

Chapter IV

Glimpses of Punjabi society and everyday life in Punjab villages

This chapter describes the general pattern of every day routine in rural households of Punjab. It depicts the time spent on daily basis on the different activities by men and women. Thus the chapter outlines the details of the activities of individuals in his/ her daily life.

The geographical position of Punjab has always imposed on its sons the duty of becoming the sentinels at the north western frontier. All the important invasions of the sub-continent have been led through the western passes. The early invaders such as Greeks, the Afghans, the Mughals, the Iranies and the Durrannies invaded the country from the north-west and the Punjabis had always to face the first blows of enemy. But never did an invader have an easy work-over. The Punjabis fought for every inch of land and continued to fight single handed even loosing battles. These freedom loving heroes never admitted defeat. They won or they died fighting. This is the common trait of the land of five rivers. They prefer death to a dishonourable existence. The geographical location of Punjab and political upheavals lent to the Punjabis a distinctive character of their own compound of valour and industry, of courage and fortitude. The people of Punjab have learned to grow amid the cross currents of various civilizations which have served to broaden their outlook, enlarge their mental horizon and evolve new patterns of thought.

Larger part of Punjab dwells in villages that are the smallest but important units of Punjab's economy. Every village is like a stream, which has its own aura. Villages basically are self productive units. Besides salt and oil, they produce every commodity. In spite of separate existence every village is related with the national mainstream. Marian N. Smith has commented that, "Punjab is not such a society which has made from different units. This is such kind of *Galicha* (a cloth knitted by Punjabi ladies) in which every part- though recognized separately but woven in an integrated form which cannot be detached from the

others (Smith :144).” The main occupation of the people of village is cultivation. Being dependent on farming all the natives of villages are economically inter-dependent. The carpenters, iron smith and potters, workers and low castes residing in village, though do their work separately, but their livelihood is based on farming. Likewise barber, water-carrier, drum-beater etc. depend on farming one or the other way.

The background of larger part of people residing in cities and towns of Punjab are related with villages. People living in villages directly or indirectly depend upon agriculture and allied works. Either they have their own farming land and cultivate their land or they get on rent land from *zamindars* (big land holders). These types of cultivators are called *muzares*. (Thind, 2007:75).

Many people living in the villages of Punjab neither have their own farming land and nor are they related with the occupation of agriculture. But to fulfill their needs they have to depend on the farmers. In other words, they are related with different kinds of crafts. These crafts are of two types: (1) ordinary crafts; and (2) special crafts.

Ordinary crafts include those crafts which are useful but do not require much of the artistic knowledge and training. Such are the occupations of *dhobi* (washer man) to wash the clothes, and of *mehra* (water-carrier) to fill the *matkas* (a large earthen pot) of water. The occupation of a shepherd is to foster the herds of sheep and goats and to sell their wool and milk. The role of a *nai* (barber) in the village is also important. On the occasions of marriages and other functions his role is very important. He conveys the messages of good and bad news. In olden time the main duty of the barber in the villages in olden days was also to find out the suitable matches for young boys and girls. Some times he performed the duty of a mediator between the girls’ and the boys’ families.

The occupation of *bhathi* (hearth specially designed for perching grain) is still an important occupation in many villages of remote areas. In the evening, the wife of the water-

carrier (*mehra*) works as grain percher. During winter nights the idle or unmarried youths sit around the *bhathi* to enjoy the dwindling heat and gossip to analyze the whole of the activities of the village. The description of *bhathi* is also found in our folk songs:

*Tinn than ashkan de,
hatti, bhathi te darwaza* (As quoted in Kehal,2009:298)

(There are three places where lovers are found that is shop, hearth specially designed for perching grain and the main entrance of the village.)

An inner strength, combined with fearlessness and a phenomenal capacity for hard work, has made Punjabis among the most enterprising and successful people in the world. Adventurous by nature, Punjabis are scattered all over the globe and have prospered wherever they reside. The notable features of the Punjabi character are – self-respect, self-reliance and a near total absence of self-pity.

Around the time that man landed on the moon, a joke was busily doing the rounds in north India; it seems that the first thing Neil Armstrong noticed on the moon was a *Sardaji ka dhaba* (a Sikh's roadside stall). Excited with delight at seeing a fellow human, the *Sardaji* rubbed his hands together and burst out in greeting, inviting him to a typical Punjabi recipe saying: “*Aao ji aao, badsahao, ki khao ge? Matar paneer, dal makhnani, chicken curry, bundi da raita....*” (Come on sir what you will like to eat? Cheese and paneer, lentil, chicken curry or curd...). Such is the Punjabi reputation for entrepreneurship that nobody would have been particularly surprised had such a *dhaba* (stall) actually existed on the moon.

The state of Punjab is famous for its handicraft products. The rich culture of the state is best reflected in its folklore, ballads of love and war, fairs and festivals, dance, music and literature. Punjab has been one of the world's most important agricultural regions and is the backbone of Indian economy. Although it occupies only about 1.7 percent of the total area of India, it produces about 21 percent of wheat and 8.5 percent of rice grown in India.

Before understanding the routine household work of Punjabis it will be worthwhile to know about the traditional life of a village in Punjab.

As majority of its population is rural, the village is the major unit of socio - economic structure of Punjab. Predominantly an agricultural state, every village, though independent and self-sufficient, is closely knit and inter-dependent. Every village is linked in one way or another with the adjoining villages. Thus, "Punjabi Society is not a mosaic made up of separate and self-sufficient village fragments. It is more like a carpet in which each part, although unified and identifiable in itself, is inextricably woven into the fabric." (Sekhon 2000:10)

The pattern of settlement in Punjabi village is mostly uniform and unique. Each village *patti* claims descent from a common ancestor and in every village one clan dominates the others. The family organization is strictly patriarchal. The eldest male, whether he is father, grand father or paternal uncle is the head of household and makes all significant decisions relating to the family and its members. Women's place in society is secondary to that of men, and she has been restricted to the performance of domestic chores and to fulfilling the role of a dutiful wife and mother.

Dhani Ram Chatrik was born on October 4, 1876 and died on December 18, 1954. He was born in village Passian, District Sialkot now in Pakistan. He was the founder of modern Punjabi poetry. He worked all his life to lift the status of the Punjabi language. He was the founding president of Punjabi *Sabha* (literary society). He worked relentlessly to get Punjabi its due status amongst people as well as government. He was the first person to standardize the type set for *Gurmukhi* script, public *Guru Granth Sahib* and Bhai Kahn Singh's Mahan Kosh, the first Punjabi dictionary by using modern technique at his Sudarshan Printing Press. He was a creative writer, and used his composing skills to experiment with different genres of Punjabi and achieved his motive. He used simple vocabulary, and use of metaphor. The tone

and style of his writings were easy to understand by the masses. As Punjab lies in the heart of villages, his poetry also revolves around the Punjabi village culture, life style, nature and interests of the common village person. He has been called Punjab's greatest lyricist and poet. He was also awarded as Shromani Sahit Puraskar by Language Department Punjab. Punjabi University Patiala also honoured him by dedicating one of their annual diaries to him.

Dhani Ram Chatrik in his poem 'Punjab' describes the complete picture of flora and fauna of Punjab and about the divine souls of Punjab. He writes:

*Punjab! Karan ki sifat teri, shana de sabh saman tere,
Jal poun teri, hariyol teri, darya, parbat, maidan tere.
Ghar tere gauan mahian ne, dudh ghio de lehar lagai hai,
Bahar baldan dian jogan ne, khalkat di agg bujhai hai.
Baba Nanak, Baba Farid, apni chhati te pale tun,
Duniyan nu chanan dein lai kai roshan dive bale tun. (Chatrik 2000:47)*

(Punjab! How can I praise you, there are lot of boons you have showered upon us. The greenery of the fields and mountains enchants us. There is no scarcity of milk and ghee because of the presence of cows and buffaloes in the households. With the hard work carried out by farmers and bullocks in the fields which in turn meet the needs of the mankind. This pious land has given birth to the great saints like Baba Nanak and Baba Farid who have enlightened the earth with their holy spirit).

Punjabi Household

A household is defined as a group of persons living together and consuming food from a common kitchen. As Nashat and Tucker (1999) mention household relationships are at the heart of most societies, since families act as the primary culture bearing unit. According to Murdock (1949), the family is a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes. The members of the household live together, pool their resources and work together.

In Punjabi society, the household can be defined as a social, cultural, economic and religious entity. Each household is a unit of food production, consumption, distribution and of property ownership. The household consists of a wide range of relatives, including grand parents, parents, children, brothers and sisters, cousins, aunts and uncles. Punjabi society practices patriarchal system and members are descended from the eldest males living in the house, the mother being, under the rule of exogamy, brought in from another clan that is entirely different group of families. Presently with the division of farming land the trend of nuclear families has emerged which consists of husband, wife and their unmarried children.

As Punjabi society is patriarchal, the father is the head of the family and only male members of the household can inherit ancestral property. No female can inherit the family landed property. If there is no male in the household, the property goes to the nearest male member among the clan members. The women in Punjabi society are expected to be obedient and submissive. They are required to respect their husbands and clan members. The married women have to observe a number of restrictions after marriage but when they go back to their native villages they can take off the veil and walk around much freely. In contrast, an unmarried girl has to be much more reserved; particularly after the age of puberty because it is a common saying in the village that *kudi ghar di izar hundi hai* (girl child is the prestige of the family).

Rural Punjabis are conscious of several degrees of kinship, ranging from the smallest unit, the *tabbar* or household, containing several generations under one roof, to the *pariwar*, a family of several households belonging to all the living males of a single line of descent, and the *khandan*, a larger family of many households belonging to male descendants of a common ancestor. When parents arrange marriages for their children, custom dictates the choice of bride or groom from the same caste but not from the same clan (*got*) or village. Though a Jatt must marry a Jatt, a member of the same clan (*got*) of the Jatt caste must not

marry another member of the same clan. Failure to comply these rules would entail a social boycott of the person concerned.

Castes

The word caste has been derived from the Portuguese word *casta*, meaning race, lineage or pure stock, which is in turn derived from the Latin word *castus*, meaning clean, or pious. It includes strict rules regarding marriage, social and personal contacts, occupational homogeneity and structured ritual practices within each caste. The original classification of Varnas was into Brahmins (priests), Kshatriya (warriors and landlords), Vaishya (farmers and trades) and Shudra (servile peasants), which later split into several thousands castes.

In Punjab, caste system, like other social systems has never been so rigid as in the other parts of India. Still it provides the parameters necessary for understanding the people here. Here the Brahmans do not occupy the highest position in the hierarchy. The grading of castes is not on the basis of purity and pollution, but on the basis of worldly possessions like land, physical strength and political power. The Sikh Guru's came from the trading caste of *Khatri* it is among the peasant caste of Jatts and the other rural castes that Sikhism found much of its followings. The teachings of Sikh Gurus, the religious institutions of *langar*, *sewa* and *sangat* all these were together aimed for creating a caste free religion, inspiring the 'untouchables' in the *Varanashram* to convert to Sikhism, for a better life and inclusion in the main stream of the society. Punjab villages are predominantly Sikh and *Dalits*, *Mazhabi* and *Ramdasia* Sikh. Thus in caste terms the urban Punjab is largely dominated by the trading castes, Hindus as well as Sikhs but the rural population is mostly that of the land owning Jatt Sikhs and the Scheduled Castes. Most of the castes are linked with specific occupations.

Jatts occupy the highest position as they are the main agricultural caste in Punjab. Numerically they are the single largest group in this region, constituting more than one fourth of the population in the state. It is evident from the official observations in the census of

Punjab, 1901 that ‘there is no caste above a Jatt’ (quoted in Mohan: 167). The another evidence from Denzil Ibbetson in Punjab Castes has also mentioned that *Brahmins* commanded no respect and it was believed that in times of need, ‘A dom, a *Brahmin* and a goat were of no avail.’ (Ibbeston 1881:109) One of the most frequently encountered expression among Dalits is “When some one says ‘I am a Jatt’, his chest expands. But when we say ‘chamar’, we contract to nothing” (cited Jodhka 2000: 381).

The British, also regarded Jatts as the best cultivators and excellent soldiers, reinforced their superiority as a social group over the communities. With this support the Jatts emerged as a dominant caste in social, economic and numerical terms and they also became a crucial community in the politics of Punjab. The term Jatt refers to a cultivating class, so they are dominating cultivating caste. The common proverb in Punjab for Jatts is ‘*dabb ke vaah, te rajj ke khah*’ (till the land deep and eat to your fill). Many minor agricultural castes have started using the word ‘Jatt’ for themselves as they feel proud.

Rajputs in Punjab are farmers and do hard physical work involved in farming. The term Rajput means the sons of the rulers. But they work as agricultural castes in Punjab.

The people owning tools of production and engaged in the manufacturing of certain goods are included in the category of artisan castes like potters, weavers, carpenters; blacksmiths etc. Of these castes weavers and potters have been eliminated by the growing industry. The *Ramgarhias* however are an exception and they have adapted very well in the new system. *Ramgarihas* are an occupational caste of carpenters known as *Tarkhans* and *Khaties* in different parts of the State. They are the kinsmen of other agricultural castes as they have several common *gots* (*Gotras*). A large number of *Ramgarihas* have received higher education and taken up professions like engineering, medical and teaching.

Despite the teachings of the Sikh Gurus against the idea of ritual hierarchy, the institution of caste did not disappeared from the region. The idea of ‘pollution’ continued to

be practiced, though not as strongly as other parts of the subcontinent (H. Singh 1977; Jodhka 2000). Punjab has the highest percentage of scheduled castes. Among the scheduled castes the harijans are the main castes found in Punjab. The harijans belong to the category of Dalit castes. They have abandoned their traditional occupations like leather related works a carcass away from the habitation and remove its hide, dye it or make shoes, thongs etc for cleaner jobs. In villages they form the class of agricultural labourers. They are commonly known as *Ramdasiyas* in Punjab. They have also become agricultural labourers previously the people of this caste were engaged in scavenging. As per the traditional system a male harijans is paid after every six months according to the *jajmani* system. A female harijan generally works at home of the landlords like removing dung, making its cakes and cleaning the out house. Now- a -days they are becoming agricultural labourers and are paid both in cash and kind. G.W.Briggs mentions that they 'were little more than serfs; they were the hired labourers who followed the plough, drove the bullocks and sowed the seeds of both the tenants and the land lords' (Briggs quoted in Prasad 2000:26).

The scheduled castes have been seen down upon by the Jatts and they have often exploited them. As Jodhka (2002) has remarked, "A more significant marker of the resistance against a sense of discrimination among the scheduled castes Sikhs is the large scale construction of separate Gurdwaras by the Mazhbis, Ravidasias, Kabirpanthi and other caste groups, parallel to the ones controlled by the Jatts. According to the Sikh religious ideology, there should be no religious discrimination on the basis of caste. However, in a study conducted by Judge and Sekhon (2001) it has been reported that the "Scheduled caste Sikh felt a sense of humiliation, that the upper caste Sikhs did not like their presence in their gurdwaras. Respondents among the latter cited instances of contempt or ridicule, instructions to sit at the end of rows, to come for the *langar* at the end; to keep out of the

service of cooking or serving food at the *langar* and occasionally not allowed to carry the Granth Sahib from the Jatt gurdwara to Dalit home for *Akhand Path*, etc.”

Relationships

The relationships are part and parcel of every society. Every relation has its own importance and place in the society as well as in the individual's life. According to the Vanjara Bedi, the most important relations are of *nanke* and *dadke*, these two have very important role to play in the individual's life. The relations of *dadka* side are of *dada -dadi, taya -tai, chacha -chachi, bhua -phufad* etc. and on the *nanka* side are of *nana - nani, mama - mami, massi - massar* etc. Gurbax Singh a poet has beautifully described relationships in the following lines:

Bana teri sabbo thok, nanak dadak sahur lok,

Pehlan banan teri mai, bana jin khidai,

Bana teri chachi, tai bana bhain teri bharjai,

Bana teri bhua bhatiji, naal guandan duji teeji. (Punjabi Janjhan 1975:49)

(Son the relatives of mothers and fathers side are all yours. The first place is of your mother who helped in your bringing up. Son your paternal aunts, sister, sister-in-law and the neighbours are all yours.)

In rural areas a man is usually referred to as *bhaji* or *bhai Sahib* (brother) and a woman as *bibiji* (mistress) *bhainji* (sister). Sikhs are addressed as a *Sardar* (Mr.) for a man and *sardarni* (Mrs.) for women. When they meet, Sikhs put their hands together in front of them, with their palms touching and say *Sat Sri Akal* (God is truth). Hindus accompany the same gesture with the word *namaste* (Greetings). The common Muslim greeting is *salaam* (Peace or Greetings) or *salaam alaikum* (Peace be with you).

Another interesting feature of Punjab villages is the prevalence of fictive Kinship; for example all male members of the village who are elder to one's own father are known as *taya*

and those who are younger are known as *chacha* and their wives called as *tai* and *chachi*. Similarly on the female side all elderly ladies of the villages are called *massi* and *mami* (mother's brother's wife). *bhua* is called for father's sister and his husband is called as *phufad*. In the younger generation all the boys and girls of the village are considered as brothers and sisters and this explains the prevalence of exogamy in the Punjab villages.

Thus the father of the father is *dada*, mother of father is *dadi*. *Dada* also applies to any male relative through the *dada or dadi*, and *dadi* to any female through the *dada or dadi*. Thus *dada* is "grandfather," "great-uncle," and indeed all of their siblings, spouses, or siblings of spouses or spouses of siblings of whatever remoteness. *Nana* and *nani* are those similarly related on the mother's side. Father of *dada* is *pardada*, his wife is *pardadi*, and these terms too are similarly extended. Their counterparts on the mother's side are *parnana* and *parnani*. The term-pair superior to *parnana-parnani* on the father's side in turn is *nakarnana-nakarnani*. Above this no further relations are recognized on the father's side.

Fairs and festivals

The word fair is the English version of *mela*. The root of *mela* word is in *milan*. The meaning behind this word is the meeting of the people and community to share their happiness and for their recreation.

Fairs and festivals are as old as mankind. They provide index to cultural, social and domestic life of the people. Many among them are based on legends, deities, and persons believed to possess some supernatural power for the grant of desires and warding off troubles and curing ailments. Some of them mark the seasons which signal to man the time for work and the time for play and relaxation, the commencement of the agricultural cycle with sowing in spring, and its culmination with the harvesting of the golden grain.

Festivals of socio-religious nature provide an atmosphere of devotion and enjoyment. The fairs and festivals attracting large gatherings are taken advantage of, by government, social and religious organizations and business firms for publicity.

Fairs and festivals are part and parcel of rural Punjabi life style. From the ancient times Punjabis are fond of fairs. These have become the source of their meetings and expression of feelings. In Punjab the religious and cultural fairs go side by side. These have always been the source of Punjabi's cultural appetite. Today, in spite of over work the Punjabis have not forsaken this fondness related with fairs which are the great source of their enjoyment. These are the best stage for the exposure of folk talent. Rural fairs represent the feelings of rural masses and are the expressions of their attire, ornaments, eating and drinking. These are the common legacy of Punjabi folk.

Special cooked dishes, expression of folk arts and tricks, wrestling and rural sports are the main attraction of the rural fairs. The folk tales representing the stories of lovers like *Heer-Ranjha*, *Sassi-Punnu*, *Sohni-Mahiwal*, and ballads of famous warriors and dacoits are the special attraction of these fairs.

However, Vanjara Bedi has classified the fairs of Punjab into four types namely: (i) seasonal
(ii) mythical
(iii) fairs held in honour of saints
(iv) fairs connected with festivals. (Quoted in Kaur 2004:10)

Another classification has been made by Harinder Kaur she classified them into six types namely:

- (i) seasonal fairs like *Baisakhi* and *Basant Panchami*
- (ii) mythical fairs like the *Chhapar* fair
- (iii) fairs held in honour of saints like Hyder Sheikh of Malerkotla, *Roshni* of Jagraon

- (iv) fairs held in honour of historical events and personalities like *Chaunkian* of Fatehgarh Sahib and *Maghi* of Muktsar
 - (v) fairs connected with festivals like *Akadshi*, *Diwali*, *Dushehra*, *Namani Kadshi*
 - (vi) Lastly sports fairs like *Khedaan* of Qila Raipur, Sarabha, Patiala and Kamalpur.
- (Kaur 2004:10).

In Punjab in the month of January *Lohri* is celebrated. It marks the peak of winter and heralds the slow progress into spring. Children go from door to door, gathering sweets, and at night sweets and puffed corns are thrown into bonfires as offerings. Another fair in this month which is celebrated is Muktsar fair. In the early eighteenth century, Guru Gobind Singh led a heroic battle against Mughal from Muktsar. The courage and martyrdom of his warriors is celebrated across three days of holy bathing and prayers. It coincides with the festival of *makar sankranti*.

In the month of March comes *Holla Mohalla* which is celebrated in Anandpur Sahib. It is the largest annual festival, which was instituted by Guru Gobind Singh in 1701 as a showcase for Sikh martial skills. *Basant Panchmi* marks the end of winter and every part of Punjab celebrates the beginning of spring. The fields covered with golden mustard, the sky filled with multi coloured kites and the beat of *bhangra* resounding in the air.

Baisakhi, also called *Vaisakhi*, is a harvest festival which is celebrated on the thirteenth of April according to the solar calendar. It is celebrated in North India, particularly in Punjab, when the *rabbi* crop is ready for harvesting. The tough agricultural operation is rendered into a lighter occupation by merry community festivities such as the *Bhangra* dance by men, who pound the ground with vigorous steps accompanied with singing. Women too, break into revelry of dances principally the *Gidda* dance, executed with fervor and rhythmic

exactitude. On these occasions, men and women adorn themselves with gay colored clothes and traditional ornaments.

For the large farming community of Punjab and Haryana, Baisakhi marks a New Year's time as it is time to harvest *rabi* crop. On Baisakhi, farmers thank God for the bountiful crop and pray for good times ahead. People buy new clothes and make merry by singing, dancing and enjoying. Cries of "*Jatta aai Baisakhi*", rent the skies as merry-making men and women break into the *bhangra* and *gidda* dances to express their joy. Everyday farming scenes of sowing, harvesting, winnowing and gathering of crops are expressed through zestful movements of the body to the accompaniment of ballads and *dhol* (musical instrument). In many villages of Punjab *Baisakhi* fair is organized besides other recreational activities like wrestling, cart racing, tricks of *Baazigars* and fighting of birds are also held.

Dhani Ram Chatrik in his poem '*Mele vich Jatt*' has given very beautiful description about the Jatts (farmers) of Punjab. That is

*Turi tand sambh hari vech vatt ke,
Lambran te shahan da hisab kat ke,
Pagg,jhagga,chadar nawan siwaike,
Saman wali daang utte teil lai ke,
Kachhe mar vanjhali anand chha gaya,*

Marda dammame Jatt mele aa gaya. (Chatrik 2000:94)

(After getting free from the activities of *rabi* season and after clearing the out standings of the brokers, with the remaining money the Jatt gets new clothes for all the family members and goes to fair to enjoy and dance with the enchanting beat of the *dhol* (drum).

In the month of August *Teej* or *Teeyan* celebrates the outset of monsoon rains. With *mehndi* on their hands, women welcome the rains with *gidda* and *kikli* dances. Recital of traditional *bolian* and *tappe* (songs) also mark the occasion.

Gidda

Kathian ho ke ayian gidde wich, Ikko jehian mutiaran.

(Young beautiful girls came together for traditional dance)

Kikli

Kikli kalir di pagh mere veer di,

Duppata mere bhai da phite munh jawai da.

In the month of August a *Chhappar* fair is celebrated in Ludhiana district. The celebration of *Gugga Pir*, said to have miraculous powers over snakes, this fair involves visiting his shrine- said to cure snake bites and help women conceive. Fair of Baba Sodal is also celebrated in this month. Pilgrims from Punjab and surrounding areas come to worship the infant saint (Baba Sodal). Particularly women make offerings at his burial site. In this only month *rakhi* is also celebrated. On this day girls tie coloured threads around the wrists of their brothers. The brothers in turn promise to protect them.

In the month of October and November the festivals like Navratras, Dussehra and Diwali are celebrated. Navratras, the nine auspicious days which proceed to Dussehra are celebrated. People fast for these nine days and abstention from liquor and meat is also marked. On the day of Dussehra effigies of the demon king Ravana and his two brothers are burnt. Diwali the festival of lights is celebrated with special aplomb in Amritsar. A famous Punjabi proverb makes it more clear *dal roti ghar di diwali Amritsar di* (the simple food cooked in home is best but diwali is best of Amritsar). this is also known as '*bandhi chod diwas*' as Guru Hargobind returned to this holy town after the release by emperor Jahangir.

Gurpurabs are the largest religious festivals celebrated with great devotion and love for *Gurus*. They are celebrated throughout the year in celebration of births and martyrdoms of the ten Sikh Guru's. Big *diwans* are held on the birthdays of Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Gobind Singh and martyrdom days of Guru Arjan Dev and Guru Tegh Bahadur. For three days, a non-stop recitation of the *Guru Granth Sahib* continues, accompanied by the singing of hymns and procession of devotees. At night homes and *gurudawaras* are beautifully lit up. The *Gurpurab* of Guru Ravi Dass is also celebrated in the month of February.

In the month of December a *Jor Mela* is organized in Fatehgargh Sahib. This fair marks the martyrdom of Guru Gobind Singh two young sons, Baba Zorawar Singh and Baba Fateh Singh. Thousands of devotees attend, to recite hymns of *Guru Granth Sahib*. It also displays handicrafts, traditional costumes and weapons of the Sikhs.

The other festivals celebrated are Shivratri, Holi, Janam Ashtami, Tikka, Ram Naumi, Nirjala Ekdashi, Guga Naumi etc.

Rural Sports

In villages sports have a great importance and they grew out of necessity to cultivate individual strength for labour on the fields, the interdependence within the community and need of defence. These gave birth to sports like wrestling, running, jumping, weightlifting, tug of war, bullock-cart races, cock fighting and such performing arts as a measuring strength by holding wrists and twisting hands. Sports in Punjab took shape under the leadership of the Sikh Gurus. During Holla Mohalla celebrations at Anandpur Sahib, tent pegging competitions, archery, fencing, and riding competitions, gymnastic and acrobatic displays are performed by the Nihangs. The sports became a proud facet of life in Punjab. They can be seen on common grounds of villages and in the fairs, during the festivals.

In Punjab there are games for all age groups and for every person according to their physical strength and mental ability. The games for small kids are *Kotla chappaki*, *Pitthoo*, *Gullidanda* etc. for young boys *Kabbadi*, *Kushti*, *mugdhar* etc., by playing these games their physical strength increased and they remain active. For girls games are different like *Tahna*, *Khidoo* etc. The older age groups people also play *barahan tahna*. The most important games of Punjab as classified by Sujan Singh are: *kabbadi*, *gullidanda*, *khidoo*, *kushti*, *sonchi*, *kotla chapaki*, *mugdhar*, *chatappu*, *pithoo*, *bil bachian di maa* (Quoted in Randhawa 2006: 160). Another classification of rural sports is mentioned in survey book Fatehgarh Sahib. They have classified games into two categories, firstly games for recreation like *lukan miti*, *peecho*, *pil tika/kanche*, *baran veete*, *bohra khooh*, *naun veete*, *satt kadna*, *guddian patole* etc. and secondly games played by physical strength which were further divided into two categories of children like *korra chapaki*, *bhanda bhandaria*, *pithoo garam*, *gulli danda* etc. and for younger generation are *kabbadi*, *sonchi*, *langra sair*, *phind khudni*, *peel plangrahn*, *Bandar killa*, *loon miani*, *rassa kassi*, *kushti*, *bail gadian di dour*, *gatka* etc. (Singh and Chowdhry 2002: 40-48).

Today rural sports events are one of Punjab's main attractions. Almost sixty years ago Grewal Sports Association began to hold competitions in rural sports at village Qila Raipur which became world famous afterwards and is eagerly awaited every year. It is also called mini rural Olympic. It is held in the month of February every year. Today in almost seven thousand villages in Punjab sports events are organized every year. The Punjabi devotion to physical fitness has allowed for sporting infrastructure to spread across the state. Together with wrestling, *kabbadi* is extremely popular, and a prominent feature and became the mother of games of any rural sports event. Other sports include weight-lifting, hockey, cycling, *khokho* and *khudo-khoondi* (a kind of hockey played with a ball made of cloth cuttings and a crooked stick) , *guli- danda*, kite flying, acrobatics, twisting an iron rod, passing tractor over

the ribs, cracking a big stone by placing it on the chest. Now almost all sorts of modern games and sports are played. The popular among these are football, volleyball, cricket, boxing, athletics, basketball, etc.

Villagers are not just fond of their own competitions to size up the skill and power of their animals like bulls, horses, dogs on the sports ground. At places cockfights and pigeon fights are also held. In some parts of Punjab people indulge in fighting a bull with bare hands which is a national sport of Spain.

Dwellings

Punjabi villages are of compact settlement. The main entrance to a village is through an arched gateway called a *darwaza* (door or gate), which is also a meeting place for the old as well as idle people of village. Houses are closely built often sharing walls. Presently the percentage of *kucha* houses has decreased. There are *pucca* houses more than *kutchha* houses. The recently constructed houses are of modern designs. Cement and iron are used in construction of houses. They have replaced the old structure of houses in the Punjab village when the ceiling was made of *ballianwali chatt* (ceiling that uses wooden logs) and the over all designs resemble that of *haveli* (big house). In villages there is a separate shed for cattle called *chappar*.

Furniture and decoration

Households middle class and above usually have comfortable furniture now days. The well-off people of villages have all the facilities which any urban houses have. The preferred items of furniture are modern types of beds, dressing table, sofa set, dining table, electric fans, air conditioners etc. Televisions and CD players are found in every house. Among the economically weaker sections of people chairs and a small table, besides old type of furniture is also seen like *pihri*, and *murha*. Pots and pans of stainless steel are becoming popular. Modern cutlery is also in demand to entertain the guests. But the utensils made of stainless

steel are used for their daily purposes and traditional utensils made of bronze and brass like *thalis* (plate), *karahis* (a pan), *lotas* (cup), glasses and kettles are still part of their kitchen.

Earlier the joint family system prevailed in which women were occupied in the household through out the day, in cooking food, cleaning utensils and looking after the large family. The *phulkari*, (a kind of embroidery) hand woven *durries*, *charkha katna* (spinning the wheel), knitting etc. were the pastime for the women of yesteryears, who chatted, worked and indulged in an art; all these things are also well depicted in Punjabi folk songs. In earlier days *chakki* (used for grinding) *kundi- sota* (used for crushing of spices) were the instruments which demanded hard work and labour as compared to modern kitchens which have time and labour saving gadgets.

Earlier in a village house one can always find a *tandoor* (oven) that stands in a corner and a *loh* (a big piece of iron plate to make many *chappatis* at one go), along with a *chulha* (a regular earthen stove), *chajj* (a tray), *chikko* (basket to keep things), *gaggar* (water pitcher), *suhaaga* (a big wooden log to level the ploughed land), *gandasi*, *daang* and *barcha* (the spear like weapons).

Dress

Dress is the special identity of any culture. A person is well recognized with the type of clothes he/she is wearing as it clearly defines to which culture he/she belongs. Likewise Punjabis are easily identified by their wearing. The development of a culture is adjudged by the dress of the residents. It also denotes the intellectual and psychological status, social and economic prosperity of the region. The description of the dresses of males and females in Punjabi society is discussed below.

In the rural areas, the dress of a farmer consists of a *safa* (turban) a *kurta* (shirt), and a *chadara* (knee deep cloth tied round the waist). This type of dress is used in summers, while in winters there is an addition of cardigan or pullover and especially a *loi* (thin warm cloth),

or a blanket. Besides this a loose fit *pyjama* is also worn by the people. The younger generation has started using western type of clothes. The use of *pyjama* and *kurta* is confined to home wear. The turban is confined to older generation now days; younger people do not use any headgear. Vaisakha Singh has defined males dress in the following lines:

Safe te pyjame jame , coat chadre,

Jagtan, kameezan, choge zari, badre. (Punjabi Janjhan 1975: 122)

Salwar kameez (suit) with *dupatta* (to cover the heads) is the main attire for Punjabi women. The *salwar* of Punjabi women is very heavy with lots of curves. The Patiala *shahi salwar* is world famous. In earlier days there was a trend of tight *pyjami* with skin tight shirt, *garare* were also worn by the Punjabi women. *Bagh* and *phulkari* also have very important place in the women attire. *Phulkari* means flower embroidery traditionally done by Punjabi women on clothes, *duppatas* and now on bedspreads also. *Phulkari* is done in patches over cloth; it is distinguished from *bagh*, which covers every inch of cloth. These were made especially for special occasions like marriages, festivals and childbirth. Normally they wear Punjabi *jutti* with embroidery is worn by the females but as the time is changing now they have started wearing high heels also.

Diet

Punjabis have hearty appetite. Punjabi cuisine has become the rich amalgamation of tastes it is today. Spices and herbs are the essence of meats and curries; while milk, butter and cream are the soul of main courses and desserts alike. Although Punjabis have a fondness for chicken and meat, certain communities follow a vegetarian diet. A typical Punjabi is as versatile and popular as a potato, which goes well in combination with almost all the vegetables. A Punjabi meal is incomplete without *makhan* (white butter) and *lassi* which is made with curd. A few of popular Punjabi dishes include *rajma* (kidney beans), *matar paneer*, stuffed *parathas*, *dal makhni* (lentil curry) *kadhi* (made from curd) and *sarson ka*

saag (Punjabi style spinach). *dahi*, yoghurt is also an essential item to the Punjabi meal. A Punjabi dish is made with a lot of onion, garlic and ginger and tomatoes cooked in pure ghee. It also contains a lot of *masala* (spices) such as cumin, turmeric and mustard. It is common saying in Punjab that '*khada pita lane da, baki ahmadshahe da*' (whatever you consume is gained remainder will be looted by Ahmed Shah).

Other vegetables come and go from the kitchen with the seasons. The meal in winters is *makki di roti* (made from maize) with *sarson da saag* (made from mustard greens with a *tadka* of spices, onions, garlic and cooked in butter or ghee) while juicy carrots, peas, potatoes, tangy *methi* greens, cauliflower, radish and capsicum are the soul of kitchen. In summers, when vegetables are less crisp and taste buds go tired, preparations such as *masala karela* (bitter gourd stuffed with a spicy taste), do much to rouse the palate. The most common meal is *kanak di roti* (made from wheat) and a side dish such as *dal* (curried lentils) potatoes or any vegetable. Although Punjab grows some of the best varieties of *basmati* rice, its staple food remains wheat. Punjabi breads, baked in *tandoors*, (oven) heated or fried on *tawas* are ideal for soaking up fiery curies, or stuffed and made into *pranthis*, eaten alone.

An antidote to spices or cooling agent against the scorching heat of Punjab yoghurt is also essential to Punjabi meal. It is taken in many ways in the form of plain curd or as *lassi* (yoghurt flavored with salt or sugar) tops with thick coat of cream.

Punjabis are fond of sweets too. They are fond of *halwa*, which is also offered as *parsad* to devotees at *gurdawaras* and temples. *Gajaar da halwa* (made from grated carrots cooked in milk for several hours on a low flame), *laddoo*, or even raw sugar or *gur*, *shakkar* and *jalebi* after the meals.

Drinking liquor is very common among the men folk of the Punjab villages. They do not generally drink high quality liquor, but they drink *rudi marka* or *thara* (liquor made in

country side). Most of them consume it daily but many consume it during festivals or any happy occasions in the family.

Wedding

Wedding is considered as holy ritual in each society, whereby an unrelated man and woman leave their family of region and begin their own family of procreation. It is also a legal contract which involves an assumption that the husband's duty is to support the family financially and on the other hand, the wife's duty is to perform all the household work and childcare. (*Macmillan Encyclopedia of Sociology*, 1983:220).

In Punjabi society marriage is considered as a divine relationship between man and woman which is also considered as a relationship of a previous life. The great Punjabi wedding is a time of music and dance, rich food soaked in butter and sweets dripping in syrup popped from hand to mouth. A time when mothers shed tears while brides sit with heroic smiles through hours of make up and *mehndi* (tattoo on hands), wrapped in silk and heavy gold. A time for uninhibited dancing and lavish gifts exchanged over the murmur of family and gossip, a time of celebration, in which whole of the family is involved.

Marriages amongst the Hindus, the Sikhs, and the Muslims are performed according to their respective customary and traditional ceremonies. Usually the marriage is arranged by the parents. However, the boy and girl have a glance of each other. The parents of the girl approach the parents of the boy either directly or through a mediator. In urban areas these are settled down through matrimonial advertisements also. Before the actual marriage a number of ceremonies are performed both at the house of the boy and that of the girl.

The main ceremonies related to Punjabi wedding are as follows. *Var Labhna* (mate selection) is the first step during this process the Gotra is considered most important. Then comes the *kudmai* (engagement) ceremony. This means the introduction of boy and girl in their respective families. After that comes *lagan/saha kadna* (fixing of marriage date) is an

important part. Another ceremony is of *gandh ferna* (means sending the invitations to the relatives. In earlier days *gur* (jaggery) *khand* (sugar) was also given to them.

After sending the invitations, the ceremony of *suhag-gana* is done. It is tied on the wrist of the boy/girl who is going to be married so that he/she can be saved from evil spirits. Another important ritual in earlier days was of *maian pauna*. In this ceremony the boy/girl wears old clothes, rich diet was also given to them and they did not even get out of the house alone. But these days this ritual has somewhat vanished. Another important ritual is of *khare bithaona* in this the girl and boys are given the bath with the water which is brought by the *bhabi* of the boy/girl from some religious place. After that the married females apply *vatna* (made up of turmeric) on the body of the boy/girl and then they are given the bath. Then the ritual of *kuar dhoti* comes in which the clothes; make-up-kit, almonds, dried date, coconut, mehndi, kesar etc. are send. She has to wear these clothes in the morning on the day of the wedding.

Then the *sangeet* ceremony comes, in which young girls and their mothers and aunts come together to sing songs and pass the secrets of married life from generation to generation. The dark orange colour of *mehndi* spread in ornate patterns on the brides hand evokes families' sense of separation, loss and new beginnings and songs in which she grieves for the loss of her father's house will not leave many Indian eyes dry.

On the day of wedding *sehra bandi* ceremony is performed. After *sehra bandi* comes the ceremony of *tambol pauna* in which the relatives of the boy give some cash to the father of bride. Then comes the ceremony of *wagh farai* in which the real sisters and cousins tie a thread to the mare. After that the *bhabi* of the boy put *surma* in the eyes. Then the *barat* leaves for the bride's house. The *ghodi* or white mare on which the groom rides to his bride's place to marry her passes through the narrow village lanes. At the bride's house the relatives and friends gather to receive the *barat* where *milni* of the parents and close relatives takes

place. After that *pheras* take place before the sacred fire in case of Hindus and in front of *Adi Granth* (a holy book of the Sikhs) in case of Sikhs. After that the *bidai* comes which is the most difficult time for the girl and her relatives. After that reaching at her in-laws home the ceremony of *tel pauna* is done which means to welcome to the newly wedded couple. After that *pani warna* ceremony is done in which the mother of the boy rotates the *gadhwi* full of *kachi lassi* (mixed with raw milk and water) from the heads of the newly married couple. By this the couple is entered to the house.

And so marriage seasons come and go, bands are hired and cooks prepare bubbling curries in cauldrons, extravagant tents are erected and younger cousins rehearse dance steps and at the event centre the bride and groom sleepless, tense and excited, watch the colours and scents of the most splendid day of their lives swirl around them, waft upwards and disappear into the night.

4.2 Crop Cultivation

In rural areas, the main occupation is agriculture, along with the presence of some specialized craftsmen like artisans, carpenters, masons, blacksmiths etc. Big villages also have shopkeepers, teachers, religious professionals, tailors etc.

The present cropping pattern in Punjab is that of *do fasali harsala* means rotation of two main crops in twelve months, *rabi (hari)* and *kharif (sauni)*. In fact, about seventy percent of the total cropped area in each season is under one or other of these two crops. There have been specific changes from time to time in order to find more suitable and profitable combinations. In these villages the initial popular combinations are wheat, gram, barley, some oil seeds, *sarson* and *barseem* in *rabbi* season. They are sown in October-November and harvested from mid March to mid May. The *kharif* or autumn harvest consists of rice, *jowar*, maize, sugarcane, cotton, pulses, peas, onions and gourd. They are sown in June-August and reaped from early September to late December.

4.2.1 Wheat

Among food grains wheat is the most important *rabi* crop and is the staple diet of the people of Punjab. It is sown a few weeks after the retreat of summer monsoons, generally in November. At that time soil is most easily worked and sufficient moisture is present to help the growth until the light winter showers. It requires about four to five months to mature and the crop is harvested between April and May.

4.3.2 Paddy

Next to wheat, another important crop is of paddy. Paddy needs warm and moist climate. It is sown in the months of May and June and the transplantation is done at the end of the June and the beginning of July. Its harvesting season is October- November. The crop needs a lot of irrigation and it has to be well manured for the proper growth of the seed.

Crop activities in different months

Chaitra-Vaisakh

During these months the crop of sugarcane is sown so that *gur* and *shakkar* can be produced to cater the need of the house. At this time the *rabbi* crops come up on maturity, first of all they reap petty crops like mustard, grams, barley etc. After being free from these crops they prepare to reap the wheat which is the main crop; so all the family members engage in this task. After reaping huge piles come into being and wheat is separated through the process of threshing. But presently combines are used for harvesting the crops and so this task has become very simple and convenient.

Jaith-Aasarh/Har

After reaping the wheat the cultivators do not sit idle as they are busy in preparing the land for further crops. The land is prepared with the help of tractors and oxes to plough the fields and soil out the unnecessary weeds from the fields. The farmers who do not have sufficient means of irrigation have to depend upon rains. After the first shower in this month

the farmers level their ploughed fields and sow the *kharif* crops that is, millet, *jowar*, *moth*, *mungi* etc. Before these crops, cotton crop is also sown. But these days the paddy crop has become the main crop of *kharif* season.

Sawan-Bhadon

By these months the *kharif* crops are sown. Arrangements are made through fencing to save the crops from stray and wild animals. Elder male members of the family sit in the field's whole day to guard the crops and to keep away the birds. The weeding activity is also undertaken in these months

Assu-Kattak

These two months are the busiest months for the farmers. As the *kharif* crops are ready to reap in this season so there are so many activities such as plucking of cotton, to grow ear of barley, maize, and jowar etc. But the main activity is to harvest the paddy which is grown at the larger scales. With the ultra modern machinery and combines the process of reaping has become very easy and is less time consuming.

Magghar-Poh

These are the winter months. During this time the farmers take care of *rabbi* crops. Watering and weeding of wheat crop is under taken and fencing is also done around the fields to save the crop from stray animals. The farmers do not bother about the chilled nights of these months and they water their fields with channels from tube wells or canals etc. Elder members of the family also contribute by performing petty tasks by providing food and water to the pet animals.

Magh-Phagun

In these months the sugarcane crop is reaped and the farmer takes it to the crusher. In the modern times the concept has been changed now the cooperative societies and private sugar mills purchase the crop from the farmers at the rates of which are fixed by agricultural

price commission with this the farmers are getting handsome return of their crops. The *rabbi* crops also are at maturity. The weeding and watering of these crops is done. The farmers have to guard the crops at this time to save them from the animals and birds. This time is little bit free for the farmers so they carry out certain tasks which are being done in the coming months. Marriages are also undertaken in these months because they have time and money which are important.

Climate

Punjab is characterized by a continental, semi-arid to sub-humid climate. Punjab is also marked by change of seasons. The contrast between summer and winter is well marked and these are two primary seasons associated with two main crop seasons of *kharif* and *rabbi* respectively. Thus, temperature conditions remain favorable to plant growth throughout the year.

Daily routine

Punjabi household work

Work is the most important and primary human activity. Generally, work is any activity or spending of energy that produces services and products of values. Here we will examine work in the context of Punjabi society.

In villages men go to fields early before the day break to work there and women of the household go after them carrying lunch for the working men in the fields. It is a traditional Punjabi household ritual and is witnessed in every village. But as the time is passing this ritual is also fading.

*Hall suhage godian, sir te rehan swar,
Palle tere pai gayi pashuan wali kar,
Raati aa pain tut ke, chare neend khumar,
Kukar bange pher tun use taran tayar. (Chatrik 2000:93)*

(In the above said lines poet is handsomely described the level of physical, mental in puts put in by farmers to make their crops grow, the last two lines describe even of immense fatigue the farmer gets up for the same routine on the crowing of cock).

Men work in the fields for whole day in the peak season but they get some rest in the slack season. They remain busy in different types of agricultural activities like ploughing, leveling the land, weeding, sowing, transplanting, irrigating fields, guarding the crops, manuring, fertilization of crops etc. At different stages of crop cultivation they perform different activities. Each activity has a vital role in good yield of the crop. It becomes clearer what Tejpal (36) told:

kissan di saari zindagi khetan vich hi nikal jandi hai. Pehlan kolon tan hun kheti vich mehnat bahut ghat gaihain kyoun ki pehlan saari kheti hathan naal kiti jandi si te oh baarshan te nirbar si par pher vi kam tanohna hi karma painda hai. Fasal beejan lai khet nu padra karma, hall wahna, nadeem kadne, khetan nu paani lana, faslan nu beejna, ohna di rakhia karni, khad pauni ate isse taran de kai hor kam jina vich saara sama nikal janda ha; bas eh hi hai ik kisaan di zindagi. (The farmers' whole life is spent in the fields. These days the tasks have become easier as in earlier days all the agriculture was dependent on rains and was carried out by hands but we have to work as much as they did. Different agricultural activities are undertaken for the sowing of crops like ploughing, leveling of land, manuring, and irrigating fields time to time, guarding of crops, weeding etc. By doing these tasks the whole life of a farmer is finished.)

In the household, men and women are involved in different activities to ensure the availability of goods and services for family consumption. Although, these activities may be different, and have a social connectedness but also have conflict relations. There exists a relationship of cooperation, exchange and conflict between men and women. This gender

division of labour in households is the main economic strategy used to meet basic needs of the family like shelter, food, health, procreation and education. In most rural societies, in addition to gender, the allocation of activities to individuals depends on kinship, age, descent, culture, education, status and marriage. Because of socio-cultural factors and biology women in most societies have tended to dominate non-market activities. In Punjab also the traditional division of labour generally situates women in roles based on providing emotional support and maintenance, while men are responsible for economic support and contact with the world outside home.

Gender division of labour is based on sex and seniority. In economically well off households, men usually deal with the main property from which the family obtains its income: land or a shop. The wife or a mother of the senior man heads the women's side of the household. She takes direct charge of the internal household budget, directs the activities of other women and girls in the house, manages household servants, takes care of children, animals in the house, and also looks after the daily preparation and distribution of food. Sons are under the care of their mothers until about the school going age or when they begin to accompany their fathers at work. The conversation of Surjeet Kaur (62) told that:

putt aadmi tan tadke hi khetan nu nikal jande ne, pichoon ghar di saari zimmewari mere upper aa jandi ae. Thanu pata hi ae aj kal dian kudian da kam ton tan jee churandian ne aiven hi thak jandian, ehna nu tan bahut sukh mile hoye ne saade wehle tan chulhe balne, ghar vi kache hunde si ohna nu vi lipna painda si par hun tan gassan aa gian ne, ghar vi pakke ne. Par je main ehna te nazar na rakhan tan roti vi samey sir na mile. (Child men leave for the fields in the early morning; after they are left I have to take care of the household. You know about today's generation they don't want to work and get tired easily. They have so many facilities like gas stove, and houses are also of concrete even then they get tired. We used to cook food on

earthen stove and houses were also of mud we did not get tired. If I do not supervise them then food will also be not served on the time).

Work plays a significant role in Punjabi livelihood system. It is important to understand how the rural residents of Punjab perceive work in relation to their social and cultural practices. The work performed in the house is cooking meals, cleaning, taking care of children, sick and elderly and animals. A majority of the female respondents were of the view that work done by them is necessary for the survival of the household and their livelihood. The picture becomes clearer by what Aman (40) told during the conversation: “*ghar de kam karna tan saanu bachpan ton hi sikhaya janda hai, je kite peke ghare kadi kam nu jee na hona tan dadi te bebe ne jhat hi keh dena ‘agle ghare ja ke vi je ehi kujh kita tan ohna ne tan saanu hi dosh dena, ke mapian de gharo kujh ni sikhia’ isse lai hun tan ehna kamman di aadat ji hi ho gai hai.*” (We are taught from the childhood that doing household chores are necessary for you. If sometimes I do not wish to work in my parent’s house then my mother and grand mother immediately replied: ‘when you will be married and do these things over there they will say that we did not taught you anything’ so that is why it has become habit of doing all these works).

Another conversation with and she is working as a lecturer in a college told that: *mere aine pade likhe hon te naukri karan de bawjood main khud hi ghar da saara kam kardi han jiven roti banauni, pack karni, bachian nu tayar karma, kapde dhonea, dharan kadhian te hor chote chote kam. Han safaian te bhandian lai hun kam waali laai hai. Sadda tan shuru ton hi isse taran da palan poshan kita janda hai ke ghar de kam karna zarrori hai. Mere dadi nani aksar eh keha karde si ki padai karan da matlb eh nai ke tusi ghar de kam na karo ghar de kam tan istrian da gehna hai.* (I am well educated and working as a lecturer even then I do all household chores like cooking, packing lunch boxes, washing clothes milking cattle, getting ready children

for school etc. Now I have hired domestic help for cleaning of the household and utensils earlier I used to do myself. We are socialized in such a manner that we have to perform these activities. My grandmother used to say getting education does not mean that you have not to perform household tasks but it is an ornament of a woman).

One of the male respondents Karnail Singh (52) replied in this way:

Ghar de kam karne, bachian nu sambalna aurtan da hi kam hai, Je ehna nu gharon bahar kadia tan eh tan char bandian dian gallan vich aa ke apna basia bassia ghar vi patt dendian ehna nu kehri bahuti samaj hundi ae. Main apni ladki nu vi B.A. te pher B.ed. vi karai hai jehri ke aj di zarrorat vi ae par rista tolan vehle harik ne puchia ke ghar de kam vi aande hain ke sirf padai hi kiti hai. Bhaven assi bahut taraki kar lai par ajj vi saaddi soch uthe hi khloti ae so is lai aurtan gharan de kam kardian hi sobdian ne. (looking after house and taking care of children is part of women life. If they will go out of the house and by meeting other persons they will ruin their happy life. As education is the need of hour I have taught my daughter. She is B.A. (Bachelor of Arts) and B. ed. (Bachelors in education) even then at the time when I was searching for groom everybody asked ‘whether she knows to perform household chores’. Time has changed and our lives are also affected by the process of modernization but still in our thoughts we are backward so I will say that the grace of a woman is in performing household chores).

Women have a greater range of responsibilities, starting from household maintenance, to take care of children, cattle and of sick and elderly. In case of the lower caste groups, women are partially engaged in agricultural activities also. They are first to rise, before the crack of dawn and start the day’s work. Their daily life is a juggling act as they try to fit in a vast range of tasks and responsibilities. Dhani Ram Chatrik in his poem ‘Punjab’ has described about the day to day activities of Punjabi women. He writes:

*Kaya chure bire fabde ne, Joban matian mutiaran de,
 Jad paun madhani chatti vich, Tad shor utthan ghumkaran de,
 Koi tuidi hai koi katdi hai, Koi pihndi hai, koi chhardi hai,
 Koi seundi hai koi proundi hai, Koi welan butte kadhdi hai,
 Piplan de chhanven peenghan nu, Kud kud ke masti chardi hai,
 Tumda hai josh jwani nu, Ik chardhi hai ik fardi hai,
 Ik raat channi khirdi hai, Koi raag ilahi chhirda hai,
 Giddhe nu lohra aunda hai, Joban te birhan bhirda hai. (Chatrik 2000:96)*

(When Punjabi women churn the milk, the melodious sounds are created with the bangles they are wearing. They do different tasks such as knitting, yarning, grinding, or doing embroidery, stitching and cooking. Beneath the *pipal* tree swings up, one sits and the other holds the swing. In the bright light of moon they enjoy their folk dance *giddha*.)

The Punjabi mother has no lesser role in the household. A major course of the domestic chores is in the mother's hand. Indeed, the position of women in the Punjabi society is far from being inferior. Mothers look after the children and teach the children. Punjabi women are hard working and dutiful to their husbands. With the proper management of the family, the family earns a reputation and respect in the village as well as in society. When asked about their daily routine one of the elderly women replied, "*Asi tan put ghar da chulla chownka, roti tuk, goha kuda, ghar nu saaf karan ton lai ke, bachian di dekh bhal, pashuan di dekh bhal de aharan vich laggian rehandian haan. Sara din aise taran ehna kamman nu karde hi nikal janda hai*". (My dear child, we do all the household work ranging from kitchen related work, preparing food, cleaning dung, household cleaning, care of children, cattle etc. The whole day goes like this only.)

Surinder kaur (45) mother of three children commented that in household activities
*sara kam aap hi karna painda hai tadke ton le ke raat tikan kaman vich hi rujhe
 raeda hai. Roti banauni, bachian nu tyar karna, naal lai vi roti ban ke deni, dharan
 kadnian, kapde dhone, bhande manjne, kapde sambne te hor isse taran de gharan de*

kai kam hunde han jihre kade mukde hi nai. Sawer de same tan saah lean da vi time nai hunda, han dupehar vehle jhat ko beh jai da hai shaman nu pher usse taran hi kaman vich rujh jande han bas kam karde karde hi raat pai jandi hai. (I have to do all the work like preparing meals, getting children ready for school, packing lunch boxes, washing clothes, cleaning utensils, milking cattle, to keep the clothes at their places and likewise other household activities involve me whole day. Morning is the busiest part of the day, in the afternoon only we get some rest by the time its evening and I start working again on the same pace).

A young girl Gurpreet (15) who is studying in class IX when asked about her interests in studies she said:

ghar de kaman vich mummy da hath wataundi han naal hi apne chote bhai nu vi sambdi han, bhande manjdi han, saarian nu khana khwaundi han te kapde vi sukne pawaundi han, zayada time tan mera edhan hi nikal janda hai. Unjh tan mainu padan da bahut shouk hai main pad likh ke kuch karna chahundi han par ghar de kaman vich hi time nikal janda hai. Je mummy keh vi deve jaa hun pad lai jaa ke, tan bibi aggon di eh keh dendi hai ki ghar de kam aane zarrori han schoole bathera pad laindi hai, pad ke tun kehra vadi afsar lag jana hai. (Many of the household works are unrelenting. I help my mother in the kitchen and household everyday. I have to look after my little brother while my mother cooks for the family. I clean dishes, clean the house, serve the meals to family members and dry up clothes regularly. I want to do something in my life but due to household chores I get very little time for my studies. If my mother says go and study now, then my grandmother immediately says you have enough time in school for studying and by studying you will not become an officer).

A Punjabi woman begins her day at around 4.30 a.m. She is the first to get up in the morning. After getting up, she takes a bath and offers prayers. Around 6'o clock in the morning she prepares tea, then milks the cattle and prepares meals for family, then getting children ready for the school besides feeding domestic animals. She feeds the children, washes the dishes, clothes and cleans the house. In the afternoon she again prepares the meals and takes it to the fields where the husband and other family members are working. Around 4 p.m. in the evening she prepares tea and sends it to fields and then prepares dinner and washes the dishes, feed animals. If there is another female member in the house then she gets helps in these tasks and if there is no one then she has to perform all these activities on her own. By 9.30 p.m. she goes to the bed. The picture becomes clearer after reading this conversation of Jeeto (42) of village Lang

Main ghar vich sab ton pehlan uth jandi han. Uthan saar hi kam shuru ho jande ne, pehlan dangran da goha kuda karma pher dharan kadnianus ton baad sare ghar di jee uthne shuru ho jande han, pher main unha lai chah dhardi han, roti tuk da kam ho janda. Jadon bache school chale jande ne te eh khet nu chal jande ne pher rasoi sambni, bhande manjane, kapde leede dhone jad tikan ehna kaman ton vehli hon lagdi han bache schoolon aa jande hyan pher ohna naal rujh jaeda. Enhe ch aathan wehle de kaman di tayari shuru ho jandi hai sawer waangu pher dharan kadnian, roti tuk karni ate kai hor kaman vich saman beet janda hai te raat ho jandi hai. (I am the first one to get up in the morning. From that time I start working by cleaning the cow shed, milking cattle. By the time other family members get up I prepare tea for them, cook food. When children leave for school and my husband leaves for fields then I clean the kitchen, utensils, house, wash clothes etc. When these works are going to finish children come from school and I get busy with them. After the preparation for evening is started and day passes like this only.)

Pali (39) father of two sons admits that though I am a good father, but my wife has contributed more in housework, bringing up children and also helped me in agriculture related tasks like storage of grains etc. Gurjeet Kaur (31) mother of a son tells that,

jadon mere M.Ed. de paper chal rahe si tan raati main ehna nu keha ke ajj main bahut thak gai han padai de naal -naal ghar da sara kam karna te bache nu vi sambhalna painda hai, tan oh ikdum bolle padai tun apne shouk nu kardi hai je nai hundi tan chadd de kam tan tenu hi karna pau. (When my M. Ed. exams were going on I myself did all of the household work and looked after my son. One night I told my husband that I am too much tired because of long day activities in the house and studying. He immediately replied, “Household work is your duty and you have to perform it. Studying is additional thing you are doing and if it is not possible for you to manage, then leave your studies.”)

Most women do not consider their chores as “work” and thereby do not rate these activities as entitled to any form of recognition. This is a perception most often reflected in the inequalities that women suffer.

Village life is changing in terms of its culture. Old taboos against holding certain kinds of jobs are disappearing; the caste system is no longer very rigid, though there is a strong assertion of caste pride and caste identity. However, untouchability is no longer practiced as was the case in traditional Indian villages.

A villager is understood as being rooted to the soil, not very rational, given to superstitious beliefs and devoted to the traditions of the joint family. A common saying for Jatt was: *Jatt saari dunian nu kama ke khuawe, raat barate paani lawe, hal wahe, wadian kare, mitti nal mitti howe tan Jatt; bhadon de mahine di kadakdi dhup vich godian kare tan Jatt, je garmian vich waadi kare, tan Jatt akhwaunda hai.* (Singh.2003:63)

(Jatt provides food to the whole world, in the night waters the fields, ploughs, harvests the grains and mingles with mud only then he is known as Jatt. In the humid days when he ploughs the fields then he is Jatt. In summers when he harvests the fields then he is Jatt).

This was said because Jatt caste is the landowning caste of the village and is considered as the backbone of the village. But due to the economic compulsions, most of the villagers no longer hesitate to migrate from the villages. In the present scenario, even the land owners are keen to migrate to urban areas in search of better economic opportunities.

The rural women for years, had managed the household, also worked in the fields, looked after the domestic animals. By doing these activities, they contributed to economic growth of Punjab. Mohan (1996) has vividly described the roles of females of Punjab villages in the following words,

In the popular mind, the image of a Punjabi wife especially Jatti was constructed as a sturdy and hardworking woman. The agricultural sayings and proverbs of Punjab celebrate her multiple functions: domestic chores of cooking for the joint family (which gradually became nuclear units), cleaning and scrubbing, nursing the children and extensive animal husbandry work. Animal husbandry work which involved tending, feeding, milking the cattle, churning, preparing *ghee* (refined butter oil) was the exclusive responsibility of women and their invisible contribution to the hard subsistence economy whose backbone was the small peasant proprietor. Besides, she performed various agricultural operations such as picking cotton, weeding and peeling sugarcane. (Mohan 1996:171)

Evenings and mornings are such two units of rural life of Punjab which have their own beauty and attraction. In so many poems Punjabi poets have given live description of morning and evening. For example Dhani Ram Chatrik has beautifully described the scene of a morning in his poem called 'Punjab':

*Khuhan te tik tik hundi hai,
Khetan vich hal pae chalde ne,
Bhattey chah vele dhukde ne,
Hali tak tak ke hasde ne. (Chatrik 2000:96)*

(Different sounds are created with the working of wells, farmers are ploughing in the fields, and the beautiful Punjabi women come to the field taking the morning breakfast of farmers to the fields and men feel happy to see them.)

A live description of dusk by Dhani Ram Chatrik has been elaborated in his poem called 'Sandhya' which represents the complete picture of the activities. He writes:

*Pind de dwale dhoor dangran dhamai ae,
Mandran ch pujarian ne talli kharkai ae,
Rahi tikanian te thawaan aan mallian,
Hattian te soude dian chungan muk challian,
Bhattian te nadhian di bhir katthi ho gai,
Bhounian di chak chak khoohan te khlo gai.*

(ibid, 2000:96)

(With the coming of dusk the cow herds come back to village from pastures with their grazing cattle's. In the temples the *prohits* start *arti* with the twinkling of the bells; the farmers who had gone out in the fields have come back to their destinations. The people rush to the village shop to get the required items for their households and some of them gather around the earthen part to perch their grain and with the coming back of cultivators and farmers the sounds of wells have stopped.)