset their negligent worshippers. Fortunately, they can usually be placated. Their form, origin and affinities are of less significance to the Garasias than are their effects and the means to placate them. Some of these beings are gods and goddesses which affect the entire village while there are others which affect only particular families. Others are ancestral spirits. Other categories of powerful supernatural forces are ghosts and spirits. Some of the gods and goddesses can be traced to the great god and goddesses of Hinduism, but others cannot. Some spirits are ghosts of dead relatives, while others cannot be traced to specific people. These facts are of great interest and are often known but are of little immediate relevance to an average Garasia. All such beings are active unseen forces which must be recognised and dealt with in specified and often similar ways or else their subjects will suffer well-known and dreaded consequences.

The religious beliefs of the Garasias and their ritual practices recognise to the existence of two different sources of supernatural forces. The one centres on beliefs in a host of non-human spirits that inhabit certain localities and the other on veneration of ancestors, who, in their divine state after death control many activities of the living. Under the influence of these two forces; the animistic and the ancestral, life must be conducted in such a way that both remain appeased at all times by worship and performance of rituals as well as by avoidance of



actions which might offend these supernatural forces. The dominant factor in the religious faith of the Garasia is a belief in the spiritual beings who control and influence the destinies of man and with whom their own Bhopas can enter into personal relations through appropriate magical rites and rituals. The Garasias have also absorbed into their religion a large number of Hindu gods and goddesses. They discovered them in the hope of furthering their happiness and prosperity. In this way the Garasia religion has changed from a mere crude form of animism to Hinduism, although it is very difficult to draw a line between 'animism' and popular Hinduism.

#### Conception about Supreme God.

For the Garasias, the supreme god is Bhagwan. This god is however, neither personified nor worshipped. But to it is attributed almost any event or circumstances worthy of notice and beyond immediate human control. Such comments as 'It is God's will' (Prabhu or Bhagwan ni Ichha) and 'God only knows' (Bhagwan or Prabhu Jane) are frequently made by the villagers of Matadham. There is no effective means by which to deal with Bhagwan or his manifestations in fate, although villagers may occasionally direct an appeal for mercy or help in general way. Nevertheless there is lively interest and activity in influencing events by propitiating the many specific deities and other supernatural beings which are thought to control or influence daily life. He is concerned with these deities and supernatural beings which form the core of religious life of the Garasias.

The remark of one villager of Matadham village explains the general attitude of the Garasias towards

these deities and supernatural beings. "When a king or government gets infuriated by a person, he beats or kills or punishes in other ways. Similarly if these deities and supernatural beings get infuriated by a person, he has to undergo all sorts of sufferings. Hence it is essential to propitiate them to keep them always appeased."

#### Village Gods

The outsider will encounter his first experience of the religious life of the Garasias of Matadham village, in the course of his walking through the forested region of village because it is on the forest path, near a strikingly large tree or in between two hills that he will find some of their oldest shrines. These shrines consist simply of a painted stone or an earthenware plaque bearing the figures in relief of a deity and honoured with flimsy roof of flag-sticks.

There are six such shrines in the village. Three of such shrines represent goddess Ambav. These three shrines are located on hill tops and the goddess is referred to by the name of the particular hill. The most revered one is that whose shrine is on the hill top known by the name of 'Sur' and accordingly she is known as 'Sur mata'. She also resides on the hill tops known as 'Gadhwadia Dungar' and 'Rehaino Dungar'. All these three hill tops lie in the vicinity of the village Matadham.

Such shrines, three in number, also represented the local god, 'Bakhar Bavsingh'. One is located across the rivulet, on the fringe of the forest and another is located on the narrow path between two mountain cliffs.



As stated earlier, the traditional offering for these wayside gods and goddess takes the form of clay horses, of bizarre and simplified design, which are made for them by the hindu patters of Ambaji town and Abu Road. These shrines present a mysterious appearance when one comes upon any one of them suddenly, with a circle of twenty or thirty of these red baked clay horses, all standing, facing the central stone or the earthenware plaque: it is as if one had burst in upon some secret gathering. These shrines are of great antiquity. They have no formal ritual, no festival, are worshipped only in order to alleviate specific difficulties which according to a shaman's (Bhopa) diagnosis have been inflicted by them or they are often worshipped simply to maintain the peace of village life. Sometimes one of them acquires a more widespread fame, such as 'Sur Mata' in the village Matadham. When one acquires a more widespread fame, more and more people promise her offerings in case of sickness or other natural calamities.

The other conspicuous type of shrine is found on top of a small hillock. This consists of a low wall forming three sides of a room. It is roofed over with tiles. On the eastern side of this room is the door. At the back of the room is a low platform, on which are set a row of massive and coloured terra cotta plaques of a characteristic design bearing the figures in relief of certain Hindu gods and goddesses. These plaques are made by the potters of a village called Motera which lies on the fringe of the mountaneous area, not far from the town of Nathdwara. The villagers have to travel for four days carrying these plaques either on their back or in hand, in order to bring

them from their place of origin. In former days, each plaque used to cost only Rs- one and quarter to one and half rupee while now-a-days it costs Rs. five to Rs. six. Only those villagers go to bring the plaques who have taken vows in the name of gods of this shrine to do so. Such vows are made when they are faced by sickness in the family or similar other troubles. This shrine is known as 'Devra'.

In the Devra of Matadham village, the following gods were found: (i) a plaque representing Ganesh; (ii) eleven plaques of Dharam Raja which is also known as Thakurji; (iii) one plaque bearing the images of both Kala Bhairav and Gora Bhairav; and (iv) one plaque bearing the image of Amba Mata, mounted on tiger. Outside the temple there is a stone set on a little platform called Poliya Dev (A Hindu word, meaning Door keeper). He is described as servant god - he guards the door of the temple.

In the Devra of Siawa village there were fourteen plaques of Dharam Raja, one plaque of Kalka Mata, two plaques of Kala and Gora Bhairav together, two plaques of Amba Mata and one plaque of Ganesh.

Similarly, in the Devra of other villages visited by us, plaques of all these gods were found. Of course the number of plaques of Dharam Raja differed from village to village. The number of plaques depend upon the number of persons in a village who take vow to install such plaques in the Devra.

There is a raised platform in every Devra which is recognised as the seat of Bhopa. When the villagers worship these gods on an auspicious day, the Bhopa sits on this platform to propitiate these gods, especially Kala Bhairav.



The entrance side of every Devra is towards the east.

The Devra of Siawa is very spacious and the walls of this Devra is a pucca one. For preparing 'Churma' (sweet dish prepared to offer these gods) there is a large iron 'Karah', kept inside the Devra. There is also a high pucca platform which is used for preparing the Churma. A wooden stand for keeping the 'Nagara' (a large kettle drum) is also there to facilitate the beating of this instrument. Besides these, there is a pucca 'havan kund' where the sacrificial fire is burnt. As far as we know no other Garasia village has such Devra with so many facilities. It was reported that all these were obtained with the contributions of the villagers. This factor shows the progressive nature of the people of Vansia clan of Garasias of Siawa.

A big village may have three or four Devras. For example Siawa has four Devras, Dhareda has three Devras and so on.

The Garasias of Vijaynagar taluka do not worship Kala Bhairav and as such their villages do not have 'Devras'.

This shrine is also known as 'Bhairav-nath mandir'. About Bhairavji, who is worshipped in many parts of India as the terrible, the wrathful aspect of Shiva, all the villagers knew that he was a god, but not a great god. According to them he was the lieutenant of Dharam Rajah. Bhairavnath was known to have two forms, black and white. Both were supposed to be brothers. There is a legend about Kala Bhairava which tells that he got badly burnt down when sent towards Sun by Dharm Rajah on a mission and hence became black. Both the Kala Bhairav and the Gora Bhairav differed in one respect,

the former liked blood sacrifices, the latter only sweet things. The Kala Bhairav is a more malevolent being than Gora Bhairav. Hence, Kala Bhairav is more dreaded than Gora Bhairav. It was also believed that Kala Bhairav was more effective in granting prosperity to the villagers. The villagers associate Kala Bhairav with anger. That is why some people wear his image on their chests in order that misfortune should not come to them on account of his anger.

Dharam Rajah is considered as a great god but as he is benevolent in nature, he is not at all dreaded. He never brings wrath upon villagers.

The mother-goddess, Mataji, who appears in so many forms, and with so many different names, is revered by every Garasia. She is worshipped most ardently by the Garasias of Matadham village, a trait by which they assert their Rajput status. About all these varied forms of goddesses the Garasias believe that they have so many names, but they are all one. The villagers generally refer to all the goddesses by a generic name 'Ambav Mata'.

Bakhar Bavsingh traditionally ranks foremost among the supernatural deities. Bakhar is the name given to the hill ranges in the Garasia country. Hence Bakhar Bavsingh is the mountain god whose mount is horse and hence in propitiating him the Garasias invariably offer clay horses. Bakhar Bavsingh is supposed to be immensely powerful and very much dreaded.

There is a legend which illustrates the powerfulness of Bakhar Bavsingh. The ancestor of the Garasia of villages Bara, Satrang, Mama-Na-Riplav and Beri fled from Panorwa and came to the site of these



villages. He was being followed by the army of his enemy. When he took refuge in these hills, Bakhar Bavsingh once appeared in his dream and asked him to bring seven earthen pitchers from Poshina and instructed him that after filling the pitchers with water, he would keep them in upturned position. If in the next morning he finds that the water has flown down and the pitchers have become empty, he should leave the place and go elsewhere in search of peace and protection from the enemy. But if not a single drop of water flows down from the pitcher he may stay there. The Garasia man did so and when next morning he kept the pitchers in right way, he found that not a single drop of water flowed down. So he decided to stay there. Soon the army of enemy mounted on horses found his whereabouts and came down to kill him. But as the mounted persons approached him, they were attacked by a swarm of deadly insects (Black Bhramar) which began to sting them furiously and compelled them to run away from the place. Many of them died on the spot. It is believed that the swarm of the deadly insects was sent by 'Bakhar Bavsingh' as counter attack on the army of the enemy. Thenceforward, the legendary ancestor of the Garasias of these villages lived peacefully, married and multiplied the population of Garasias in this region.

Thus, Bakhar Bavsingh is supposed to be the protector of the Garasia villages and hence most revered.

As to the other gods in the Devra, the villagers said, "It is just a god". They are benevolent in nature and as such they do not harm the villagers.. The image of Ganesh in the Devra is a recent addition.

Another shrine near the Khetlo which is situated across the rivulet, bears the image of Shitala Mata, the goddess of small pox.

In about the same place (near the shrine of Shitala Mata), quite a big pucca, cemented platform is the shrine of Lord Shiva. A circular black phallic stone (lingam) lies in the middle of the platform, representing Shiva. This shrine of Shiva has been erected quite recently (only two years back) by the Hindu contractor who has built the dam in the village. Shiva is not a god of the Garasia pantheon. However, they are quite aware that in the Hindu's pantheon Shiva occupies a very prominent place. Due to this, although the villagers do not worship Him regularly, they do reverence Him and recognise him as a powerful god.

In case of snake bite, the Garasias worship 'Ghogh deo'. There is no fixed abode of this deity. But an earthen tile is kept in one corner of the courtyard which represents the deity of the 'Ghogh deo'.

When the Garasias go into the forests for extracting honey they worship 'Golre mata' before starting the operation. She resides in the hills.

The devra present a striking contrast between the glitter of bright paints on the newest of these gods, which must have been brought from Molera, during last year, and the dull, colourless, dilapidated state of the rest, which have been lying out neglected in all weathers since they were brought some years before. A heap of colourless and dilapidated plaques was found behind the back wall of the devra of village Matadham.



HOUSEHOLD GODS

There are two forms of household gods which usually are given a place inside the house to reside. These gods are of purely male character. The first of these is called 'Prabhu Ka Pat' while the other is known as 'Rama Pir Pat' or 'Kamariapat'. In each case the place of worship is in the living room of the house, and consists of a low platform, about ten inches high, a foot wide and few inches in depth. Each one of these gods has a separate platform. The entire platform is neatly smeared with mud and cowdung plaster. The platforms are referred to as the 'Pat' (meaning by 'throne'). Prabhu-ka-pat is milder in nature and the Garasias generally rely less upon it as defender of the home. The Garasias are quite unable to describe its attributes, except to say that it is of god, using the term 'Prabhu' or Bhagwan, which they use when they refer to a remote, aloof deity who is behind all reality, but with whom ordinary mortals have no dealings. The Garasias believe that this deity is the reincarnation of the Supreme God in the same way as Lord Rama and Lord Krishna were reincarnation of Lord Vishnu.

Rama Pir Pat is quite different. The Garasias of Matadham village believe that he is fierce, and jealous god, who is worshipped in the form of a small brass horse. In the majority of instances, the families which worship a Pir do not possess such a horse, but only the empty pat. Rama Pir Pat is by far the most dreaded of all the protectors, but all the most exacting; requiring his worshippers to keep their singing and dancing hour after hour, for many nights of the year.

Besides these two forms of household gods, one or two families in the village have Bakhar deo-ka-pat too. Bakhardeoka-pat is usually found in the house of those men who are considered as specialists (shamans). There are three such persons in the village, Jiva, Maina and Kala. All Bakhar deo-ka-pats in the village are not taken as reliable god. That Bakhar deo-ka-pat is considered more reliable who reside in the house of a more skillful shaman, practicing black magic, whose uttering prophecies come generally true. It is believed that prophecies made by the specialists are not theirs but of Bakhar deo. Kala's prophecies generally come true and as such Bakhar deo-ka-pat found in his house is believed to be 'Sachcha' (true and faithful). To guard the home from the evil eyes of witches, thefts and all kinds of attacks, the Garasias keep in their households, Sikotra which is a goddess, called 'Melri' and her lieutenant a male spirit, called 'vir'. These are represented by two stones, often set into the wall which formed the base of the back of the house. It is to these agencies that the Garasias refer as sentinel of the home'. When a household possesses a guardian Sikota, there is usually one member, either male or female, to whom the spirit of the Melri goddess would come, either on special occasions, or on the occasion of the annual tributes which consist of all night singing and worship. It is generally believed that the goddess would appear in dream, in order to rouse the person from his sleep, when the house was in danger of attack by thieves. If she fails to do so and the house is robbed, it is an indication that she is displeased with the family. In such cases, when Melri goddess falls out with the family of her keeper, the family suffers one hardship after another. If such is the case, this is at once diagnosed by the shrewd specialist. Melri is usually handed down from father



to son and there is an obligation to keep her pleased with regular attention.

In some households, wooden images of 'Gaur' mata and 'Budio' god are also found. gaur mata is the version of Hindu goddess 'Parvati while Budio is the husband of Holika (sister of Hiranya Kashyap)

The only two contexts in which the Garasias get really strongly moved in relation to their religious beliefs are, first in describing the menace to the community of a really stubborn witch and in referring to Ramapir-pat. In all other context, the supernatural seem to lie easily upon them. For example one informant, after describing how Melri must be offered a goat at Navratri, and how her Bhopa will drink the goat's blood, mixed with 'daru' (country liquor) and with milk, goes on to say, "If a Melri fails to protect your house from theft, you sometimes have to reproach her, abuse and knock her down-leave her lying for some days with her face in the mud. Then she will go and strike the thief and then you will treat her well again. But Ramapir or Kamria is not like that. If a man ever breaks into a house and sees that brass horse, he will not dare to steal from there or try to have sexual relation with a married woman of that family. If he is foolish enough to do so, he will surely die'.

#### OTHER GOD

The names of many of the principal gods of the Hindu pantheon are known to the Garasias of Matadham. In practice, however, there are only three outlying temples which concern them in everyday living. The one and which is of foremost concern is the temple of Mahadeva at village Kumbharia. The third one is another temple of Mahadev at Koteshwar. Besides these Hindu gods, the villagers also revere the Jain temples dedicated to the several Jain /Amba-Mata at Ambaji. The second is the 12th Century temple of

Tirthankers. The villagers often visit these temples, located at village Kumbharia.

Having described the gods and goddesses of the Garasia pantheon, we now describe the nature of these principal gods and goddesses, type of offerings they require and time of their annual worship in the following chart.

Sr. No.	Name of God or Goddess	Nature (whether malevolent or benevolent)	When worshipped	Type of offering
1.	Ambav Mata	Malevolent	Faishakh (May)	He-goat or coco-nut
2.	Bakhar deo or Bav Singh of Khetlo	Malevolent	Chaitra (March-April)	Clay horse He-Goat
3.	Dhula-na-pat	Benevolent	Ashwin (Sept) (Jan. Feb)	coco-nut Churma
4.	Bhairanath (Black one)	Malevolent	Bhadra (Aug-sept) (March-Jan-Feb)	He-goat, coco-nut, Churma
5.	Bhairavnath (White one)	Benevolent	fo	Coco-nut, Churma
6.	Sur-Mata	Malevolent	Chaitra March-April	He-goat
7.	Ganesh	Benevolent	Bhadra (August-Sep) and Magh (January-Feb)	Coco-nut and Churma.
8.	Dharam Raja	Benevolent	Kartik (Oct.-Nov.)	Coco-nut & 'Churma'



Sr. No.	Name of God or	Nature (Whether malevolent or benevolent)	When worshipped	Type of offering required.
9.	Ramapir	Malevolent	Bhadra (August)	Brass horse, He-goat.
10.	Gaur-Mata	Benevolent	Chaitra (March-April)	Coco-nut.
11.	Mahadev (Budio)	Benevolent	Chaitra (April)	coco-nut & Churma
12.	Melri	Malevolent	Falgun (March)	He-goat

Amba-mata is worshipped on the full-moon day of Baisakh month. On that day, huge gathering of the Garasias of the region takes place. The gathering is known as 'Garasiasangh' (on the pattern of different sanghs of Hindu caste). Nearly forty to fifty he-goats are sacrificed on that day in the name of goddess. Those Garasias who have earlier taken vows to offer a he-goat to the goddess fulfill their vows on that day. If a particular person fails to fulfill his vow, he will deny himself the privilege of entering the temple so long he does not offer the sacrifice. Besides the offering of he-goats, churma is also offered to the goddess. About two and half maunds (nearly a quintal) of wheat floor, one and quarter seer (more than a kilo) ghee and the same quantity of mollasses are collected. Out of these articles, churma is prepared.

Amba mata is also worshipped on the next day to Holi festival. However, on that occasion no offering of he-goat is made. The Garasias go in a group to the temple, only to have darshan of Mata. Such groups of Garasias men and women sing devotional songs to the rythm of dances.

Sur mata is worshipped on third day after Holi. On this day, all the families in the village contribute towards purchase of two he-goats. Besides contributions are also made for two and half maunds of maize, one and quarter seer of ghee, one and quarter kilo of mollasses and five kilos of wheat floor. Matar or churma is prepared out of the wheat floor, ghee and mollasses while Ghughri (boiled maize) out of the maize. The meat of the sacrificed he-goat is cooked and is distributed as 'Parsad' to all the families. Churma and Ghugri are also distributed. Those who have made a vow to offer clay horses to the shrine, offer on the very day. Bakhar Bavsingh of Khetlo is worshipped in chaitra. Clay horses are offered. Whoever has made a vow to offer clay horses at Khetlo in the name of Bavsingh or Ghod dev or Bakhar dev, offers on this very day. He-goat may be sacrificed as offering to him in case anyone has made a vow to that effect. Churma is also offered.

Kala Bhairavnath and Gora Bhairavanath are worshipped on the sixth day of the black half of the month of Bhadra and on the seventh day of the bright half of Magha. All the villagers assemble at the site of the temple. The villagers reach the temple in the afternoon. Each family brings contribution of maize floor, wheat floor, mollasses and ghee. Churma is prepared at the site. Sometimes, unleavened breads are brought by each family. The breads are powdered and in it is mixed ghee and mollasses.



Churma is ready. The actual worship by Bhopa starts sometimes late in the night. Meanwhile, uninterrupted dancing and singing by young men and women of the village goes on for the entire night.

On the full moon day of Chaitra goddess Gauri and Budio are worshipped. Coco-nut, and churma are offered to them. Their worship is connected with the fertility of the soil as well as of the women. Idols of Budio and Gaur Mata are prepared out of mud or wood or wax mixed with mahua flowers and are painted and decorated by garlands and flowers. These idols are worshipped for about 25 days and the villagers enjoy the occasion by singing and dancing during those days. A mela also takes place during the first few days <sup>in</sup> which vendors of all sorts bring their merchandise.

On the eighth day of Bhadra, the worship of Ramapir-ka-pat is done collectively by the villagers. Worshippers assemble in the interior room of the house of the shaman or any other villager who has established a platform in his house in the name of Ramapir deity. Hymn-singing sessions are held ~~for~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~the~~ night. In former days he buffaloes used to be sacrificed in his name but now a he-goat takes his place. It is not that all the villagers contribute towards purchase of the he-goat to be sacrificed. But who soever has made a vow to sacrifice a he-goat in the name of this god, offers the he-goat to be sacrificed in the name of god. However, the sacrificial meat is distributed to all present there. If no he-goat is to be sacrificed, Churma and coconuts are offered.

In the month of Ashwin, the collective worship of Dhula-Na-Pat is held. The villagers, particularly lineage fellows, assemble at the house where Dhula-na-pat is installed and hymn are sung in long sessions night after

night. Each such session lasts the entire night and the worshippers return to their homes in the early morning after taking the 'Churma'.

These hymn-singing sessions at certain household are attended by a number of enthusiasts. These hymn-singing sessions have some thing of the character of family, as these gods bestowed protection on the household which harboured and payed homage to them, but they could also be worshipped and have favours asked of them by others as well. The corporate element in their worship is most apparent in case of Ramapir, because every family which worshipped Ramapir is linked with every other one, through knowing the same hymns, and dance and song and through the common experience of being possessed by his spirit. There is another factor which tended to cause a feeling of solidarity to develop among worshippers and this is that families which did not subscribe to this cult are reluctant to enter into marriage ties with those that did; they felt that the responsibilities involved in worshipping the deity is even more onerous than his protection justified and preferred to keep clear of it altogether.

These are some of the worships of the principal gods and goddesses which are collectively done by the Garasias of Matadham village.

#### Annual Cycle of Festivals

Festivals form an important part of the Garasia cultural life. They serve to mitigate, and more positively to sweeten the otherwise round-the-year struggle with the elements, provide an occasion for the display of their gay, jovial nature and for the periodic release of emotions and help in renewing



social contacts and in strengthening community relations. Apart from providing fun and frolic, these festivals help in maintaining social solidarity. Notwithstanding, even in defiance of the hard lot that their inhospitable environment enjoins upon them, and the acute struggle for existence that it forces upon them, the Garasias have, by means of social cooperation, evolved a net work of festivals which aid them in sharing their hardships and fortunes.

Eleven ritual observances or religious ceremonies are celebrated annually by the Garasias. Five of these are local manifestation of widespread Hindu festivals. The remaining four festivals are apparently of only regional significance.

#### Calendrical Festivals of Garasias

<u>Name</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Month</u>
1. Khetlo Puja	Annual ceremonial worship of Bakhar Bav Singh when clay horses are offered by every family.	Chait (March-April)
2. Sur Mata Ka Mela	Annual ceremonial worship of Sur Mata when vows are fulfilled.	Chait (March-April) Next day of Holi
3. Gangor	Worship of Gaur Mata. This ceremony is connected with fertility of crops as well as of women.	Chait (April-May)
4. Baisakhi Mela	This is celebrated in connection with the annual ceremonial worship of Amba Mata at Ambaji. Garasias from all parts congregate on this occasion at Ambaji.	Baisakh Poonam (April-May)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Month</u>
5. Balev or Raksha Bandhan	Tying of red thread by sisters in the wrist of brothers.	Sawan (Aug-Sept.)
6. Diwali	Worship of all important deities	Kartik (Oct.-Nov.)
7. Sankrant	Omen reading day	Magh (Jan-Feb.)
8. Bhairav Puja	Annual Ceremonial Worship of Bhairavji	Magh (Jan-Feb.)
9. Holi		Falgun(Poonam) (Feb-March).
10. Akhatrij	Concerning crop fertility	Baisakh (April-May).
11. Nav-Ratri	Ceremonial sacrifice to Ambaji for driving out the evil spirits.	Ashwin (Sept.-Oct).

Besides these annual festivals, the Garasias also participate in Chitra-Vichitra fair held at a place in Sabarkantha district on the 15th day after Holi festival.

#### GHOSTS AND EVIL SPIRITS

The Garasias believe that a host of ghosts or malevolent spirits inhabit the village and surrounding countryside. These ghosts are unassociated with any one family or even any one village. They are usually the wandering spirits of deceased people who are out to attack living people. In general these ghosts (bhuts) attack at night in dark places. Strange or unaccountable sounds and the like are attributed to them. Their fear tend to prevent people from travelling at night.



Evil spirits are of several kinds, the two commonest and most dreaded being the ghosts of men who have died violently, or by a sudden accident 'before their time' (called bhut) and the female ghost with a hideous face, eyes in her breast and the feet backwards at the ankle (called churail). The latter are the ghosts of women who have died in childbirth. Bhuts are encountered most commonly at the masan (burning ghats) or else at the spot where the persons were killed. Their haunting, it is believed, is most intense for a span of twelve years, and then continues with less severity for another span. Many of illnesses are due to the anger of such ghosts, and they must be appeased in order that the victim can recover.

It is believed that the ghosts remain wandering in the air, however certain trees are tenanted by them. Mostly such trees are very old. Their favourite trees are 'ambli' 'ber' and mango. If a particular tree is recognised as the abode of a ghost, a piece of flat stone is kept underneath the tree which represents the image of the same. This stone is worshipped at an appropriate time. A miniature form of bow and arrow, made out of bamboo, is also kept near the stone to frighten the ghost. For appeasing this spirit, ghughri (made after boiling the maize corns) is offered at the time of worshipping. Vermillion is also put on the stone in order to show that victim reveres the same.

The worst of the ghosts possess certain people and are said to be entering their bodies because they are miserable disembodied souls seeking a body to dwell. Others are jealous of human beings or merely cantankerous. However, possession by a ghost differs from that by a

god or an ancestor. The term for ghost possession is 'bhut lagi gaya' (ghost has possessed) as contrasted to 'mathe awi gaya' (has come to a head) for possession by a god. Ghost possession is qualitatively different from possession by a god. Once a ghost has caught hold, it will usually, not leave unless forced out by exorcism. During the time it is in possession, it causes illness, unusual behaviour and even death. Insensitivity to pain is the usual diagnostic symptom of possession by a ghost. Other afflictions are: eyes rolled back, fever, inability to talk coherently, melancholia, some sensory disability or aphasia, catatonic adherence to a particular posture, illness, barrenness or repeated still births in case of females. Sometimes these afflictions may prove incurable because the ghost cannot be exorcised. Inexplicable sudden death is often attributed to a virulent ghost. The very fact of possession by the ghost is harmful to one possessed by it. A god, in contrast, bothers his victim without possessing him. He possesses the same only to dance or speak. He does so temporarily without harm to the one possessed, and he leaves voluntarily.

Ghosts do not attack as punishment for misdeeds or negligence, and they are not usually propitiated. They are coerced and expelled by means of charms, magical acts (such as placing of miniature form of bow and arrow near their stone image) or use of objects inimical to them. Once possession has occurred, they are driven out with the help of a professional exorcist who knows what will expel them. A few of them require sacrifice of a he-goat as ransom before departing, but this is not considered to be propitiatory sacrifice in the sense of an offering such as given to Amba Mata



or Bav Singh or Kala-Bhairavnath. People pay off an evil spirit. There simply is no feeling of guilt or laxity, as they cannot avoid such spirits by worship in advance.

Usually a shaman diagnoses possession by ghost and suggests a remedy to exorcise the same. Special precautions are taken at the time of disposal of the dead to ensure that nothing of the body remains for ghosts to use or torment sexually or otherwise, and to ensure that spirit of the deceased will not be bothered by other ghosts. A woman in her first pregnancy or having a first issue is especially vulnerable to attacks by the jealous ghosts of women who died in child birth.

In discussing ghosts of the dead and ancestors, the Garasias believe that the dead who return to torment the living are those who are thought to be angry or jealous. They are usually those, as referred earlier, who died prematurely or are improperly mourned. A deceased wife torments her successor, a person who died prematurely, jealously torments the living, a woman who died in child birth attacks young mothers, a father whose sons failed to give a proper feast at the time of his funeral rights is bound to suffer in the after life and therefore plagues his sons, a man whose family neglected to perform the 'Shradh' ceremony after death cannot take a rebirth and so troubles his family.

#### WITCHES

When women or especially small children are sick, the cause is very commonly ascribed by the Garasias to an act of 'dakan' or witch. There is believed to be one such witch in every village, and sometimes more

than one. No woman ever willingly submits such an allegation; indeed 'witch' and 'whore' are the two insulting epithets to be used only in the height of a very angry quarrel. Quite a wide spread delusionary system has been built around the witch. The Garasias are never tired of talking about how one witch seduced another woman into going the same way; how she can take the form of cat at will; how the witches go out at nights to consort with other witches, stripping naked and riding on hyenas while they shriek in the dark, and how destructive is their baleful glance. The psychological motives which give rise to such powerful projections of hostility and aggression by the witches are an interesting study in themselves. The whole question is attended with great secrecy, out of the fear of the power of the witch. It was with great persistence and persuasion that the name of the supposed witch in Matadham village could be known which however cannot be mentioned for obvious reasons.

Usually shamans, while diagnosing the victim, announce that the possessing agent was a particular witch. It is believed that the witches gradually eat up the liver of the victim, due to which the latter suffers horrible pain so much so that he or she becomes hysterical in his or her behaviour.

Once a woman suspected to be a witch is identified either by the shaman or sometimes even by the victim, a careful watch is kept over her by the villagers. If her movement is of a doubtful nature, such as occasionally moving out in the dark nights and if sickness frequents in her neighbourhood families, she is named by the villagers. In that case she is required to undergo a test to prove herself



against the accusation of being a witch. Some quantity of til oil is boiled to the boiling point in a metal cup (katori). Inside the Katori a one-rupee coin is put. The suspected woman is asked to take out the coin from the katori, full of boiling till oil. If her fingers get burnt in this process she is declared to be a witch. It is believed that if she is a witch, flames will begin to leap the moment she puts her hand inside the Katori to fetch the coin. When this is proved that she is a witch, a seal is put above her left eye-brow with the help of burning hot piece of stone. She is also compelled to drink the blood of he-goat. This is done in order to exorcise her. Even if after this, she persists in casting her spell, she is beaten mercilessly. Often she is swung by the feet from a very high tree while red peppers are bound as poultice over her eyes. The swinging would go on for hours or even in an extreme case day and night until the woman confessed and promised to cease her witch craft. Such a dangerous witch is generally turned out by her husband to return to her parents unless she found another man hardly enough to risk taking her as his wife. In earlier times, extremely dangerous witches used to be beheaded by the villagers when all kind of tortures inflicted upon her failed to stop her from practising black magic. This particularly used to happen when a particular witch became notorious for inflicting several deaths in the village.

The Garasias believe that witches are very covetous. They insidiously destroy any person, animal or object which they admire.

#### ANCESTOR WORSHIP

The spirits of ancestors are remembered by the Garasias. After death, memorial stones are prepared and installed at a place fixed for such memorials for the family. They are installed within about a year after the death. Whenever a male person dies in the family, the members say 'devta vegia' which means he has become a godling. A rough platform with a smooth stone set on top of it, is constructed in memory of the ancestors. However memorial stones are not erected for all the dead persons but only for those who were outstanding in bravery or personality. Nearly always, such a one will be the patel or any 'sadh' (spiritually divined) person in the family. Usually these memorials which are called 'Sura' are very crude and impermanent. A commoner form of 'sura' indistinguishable from others, is that built at the spot where a Garasia met with a violent or accidental death. The descendants of the dead person, in whose memory the 'sura' is installed, may worship 'sura' for some generations.

#### The Institution of Bhopa

A common sight inside the Devra during worship is that of a person sitting with half closed eyes and shaking his body. Similarly, such a person can be seen at the time of worship of Bakhar Bar Singh and at the hymn-singing sessions held to worship Ramapir Dev. The man is said to be possessed by the deota and is in a complete trance. His words are not usually intelligible to an outsider. He is the Bhopa. There is a separate Bhopa for different gods. For instance, there is one Bhopa for Kala Bhairav, one for Bakhar Bavsingh and one for Ramapir Dev. The position of



Bhopa in a village is entirely different. He is a medicine-man and the priest-cum-magician. Besides the Bhopa of the shrine, however, there are certain other individuals who are associated with the worship of these gods. Although the Bhopas have special position in the Garasia Society, they do not command too much authority. On the occasion of annual worships and hymn-singing sessions, the Bhopa of Kala Bhairav is acknowledged to be the central figure, but at other times he is seldom consulted. It is the Bhopa for Bakhar Bavsingh who is always consulted in case of difficulties faced by an individual.

Most of these Bhopas who choose the profession do so at the impulse of a motive in which faith, ambition and love of power are all inextricably mixed. Priestly vocation is nonetheless interpreted as a call from the supernatural world which cannot be disregarded with impunity. It is believed that a particular spirit has chosen a man as vehicle for supernatural powers and has decided to keep him in his service. Such spirits make their will known to him either by the utterances of the possessed or by a symbolic dream.

The explanation of mystic trance given by the Garasias is simple: a spirit moves into the head of an individual having first driven out his soul temporarily. The temporary eviction of the soul is responsible for the tremblings and convulsions which characterize the opening stages of trance. Once the Bhopa is possessed, he experiences a feeling of total emptiness as though he were fainting. His head whirls, the calves of his legs tremble; he now becomes not only the vessel but also the instrument of the god. From now on it is the god's personality and not his own which is expressed

in his bearings and words. The play of his features, his gestures, and even the tone of his voice all reflect the temperament and character of the god who has descended upon him. The relationship between the spirit and the Bhopa seized is compared to that which joins a rider to his horse.

The symptoms of the opening phase of trance are clearly psychopathological. They conform exactly, in their main features, to the stock clinical conception of hysteria. The Bhopas possessed start by giving an impression of having lost control of their motor system. Shaken by spasmodic convulsions they pitch forward, as though projected by a spring, turn frantically around and around, stiffen and stay still with body bent forward, sway, stagger, save themselves again and again to lose balance. Sometimes such attacks are sudden, sometimes they are heralded by preliminary signs: a vacant or anguished expression, mild trembling, panting breath or drops of sweat on the brow; the face becomes tense or suffering.

The god when in complete charge speaks and acts in the body of the Bhopa. The god then singles out the troubled person among the worshippers and tells each what troubles he has had and what the cause is, that is, what supernatural being has been tormenting him and what should be done to alleviate the trouble. The god may also identify human thieves of other culprits and point out objects that have deleterious magical effects.

The treatment recommended by a Bhopa is almost invariably performance of puja in honour of the offending supernatural being or exorcism if it is an evil spirit. In case of theft the Bhopa will merely identify the guilty party. In case of magical affliction he may



identify the offending object and recommend its removal.

Besides the Bhopas there are some other persons in the Garasia villages who are known as specialists (jānkar). Such persons are the physicians in the Garasia society who diagnose the cause of any trouble in the family, whether an illness, a theft, or a loss. He does by speaking his charms over a handful of maize and then laying out the grains in a series of patterns, first in pairs, then in threes, fours, fives and so on up to nine. By the number of grains left over at each dealing out he tells the nature and the source of the danger.

Such a person is respected, if he acquires a good reputation for healing the sick, and he may be feared on account of his dangerous charms ; but he is certainly not held in awe.

The art of the specialist has to be learned from another practitioner. In some cases it may be handed down from father to son, but more often the father refuses to instruct his own children, as there is room for only one active specialist in the village. Having learned the charms and the techniques of divining, the pupil must then accompany his instructor to the village burning ghat on the last night of the month of Kartik (about October). On this night ghosts are believed to return to earth. The specialist sits inside a magic circle marked upon the ground and converses with the ghosts. They may ask him for meat, or wine or bread and he comes prepared for this, throwing his gifts on to the ground well clear of the magical circle, where he is inviolable. Finally an apparition more terrible than all the rest appears. This is the king of ghosts and it is by virtue of his unearthly powers that the

specialist's charms acquire their potency. An apprentice cannot begin to practice with any hope of success until he has paid an experienced specialist a handsome sum in order to be initiated in this way. He dare not go alone, because without the protection of a potent charm, he would be destroyed by the ghosts.

Such specialists, although the possessor of certain magical skills, is not himself a religious figure, but simply an intermediary in cases where supernatural influences have complicated a man's life. Whereas a Bhopa is essentially a religious figure in the village.

#### Disease and Supernatural

Diseases are usually considered to be supernaturally caused. As we have noted earlier diagnosis is most often performed by a Bhopa or a specialist (Jan-kar) who recommends the appropriate type of practitioner and treatment. Again, as we have noted earlier, Shamanism is a major focus of religion among the Garasias. Some common diseases are thought to be amenable to direct treatment either with herbs and diets or with a vow to make sacrificial offerings to the supernatural deity due to whose anger the individual has been suffering. Persons knowing about the . . . have become rare in the society. Nevertheless, some herbal treatment is still given, to a patient having minor ailment. Following herbal treatment is recommended in certain diseases.

Srl. No.	Name of disease	Name of the Plant	How applied.
1	Cough	Gorhai	Its root is chewed.
2	Dysentry	Dimdo	Its gum is mixed with milk and drunk.



Sr. No.	Name of Disease	Name of the Plant.	How applied.
3	Stomachache	Akda	Its leaves are warmed and put upon the stomach. This process is repeated several times.
4	Headache	Akda	-do-
5	Sore eyes	Turmeric	The turmeric paste is prepared. It is put on a piece of cloth which is bandaged around the soring eye or eyes.
6	Wounds	(i) Dimdo (ii) Khati Limdo.	(i) The bark of the trunk of Dimdo tree is put upon the place of wound. (ii) From the root of Khati Limdo, paste is prepared and put upon the place of wound.
7	Sprains	Mujal	Leaves of mujal are boiled with water and applied at the place and bandage.
8	Ulcer	Mujal	Leaves of mujal tree are boiled and then tied on the ulcer.
9	Scorpion Bite	Hal(Sal)	From its bark, paste is prepared and the paste is applied at the place of bite.

Sr. No.	Name of Disease	Name of the Plant.	How applied.
10	Tiger Bite	Kander	From its leaves and stems paste is prepared which is applied at the place of tiger bite.
11	Snake Bite	(i) Kurwa (ii) Nagur Velo	(i) From the root of this plant a paste is prepared. After mixing the paste with more water, a drink is prepared. The victim is asked to drink the liquid. Due to the effect of this liquid, the victim vomits down and thus the snake poison flows out.  (ii) From the root of Nagur velo, a paste is prepared which is applied at the place of snake bite. The paste is also applied on the forehead. The victim is then wrapped with a thick chaddar.

The wrath of a malevolent supernatural being or the evil spirits such as ghosts and churnail is taken for granted when a Garasia or any member of his family is stricken with serious and prolonged illness. Even if a minor ailments, such as boil or wound persists and does not show any sign of healing after the application of a tried cure of the indigenous herbs, then it is sure sign that some evil spirit is at work. Thus, the spirits are also held responsible for the



protraction and intensity of natural diseases. In such cases, the specialist is consulted who finds out the spirit responsible for the disease and accordingly he recommends treatment. Sometimes he simply asks the patient to take a vow in the name of the spirit to make offering when cured. Mona Dungaicha of Matadham village, wounded his leg by an axe. His wound became septic after some time. After consultation with the specialist he made a vow in the name of Amba Mata that he will offer her special puja with appropriate offerings when he gets cured. His wound gradually filled up after two months and he proposes to make the special offering on the occasion of Baishakhi Poonam (Full moon) when the Sangh of Garasias congregate at Ambaji to worship the deity. Until he makes the offering he will never visit the temple. It is believed that without making the offerings if an individual goes for Mata's darshan, he is fiercely punished.

At the time of taking the vow, five Sādh persons of the village are invited by the victim at his residence. He ceremonially washes their feet by himself. Then these persons make prayers to the Mata and take vow on his behalf for the ceremonial offering. They recite the prayer in the following manner.

O! Mother Ambe! have mercy on the (the name of victim) to-day.

He will offer you Churma and Coconut and sprinkle flowers.

or O! Mother Ambe! have mercy on us

We will sacrifice a goat and offer its head to you.

In another case in village Matadham during our stay Kala's wife's sister was severely ill. After consultation with the specialist it was found that she was ill due to

wrath of Sur Mata. The specialist recommended to offer clay horses in the name of Sur Mata. The victim's father made such a vow in the name of Sur Mata. When his daughter got cured, he offered a pair of clay horses to Sur Mata on the day (next day of Holi) when annual ceremonial worship is done at her shrine.

Such vows are also taken in the name of Bakhar Bav Singh and Kala Bhairav. Ceremonial offerings are made to them against the vows taken on the day of annual worship of these gods.

In case the specialist diagnoses possession by a ghost, he refers the patient or the patient's parents (in case the patient is a child one) to an expert in exorcism. It is believed that once the ghost has caught hold it will usually not leave unless forced out by exorcism. Practitioners who exorcise ghosts can often do so simply by chanting appropriate charms and placing a sacred mark on the body of the victim. The ghost cannot face such sacredness and must leave. Some ghosts leave under physical duress such as a mild beating or blessed grain thrown in the face of its victim. Some require very complex rites of exorcism. Such a complex rite was observed from the body of the daughter of Bhimla Garasia of Matadham village. The rite was observed in the following manner:

"Two practitioners were called to perform the rites of exorcism. In a broken piece of earthen pitcher of black colour, fire in the form of burning cowdung was kept. A lamp was prepared out of the leaves of Sal tree. The mouth of the lamp was left wide enough. In this lamp, five cotton wicks were placed in a row and were lighted. The lamp was filled with oil. One end of the wicks remained immersed in the oil. On two leaf plates, for the expulsion of the ghost



a sweat dish made out of maize flour was kept. On one side a coconut was also kept. Both the practitioners sat opposite each other facing east and west. In between them the child was made to sit on the ground. Three green lemons were kept nearby. One practitioner cut one lemon into four pieces but allowed to remain intact. He picked up the lemon which has been cut up and also picked up one burning wick. Both these things were first touched to the forehead of the child and gradually the mouth, stomach, thighs and feet. Then he sucked the juice of lemon and also put the burning wick in his mouth. After this he threw these in the burning fire in the broken piece of the earthen pitcher. Same process was repeated by the other practitioner. Again this process was repeated by the first practitioner. After this the coconut was broken into pieces and with a piece of coconut, the above performance was repeated by both the practitioners. They ate half of the piece of the coconut which is touched with the body of the child while other half was thrown into the fire. The same observance was again performed with the sweat dish. Then the goat to be sacrificed was brought. One practitioner sprinkled water on the body of the goat. Then he picked up a burning wick from the lamp and displayed it in circular fashion before the goat and after touching it to the forehead of the child; he then threw the wick after extinguishing it in the fire. Afterwards the goat was taken into courtyard and sacrificed with a single blow by a sword. This was done by another person. The same person collected the blood of the sacrificed goat in a metal vessel (Katora) and handed over to the chief practitioner. Again he picked up a burning wick from the lamp and together with the metal vessel filled with the blood, he observed the same rite of touching these to the body of the child. When he brought these things to the

stomach of the child, he drank some of the goat's blood. Again he got the vessel touched with the thighs of the child. Here again he paused and drank more of the goat's blood. Lastly he brought the vessel in contact with the child's feet and thereafter once again drank the goat's blood. Some of the goat's blood left in the vessel was thrown into the fire. At this point he uttered loudly, 'Eat, Drink and be Merry and never come again to torture this child'.

After performing this rite he picked up the earthen vessel in which the fire has been kept and the blood of the sacrificed goat and other things have been thrown and carried it to the place (under a tree) where the ghost was supposed to reside. After placing that there he came back.

Meanwhile the sacrificed goat was cut into small pieces for cooking. Some more elders had been invited to attend this rite. The meat was boiled in water and with the help of salt and chillies, the cooked meat was eaten by them."

Thus, the necessary thing in the expulsion of evil spirit is the sacrifice as ransom to the ghost. This is like simply paying off an evil spirit.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE TRANSITIONAL PHASE: PROBLEMS AND TASKS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

In the foregoing chapters, the focus has been to paint a general picture of the culture pattern of Garasia community, in terms of the socio-economic structure as well as the ways of life and concepts of value inherited from their ancestors. In this chapter, we will explore the process of culture change occurring in the community which will be useful in understanding the problems and tasks of economic development they are facing.

As has been observed earlier, the Garasias have been living in the inhospitable region of the Aravalli range. Although they have suffered in terms of remaining economically poor due to living a relatively secluded life, they have also enjoyed the blissful seclusion. Some of the most important factors and processes for a slow rate of contact may be analysed for understanding why they prefer to remain inward-oriented by minimization of outside ties.

1. The habitat of Garasias is comparatively inaccessible by the nature of its location.
2. There has been almost no exploration of mines and minerals in this region which has been a great obstacle in developing sustained contacts with outside world as one finds in the Chhotanagpur region of Bihar State.
3. With no problem of greater pressure of population on land as one encounters in areas of crops demanding more labour intensity (e.g., wet rice areas of the plains of South Gujarat or Kaira District), the Garasias are not forced to seek employment outside their own region and hence are prevented from migrating to other regions in search of employment.

4. Unlike several tribes in the country (such as tribes of north-eastern region of India and Chhotanagpur region in Bihar State), the Garasias have been spared to come under the influence of any Christian mission. There is almost no evidence of any conversion having ever taken place in this region. Thus, the Garasias have been able to remain free from the force of change usually brought by one of the most powerful acculturative agencies.

5. The Second World War did not make any impact on the socio-economic life of the Garasias as some tribes in Bihar and Assam had been affected by the war economy.

6. Voluntary efforts by social workers to bring reformative movement, as one finds in the tribal areas of South Gujarat and Panchmahal district have been conspicuously negligible. Sporadic attempts by Social Workers have been successfully resisted by the Garasias.

7. On account of the hazards suffered during the periods of Mughal and British rule in the country (due to the bloody feuds), the Garasia adapted to their environment in order to maximize the chances of survival in an uncertain world by shunning themselves from outside involvement. In a sense, even today the present generation of Garasias avoid contact with the agents of the present day Government. The Garasias withdrew from significant participation with the agents of ruling class because of their powerlessness to manipulate the outside world for their benefit. Exploitation by those classes controlling their region or their representatives



was a continuing problem for the Garasias. These resulted an orientation towards minimization of outside dependencies in favour of supplying needs within the family and the local area.

This inward orientation was expressed, as we have seen while describing their economic life, in a high degree of economic self sufficiency of households, fatalistic attitude, a low level of technological innovation and a relatively close status system. The experience of exploitation and the strength of the outside agencies, the Garasias were forced to withdraw from anymore outside participation than necessary. The nature of their social and cultural life has also been a contributory factor in shunning outside participation. Alongwith the subsistence agriculture and low technology characteristic of the Garasia villages came a particular type of production. On small plots of land, families were practising agricultural operation in similar ways. The tasks performed by one farming family were same performed by any other. Each family head had similar roles as other heads and the same was true for other corresponding members. In other words, the community was marked by a relatively low degree of role differentiation and specialization of tasks.<sup>1</sup> Although the primary unit of production was the family, it was the lineage which was the important social group. Members of a lineage group displayed a high degree of solidarity which was reflected in the ritual interdependence and social interaction among themselves. The relationship between members of a lineage group was built upon multiplexities which ensured the continuity and stability of the community's culture pattern. As has been observed in

case of other inward oriented communities elsewhere, the Garasias too, 'through reinforcement of ties stemming from the household's function as the productive unit, beyond the economic realm into realms of kinship and religious obligations - succeeded in creating some degree of economic and social stability in their very precarious existence.

Even though the inward oriented Garasia community appear to be unchanging, they are increasingly getting more involved with and dependent on the outside world. But this has not affected their social stability which they have been able to retain over a long period of contact with outside world. In spite of the comparative seclusion in which the Garasias have lived in the past, they have not escaped infiltration from outside and have developed contacts with heterogenous peoples of varying cultural levels. The Garasia villages are always incomplete in the goods, services and personnel necessary to their functioning. These are accessible, to a great extent, within a large surrounding areas which includes several villages, small towns (such as Ambaji, Abu Road and Danta) and trading centres. This large surrounding area is characterized by cultural unity, frequent social interaction, and economic and ritual interdependence. We have seen that for Garasias of Matadham, this unit comprises the surrounding hill area (extending from Western part of Danta Taluka to northern part to Abu Road and to Poshina patta in Sabarkantha district). This area contains some 70 villages and towns. It is the area within which all the specialists necessary to economy are found. It is, therefore, the area over which artisans move to perform their duties and collect their payments. In it are



also merchants who serve as important sources of goods from the outside and as market for local goods. Within this area lie the town of Ambaji whose sacred complex attract thousand and thousand pilgrims every year from outside world. It is the area within which marriages of most Garasias of Matadham take place and therefore within which consanguinal and affinal kin ties are concentrated. As a result it is the largest area within which visiting frequently occurs. It is the maximal area over which most Garasia women have travelled in their lives. In this area are found not only the formal and informal councils of local self government and the judicial councils but the local representatives of the State and national government, the teachers, the village level workers, the Development Officers, Cooperative Inspectors, Forestry Officials, officials of Revenue Department, Police and others with whom villagers must deal.

In short, while a Garasia village is a real, functional unit, the immediate cultural area is the more self sufficient unit. However, even this immediate cultural area is not isolated nor independent. It is in constant contact with similar neighbouring areas. Moreover, such areas, including the one surrounding Matadham are in constant contact with urban centres such as Palanpur, Sirohi, Abu Road and Khedbrahma. Many goods and services must come to the Garasia country directly or indirectly from outside. Garasias often go outside to obtain goods and services rather than obtaining through intermediaries. Sometimes, as in the licensing of firearms, or as a convict in offending prohibition policy, they must go to Palanpur. Authority over the people of the area rests ultimately with

outside law and outside government located at Palanpur, Danta and Ambaji. Garasias who live within the area feel the effects of the outside world in communication with outsiders and in their own trips to the outside.

It is <sup>in</sup> this background that changes occurring in this area can be visualised properly. During the pre-independence period, due to lack of poor communicational facilities the area was comparatively isolated as has been pointed out earlier. The feudatory chiefs under whose rule the Garasias lived, took little interest in them. In fact these people were being oppressed by the rulers in a number of ways due to which the Garasias never desired to confront the rulers. Due to all these factors there was little scope for economic development in the community and whatever changes were occurring, those must be very slow and not apparently visible. Therefore it will be better to consider the changes which have taken place after independence when the Garasia community became citizen of free India and were brought under the welfare oriented government of free India.

Development efforts through the welfare policies enshrined in the Constitution of the country, improved communication and transportation facilities and influx of large number of outsiders in their region in recent times have brought the Garasias in direct confrontation to the challenge of outward oriented forces of bringing changes.



### EFFORTS TOWARDS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

As we have seen earlier the agricultural practices of the tribals of this area had been in crude form. Being ignorant of improved practices of agriculture, improved implements, improved seeds and use of fertilizers etc., they were doing agriculture on traditional pattern in which these new innovations had no place. On account of this, they were having very low yield. They mainly depended on rains, used cow-dung as manure and local seeds. Use of crude agricultural implements was in vogue. There was complete absence of the use of insecticides.

Altogether there were 450 wells and 7 tanks which were used for irrigating the field in villages of the region. On the wells the Garasias of this area have been raising either persian wheel (locally known as Ranhat) or Pavati (a kind of persian wheel manned by the cultivators themselves, not with the help of bullocks). From these sources altogether 1910 acres of land were under irrigation. Bhil-Garasias of Sanali and Hadad patta also used an indigeneous method of irrigating their field. In this method, they used to check the flow of the mountaneous stream by putting a trunk of date-palm tree across the flowing water at appropriate place. Due to this they were able to store the rainy water. During winter season when they needed water for irrigation, they dug channels for carrying the accumulated water to their field. As the flow of the stream used to be checked at some height, it was not difficult for them to rush the accumulated water downward towards their field. This was known 'Saran method'. But the whole scheme depended on adequate rainfall during the rainy season. If there was low

rainfall, naturally little amount of water could have been stored which perhaps got dried up much earlier before winter season. By this source the Bhil-Garasias and Garasias of this region were able to irrigate nearly 1000 acres of land. Irrigation was done mainly in case of wheat crop. A few cultivators did irrigate their land when they raised green vegetables or some plants of spices.

The bullocks kept by these Garasias were used to be unhealthy and of small stature. On account of not feeding them properly, the domesticated animals were not strong enough to plough the field properly. Further these were also not suitable for use of improved variety of plough, particularly the new iron-plough. The tribals were used to keep these animals on fodder only. Usually a household having 1-6 acres of land used to keep one pair of bullocks while one having more land kept either three or four bullocks. Some households might not have any bullock but they got the bullocks of their immediate kin for ploughing.

The Garasias have been also keeping buffaloes, although they did not use for consumption of milk. Nearly 150 buffaloes had been enumerated in the area of Danta Tribal Development Block, but before its existence. Cows were in very little number. On an average each buffalo produced 1 litre of milk per day. The milk was mainly used for extracting ghee which was sold in market to get some income.

The main crop of the tribals of this region, as mentioned earlier have been mainly bajri, jowar, wheat, maize, oilseeds, cotton and ground-nut. A few have been producing rice, pulses and other coarse grains. However, their major diet has been maize.



Groundnut too, was not very popular among these tribals. In former days i.e., before the start of the block, the tribals used to produce the following quantity in one acre of land; maize - 300 kilo, jowar - 250 kilo, bajri - 250 kilo, oilseeds - 200 kilo, cotton - 200 kilo and groundnut - 150 kilo.

Thus, altogether a depressing picture emerged regarding the state of agricultural economy of the tribals before the start of developmental efforts. Perhaps, they might have been able to fulfil their needs, to great extent, from the forest. As regards agricultural labour work, the poor tribals used to get engaged in such work for which an adult male used to get Re.1.00 while an adult woman Rs.0.75 only. Besides, they were provided with 'bidis'. They had to work for 9-10 hours on such a meagre wage. Opportunities for getting engaged as labourer in construction works etc. were few and far, not within easy reach. Hence, the second line of defence for their subsistence was forest where they were able to hunt games, to bring minor forest produce and sell away, and to gather edible roots and fruits for consumption.

After the development programme was started and upto this period, attempts have been made to bring all round progress in the agriculture of those tribals.

Due to the distribution of improved variety of seeds, through the agency of the Tribal Development Block, the Garasias have started using such seeds for maize, wheat and cotton. Upto this time, i.e. during 1965-1968, altogether 68,000 kilo of wheat, Ng 824 variety have been distributed. Similarly, 1200 kilo of hybrid maize, 200 kilo of Patan-64 oilseed and 14,000 kilo of cotton Gujarat-67 have been distributed among the tribals of

this block. On account of the distribution of such seeds, the acreage of land in which these were being cultivated have been rising steadily.

For making chemical fertilizers popular among these tribals ammonia sulphate, urea, superphosphate, ammonia sulphate-phosphate and green manure have been distributed among the Garasias.

Green manure has been distributed to be used in nearly 150 acres. On the whole, it has been reported that good number of Garasias have started using chemical fertilisers. Atleast, now very few of them have remained ignorant as yet, about the use of chemical fertilizers.

Improved variety of implements have been also gaining slow popularity among the tribals. A few of them have been now owning such implements which they have purchased on the recommendation of the Extension Officer for agriculture of the block. But the number of such agriculturists was very low and thus more effort was needed to make such implements more popular.

For the protection of standing crops, the agriculturists of this block have begun to use duster and sprayer. It was reported that 25 and 20 agriculturists owned dusters and sprayers respectively. Besides, each Gramsevak has been supplied with such appliances and some agriculturists did take benefit of that. The Gramsevaks were required to do the spraying and dusterling under their individual supervision.

In the field of irrigation, Rs.2,25,000 has been given on loan to the agriculturists for construction of new wells, for making kachcha well a pucca one, for purchasing oil engines, etc. The major investment out of



the total expenditure under the head of agriculture has been on minor irrigation programme. On account of this, the land under irrigation has now come to be 4580 acres from 2910 acres which was at the time of the start of the block. There has been steady increase in the number of wells and oil engines in the block.

Although good improvement has been made in bringing more and more cultivable land under irrigation, there was enough scope to be done in this sphere. Only about 14 percent of the total cultivable land has come under irrigation. Again, as has been pointed out earlier, irrigation was done only at the time of raising wheat.

In the sphere of animal husbandary programme, 333 improved variety of one-day bird and 100 - 4 months birds have been supplied free of cost to the tribals. Two veterinary hospitals have been opened in this block. But viewing the load of works of these two centres, it might be suggested that more such centres should be established.

There were number of other facilities in terms of subsidy, for purchase of improved variety of seeds, improved variety of implements, chemical fertilizers, which were provided to the tribal agriculturists of this block.

Although in terms of achievements of the block development programmes for agriculture there has been progress but it was difficult to say how much impact these have made on the tribals of this block. Even in terms of achievement not much substantial progress has been achieved so as to make any concrete impact on the agricultural economy of the tribals of this block. In view of this more concerted effort was needed to make intensive propaganda about the new and improved variety of seeds, fertilizers, insecticides, improved implements,

etc., so that more and more Garasias would take up these in shortest possible time. In number of villages, the tribals have never used hybrid maize, have never heard of improved variety of implements. On discussion with the Block staff, it was learnt that most of these achievements of the block-work were concentrated in Hadad and Senali patta of this block. When it was enquired from them why good many villages have been completely left out and why not better concentration on such villages were given which were really lagging behind in terms of economic development, most of the staff admitted that since they had to fulfil the target within a given time, they did not bother to approach such villages as the people of such villages would take enough time in finally accepting a programme. For doing things quickly and with least troubles, they approached only those villages where there have been possibility of doing things easily and quickly. It was a matter of commonsense that such villages would not be much in number because large percentage of tribals were illiterate and ignorant. Only a few tribal villages in this area could boast of having literate and enlightened individuals.

The major items of agricultural development programme, such as use of improved seeds, improved implements, fertilizers have reached to only a small number of tribals. In the animal husbandry programme no improved bull has been supplied. On account of this, the tribals won't be able to have superior quality of bullock, more healthy and strong enough to plough deeply. In absence of all the above items on mass scale, there appeared little chance to attain the goal of economic development of the tribals within reasonable span of time.



## COOPERATION AND SMALL INDUSTRIES

The cooperative societies have spread up in every region of the block so that all the villages now have become covered. Altogether there were 16 credit cooperative societies, 1 Industrial Cooperative Society. Before the start of the block, there were 13 credit cooperative societies. The Industrial Cooperative Society was functioning since much before. Hence, after the start of the block only 3 more credit cooperative societies have been added.

It was found that formerly 77 percentage of the total amount of loan was given to tribals. Now nearly 84 percent of the total amount of loan has been given to tribals. But the tribals appeared to be slow in repaying the loan back to the societies.

Altogether 2380 out of 2636 members were tribals forming 90 percent of the total members. The total number of tribal landowners was 4832. This meant that only nearly 49 percent of the tribal households have become member of the such societies. Thus, although credit society covered all the villages of the block these did not cover all the household. Much was desired to be done in this direction.

From discussion with the officials it was learnt that the average amount of loan given to a household was much below the need and ultimately they had to borrow from moneylenders. In fact it was complained that the money obtained by loan from societies was used for repaying loan to moneylenders. Although, the amount given as loan was small, most of the tribals failed to repay the loan. With the result, they did not become able to get loan for the second time. And hence, they again fell into the

clutches of the moneylenders or they had to resort to labour work for obtaining more money to be put into cultivation. The overall picture, one got was that although cooperative movement has spread up, it, hardly, has become real useful to the tribal agriculturists. There was urgent need to revise the rules regarding giving loans to tribals. Also, cooperative societies for undertaking construction work may also be organised to provide relief to the tribals during their precarious condition which generally come in the monsoon period. Cultivation should also be organised on cooperative basis, as far as possible to increase the yield of the land. On account of poor productivity of land it was beyond the capacity of single household to get better yield.

As mentioned earlier there was only one industrial cooperative society functioning. There were 11 members. All of them were non-tribals and the amount of share and total working capital has been Rs.320.00 only. This indicated that this society has not been functioning properly.

There were two other cooperative societies whose memberships have been 280. All of them have been non-tribals. The amount of share was Rs.7300.00 and the working capital amount was Rs-4,35,600.

Viewing the needs of the tribal people, certain programmes have been undertaken under the small scale industries development programme, such as carpentry, ~~ambar~~ Charkha, minor forest produce collection, rope making, soap making and manufacture of minor implements. But these programmes have not gained much popularity since only a small number of Garasias have participated in such programme. Besides, 50 percent



subsidy was provided to the trained personnel who wanted to take up these vocations for earning income. Four programme to industrial organisations were also organised to encourage the tribal people of this region.

Altogether there was Rs.65,000 as budget to be spent on the above programmes. But only Rs.16,887 has been spent. This revealed that not much attention has been given over making these programmes popular. In fact the amount of Rs.16,887 has been spent only on two programmes.

Further, Rs.7200 has been distributed as loan among 24 trainees for purchase of sewing machines.

Thus, altogether there was a depressing picture about the development of small scale industries among the tribals of this block. This ought to be given urgent attention as there was enough potentiality among tribals for such development.

#### EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Before the block came into existence there were 61 primary and other schools in the area. At the time of investigation there were 143 such schools in the area. There has been increase in the number of schoolgoing children too.

TABLE XXXII

Educational development among tribals of the Block.			
	No. before the year 1963	No. at the time of enquiry.	No. of tribal students.
Boys	888	3,304	846
Girls	104	2,202	60
Total	1,092	5,506	906

Thus, although education has spread up in the area but it has not affected much to the tribals. One could see that the total number of tribal students was denloreably low. The number of tribal teachers employed in various schools, too, was only 16 out of total 167 teachers. Of the 167 teachers, 104 teachers were trained ones.

No Balvadis was being run by any agency. Only one Ashramshala was running at Machkoda village through the agency of Bhil Seva Mandal. But this is a village of Bhil-Garasia. There was some plan to start an Ashram shala in the region where Garasias live but owing to quarrel over the location, between members of Taluka Shikshan Samiti, the grant was allowed to lapse prematurely.

Some activities concerning adult education have been undertaken by the block and nearly 438 adults have been made literate.

Thus, although Rs.54,662.15 have been spent under the head of education, very little progress has been achieved in the expansion of education among the tribal people of this block. The number of schools and the number of teachers have increased but in that proportion there has been little increase in the number of school going children from the tribal community.

Despite the expenditure of the Government for their economic development, the picture of Garasias economy, as is evident from the description given in Chapter V on their economy, was that of a vast, stagnant, subsistence economy upon which has been grafted a rapidly expanding but still relatively/<sup>small</sup> monetary sector. The overall picture that emerged was that of a low income population in which virtually the entire community is dependent upon agriculture. Due to the low participation



in the secondary and tertiary sector and limited scope of expansion of primary sector without getting financial support from outside agency, the Garasias economy belonged to what is known as traditional and backward sector.

In 1962, a study group appointed by the Government recommended a per capita consumption of Rs.20 per month at 1960-61 prices (excluding expenditure on health and sanitation) as the bare minimum of living in India.<sup>3</sup> Dandekar and Rath consider a per capita annual expenditure of Rs.324 in rural areas (at 1968-69 prices) as necessary for a 'minimum level of living'.<sup>4</sup> On the basis of both these estimates, it can be seen that the Garasias have been living in an acute situation of poverty, since the per capita annual expenditure in Matadham, on calculation comes to about Rs.150.00 (see Chapter V on Garasia Economy). No doubt, the Garasias have to put up a bold and strenuous struggle for existence. The backwardness of the Garasias is also reflected in their material possessions.

The backwardness is reflected in the structure of houses, clothing, household articles, education, etc. Walls of the houses are built with mud and the roofs are covered with country tiles. The house furnishings simply consisted of one or two cots and some utensils needed for the preparation of food. Most of the family members slept on mats. For baking the bread they mostly use earthen 'tava' while for kneading the dough they use a wooden plate which is known as 'kathrot'. For cooking pulses, vegetables or meat, each family possesses one or two aluminium utensils. Use of crockeries and stainless steel utensils is rare. As the Garasias mainly eat the bread of maize, they manage to eat the bread by holding it on the palm of the hand. Surplus bread is stocked

in small bamboo basket. Only when pulses, or vegetable curry or meat curry is cooked, they use brass thalis or pots, one or two of which are possessed by every family. Water is stored in earthen pitcher. For keeping the house lighted after evening the Garasias use kerosine oil tin lamps. Lantern has not yet come into vogue. However, fancy goods such as a mirror, a comb, soap, perfumed oil can be found in most of the families. The clothing consisted of Dhoti and shirts or bush shirts for men and ghaghra, jhulki (a blouse type garment, with sleeves reaching beyond the elbow) and head cloth known as "Sarilo" or "Lugra". for women who also use traditional ornaments made either of silver or alloyed metal and cheap lac bangles.

One of the most revealing facts about backwardness of the Garasias is the very low rate of literacy despite its proximity to Ambaji town. Although a school had been started in Matadham in 1954, only 5 men have attended schools while among women only 1 girl has been fortunate enough to attend the same. Only 3 men claimed to have become illiterate without schooling. As seen earlier, of the total number of school going students in the entire Danta taluks, only 16.5 constituted of tribal students although it is a predominantly tribal taluka. It is sometimes asked whether education precedes or whether it follows economic growth. Some economists suggest that instead of being a precondition it is a concomitant of growth.<sup>5</sup> A recent study offers some evidence in support of the proposition that education does have an effect on economic growth, the effect, however, is delayed and not felt for a period of ten to twenty years.<sup>6</sup> Our own experience in some other tribes of Gujarat confirm the above contention. The



Dhodias and Choudharys who were the first to avail the education in the beginning of this century, are today the most advanced tribal groups in Gujarat. Were it asked, incidentally, in what areas could the educated apply their talents, the answer is that bringing technical knowledge to the villages could be one of those areas.<sup>7</sup>

To this it can be added that the educated are in, better equipped to fight the exploitation by moneylenders, etc.

Due to living below the poverty line, majority of the families in Matadham have been indebted. To pay off the debt, the Garasias have to mortgage the standing crops and sometimes their land too.<sup>8</sup> This cripples their economy for a long time as well as kills their incentives to improve their agricultural economy. Mortgage of the produce of land is arranged in a clandestine manner and for that no written document is prepared. The moneylenders are fully aware of the honesty of Garasias in this matter and they exploit it to the fullest extent. Moreover, it has been a continuing process since long time and the Garasias have been left with no choice other than to suffer the exploitation meekly. Although there is a collective awareness among the Garasias of their exploitation but who will venture to risk standing up against the powerful moneylenders and who, for that matter, expects to get a hearing from the arrogant and unwitting bureaucrats? Crazed, power drunk gang of moneylenders whose interests have always been accommodated by the regional bureaucracy have been strangling the Garasia's economy.

To top this, the slow rate of progress of development programmes is not making any perceptible impact on the economy of the Garasias. Large number of Garasia villages have been completely left out. These were

villages whose economy was extremely backward and stagnant. Instead of concentrating to bring growth in the economy of these villages, the development personnel approached only those villages where there have been possibility... of doing things easily, quickly and with least troubles. It was a matter of commonsense that such villages will not be much in number because a large percentage of tribals are illiterate and ignorant. Much of the block's achievements are concentrated in villages of Hadad and Sanali 'Patta', a region which has better concentration of non-tribals, as well as of Bhil Garasias. While in the villages which are lying in the mountainous fastness, and which is the country of Garasias it is clearly visible that nothing concrete has been done to improve the economy. Due to the apathy, illiteracy and ignorance of the Garasias to cope with outside world, it has been easy for the government personnel to exploit them. We need not dwell here at length of such exploitations. The administrative decentralization that has been introduced, as well as that consequent tendency... of the local government bureaucracy to become politicized, have had, on the whole advantageous consequences for the non-tribal landowners and traders?

Thus, altogether a depressing picture emerged regarding the backwardness, exploitation and stagnation of the Garasia's economy. As we have seen, 84.6 percent of those gainfully employed in Matadham have been engaged in agriculture. If this is true for all the Garasia villages, and probably this is so, then so large an agriculture sector poses a serious problem because good agricultural land was and still is scarce since large area is mountainous and arid. The subsistence of each family is based essentially on one crop. However, land availability, and persistence of traditional mode



of agriculture limit the production of maize... to such an extent that it is difficult to feed the family, much less to buy other food items which supplement maize in the diet and even more numerous items of clothing and household equipment. Very few of the necessities of life are made at home or obtained free. Opportunities within the community to supplement family income are limited. Industry is non-existent and animal husbandry is of little importance for Garasias. It is a grim struggle to make both ends meet.

There is a growth retarding factor that can be traced to personality traits of the people themselves. It consists of old beliefs and traditions deeply rooted in their character. The Garasias have much pride in identifying with Rajput community and they militantly guard the achieved high social status amongst other tribal groups of the region. In order to keep their legendary high status, they have refrained themselves from participating in the developmental activities because that would mean to come down on the social scale as in these developmental activities the group having lower status was also participating. Further, on account of reasons of historical events, not in too distant past, they have developed a distrustful attitude towards persons concerned with administration. Hence they think that it is safer not to get involved with government machinery.

These nonpecuniary manifestations could not be considered synonymous with irritational behaviour, because in the schemes of values they embodied accepted norms. As has been rightly observed that 'for the survival of the group did not depend upon production alone;

rather than production was assumed to be dependent upon proper placation of the deities which in turn stress social cohesion. Cohesion of the group was the main essential to survival, given a technology for production in which there was no known possibility of changing'<sup>10</sup>. In such a situation, the belief and value-orientations of the Garasias are still oriented towards the traditional scheme of cultural life in which 'emphasis is on conservation, not change'<sup>11</sup> since the Garasias believed that, in an uncertain world, any departure from the mechanisms involved through the social and economic institutions involved the risk of chaos and death to the group.

But it is not merely the social ethos of the Garasias which is the chief obstacle to economic change among them. The harsh broader physical, social, political and economic realities to which Garasias had to accommodate for survival have been rather the casual factors. To cope with a hostile environment their social institutions grew to ensure survival in an insecure world. The institutionalized procedures adopted by the community limited the degree of external relations which reduced dependence on a hostile world and prevented outside participation. The persistence of these procedures has the effect of limiting direct contact with development personnel. However, with a genuine and correct approach it is certain by possible to break the hold of such values.

Economic development implies an opening of a new range of economic opportunities. With this view a good deal of encouragement, assistance and credit from government sources are being provided to the tribals and other weaker sections. The massive multithronged efforts which the State Government has <sup>put</sup> under the tribal sub-plan, are likely to achieve faster economic development. The following measures



have been adopted in Dantataluka to generate more employment opportunities for the Garasias.

- (i) Animal husbandry programme etc, supply of milch cattle at subsidized rates. A total outlay of Rs.4.23 lakh has been earmarked for dairy development in the plan period.
- (ii) Poultry development programme on large scale is being undertaken. An outlay of Rs.3.36 lakh has been envisaged.
- (iii) Development of Fisheries to provide employment to tribals.  
Six villages viz. Mota Pipodara, Rinchhdi, Hadad, Mirawas, Khandar Umri, Jaswantpura have been selected as tanks were existing there. Altogether 12 fisheries units have been proposed. 120 trainees are to be trained. An outlay of Rs.32,4000 has been earmarked for this.
- (iv) Industrial training programme to help tribal entrepreneurs to establish their own industry.  
A taluka level cooperative industrial society will be formed to promote industrial activities. Altogether three training schools will be established. They are as follows:

<u>Name of Schools.</u>	<u>No. of Trainees to be trained during plan period.</u>
1. Coir Industrial School	135
2. Cane and Bamboo School	75
3. Cotton Weaving School	125

Under this programme, a pharmaceutical industrial Cooperative Society has also been proposed.

- (v) Encouragement is being given to Forest Labourers Cooperative Society to undertake manufacturing of goods from local materials.
- (vi) On a comprehensive basis, soil conservation scheme is being undertaken. In 2711.00 hectare of agricultural land, contour bunding will be done. Plugging of gullys and nala and also terracing will be done in additional 903 hectares. More than 400 cultivators are to be benefitted. An outlay of Rs.24.17 lakhs has been earmarked.
- (vii) Major irrigation programmes on a large scale to generate employment have been proposed. It is proposed to spend Rs.78 lakhs for this scheme. Over 300 wells, 3 tanks, 6 check-dams will be constructed. It is expected that these schemes will provide labour employment to the tune of 2.96 lakh mandays.
- (viii) Afforestation programme. An outlay of Rs.15.90 lakhs has been proposed for the implementation of schemes under the programme of afforestation. It will create more than 150 thousand mandays of employment.
- (ix) Strengthening of viable cooperative structure. An outlay of Rs.10.10 lakh has been earmarked.
- (x) Various training programmes for imparting skill to the tribal youth to utilize the job opportunities offered and also for self-employment.
- (xi) Encouragement is being given to take up bee-keeping industry.
- (xii) Electrification programme for facilitating the entrepreneurs as cultivators. An adhoc provision of Rs.12.00 lakhs has been made to implement this programme in the taluka and adjoining villages of Amirgadh region.



(xiii) Programme for starting agro-based and forest-based industries are being evolved.

(xiv) Strict enforcement of reservation of quota.

The above stated programmes are being undertaken in addition to the ambitious programme of developing agriculture on a sound basis. There are number of schemes which are going to be implemented in the agriculture and allied sector, such as supply of fruitgrafts, promotion of vegetable cultivation, supply of high yielding variety seeds, distribution of plant protection appliances, distribution of seeds, fertilizers and pesticides, supply of chemical fertilizers, supply of bullocks, supply of bullock carts, agricultural education tours, farmer shibirs, tractor ploughing, establishment of mobile agricultural extension unit, etc. All these schemes, if properly executed are bound to raise the level of income of the Garasias. But the implementation part is very crucial. If care is not taken in this respect the same old story is likely to be repeated, i.e. financial and physical targets are shown to be achieved at the end of the plan period but no improvement in the level of income and subsequently in the standard of living of poor people. like Garasias.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

### CHAPTER I

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3. Erskine, Lt.Col.K.D., Rajputana Gazetteer, Vol. IIA, Mewar Residency, Ajmer, 1908.
4. Dave, P.C., The Garasias, Bhartiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh, New Delhi, 1960.
5. Ibid Page xi (Preface) where Dave mentions "In the Rajasthan copies of the questionnaire was sent to the Assistant Director of Social Welfare of the Udaipur and Jodhpur division and they were requested to collect necessary information from Garasias through District Social Welfare Officers. In the Bombay State copies of the questionnaire were forwarded to the Social Welfare Officers of Banaskantha and Sabarkantha districts for collecting information by questioning the Garasias in their districts."

### CHAPTER II

1. Govt. of India, The Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol.I, Oxford, 1967.
2. Tursunghmo was a fort-town situated somewhere in the present day Poshina-patta of Khedbrahma taluka of Sabarkantha district. After Danta was made the capital, this fort-town became desolate.
3. Forbes, Rasmala: Hindoo Annals of the province Alexander Kinloch, of Gujarat in Western India, Oxford University Press, 1924, Vol. I & II, P.419
4. Ghasdana was a kind of tax levied on the villagers to maintain the horses of the cavalry.
5. In the event of battle, Khichdi was a kind of tax levied for maintaining the army personnel.



6. Darbar has been used as a term of address for the persons belonging to the Royal family or even to them who belonged to the clan of the Royal family. It was also used to denote the Royal court.
7. Much earlier Sir James Outram had instituted Border Panchayat for the settlement of numerous blood feuds and disputes between the Bhils of Mahikantha and Bhil frontiers. (see, Erskine, Lt.Col.K.D., opp. cited).
8. Erskine, Lt.Col.K.D., Ibid
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### CHAPTER IX

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2. Ibid p.65.
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