APPENDIX-4

Ethnographic Profile of Backward Castes in Haryana

Ramgarhia

The Ramgarhia is a Punjabi community in the Punjab region of northwestern India and the community was started from the Ramgarhia Misl (army). The Ramgarhia community is an ethnic caste of the Punjab region in South Asia. The founder & leader of the Ramgarhia Misl was Misldar Nand Singh Sanghania and its members were Sikhs from different tribes. But today, Ramgarhia is associated mainly with the Tarkhan tribe because of its later famous Misldhar, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, who was a Tarkhan. Historically, the Ramgarhia community has had strong links with the Jat tribes, with whom they have been very close friends and allies; a close bond that continues to this day. Generally, Sikh carpenters use Ramgarhia as a surname whereas Hindu carpenters use Dhiman. The word 'Garh' in Punjabi means a Strong hold on a fort. Hence the combined form 'Ramgarhia' signifies a Builder of Fort. Besides he is 'Bu+Dhiman' (Budhiman) i.e. an intelligent skilled worker, who engineers all technical activities or the cosmos (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramgarhia).

Ahir

The Ahir, Hir, Yadav, Rao Ji, Rao Sahib are the different names which are used for this particular caste. Ahir is an Indian ethnic group and they are variously described as a caste, a clan, a community, a race and a tribe. They ruled over different parts of India and Nepal. The traditional occupation of this community is rearing of animals, production and selling of milk and pursuing agriculture. They are found throughout India but they are mainly distributed in Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan and Bihar. People of this caste also feel that the Ahirs are distributed in other states also and claim that some of the Raos and Reddies of Andhra Pradesh are also Ahirs. In Haryana, the Ahirs are concentrated in Mahendergarh and Gurgaon districts.

Ahirs forms the majority of the population in Haryana are the peasants and consider themselves equal to other peasant communities such as the Jats, Rajputs and Gujars. The process of Sanskritization has also affected the Ahir caste. The people of the old generation preferred to use “Rao” before the names, while the younger
generation have started writing “Yadav” after their names. Now due to the spread of education Yadavs are leaving their traditional occupation and entered in new modern occupations. Among the Ahirs of Haryana there are no traditional caste councils, i.e., the khaps, and existed among the Jats. After independence, the politicians used caste people for their benefit and formed caste panchayats (Council), i.e., Yac Mahasabha, to organize the people of the community. The Ahirs’ rituals are similar to those of other castes. Similarly, the agriculture is also common among the Jats, Rajputs, and even Brahmans. The Ahirs maintain relations of equal level with the Jats when they occupy a subordinate position to Brahmans and superior position to other arti casts such as Khati, Kumhar, Lohar, Chamar, Julaha and Chippi. Similarly, the Ahirs share Hookah and food with the Jat, Khati and Sunar. He does not accept food from the scheduled castes, though the practice of untouchability has declined considerably. The political participation of this caste is high. They participate in various political parties at various levels, ranging from local level to national level (Sangwan: 1994).

Bairagi

Vaishnav/Bairagi/Swami/Bawa brahmin is a part of the Sarswat community in Northern India. The Bairagis claim to have descended from the Jats. The recorded history of their origin is not available, but they believe and claim that a member of their family took sanyas (status of hermit) and became a faqir (Mandicant). The descendants of that faqir came to be known as the Bairagis. They are distributed in almost all districts of Haryana state in varying numbers. The Bairagi community seems to be a composite group without any sub-caste, sect or social divisions of any kind but gotras. The Bairagis are aware of, and recognise their place in the Verna system as Kshatriyas. They consider themselves equal to other agricultural communities particularly the Jats, but the Jats consider Bairagis socially inferior to them. The community is perceptive of itself midway between the higher and lower castes and this is how the other communities view them.

Cultivation is the main occupation of the Bairagis. Land is the main resource and ownership is by individual proprietorship. They mainly cultivate rice and wheat and the produce is sold in the market, which is fully regulated. Those who are landless go as labourers to private and government agencies, receiving daily payments at
approved rates by state and district authorities. Some of them are in the government and private services like the police and army. The Bairagis profess the Hindu religion. Deities only of the wider pantheon order exist. The Bairagis do not specialize in any art or craft. Oral traditions in the form of folk songs, folklore and folk tales exist as in other communities of the region. The Bairagis accept and exchange water and food from and with all other local Hindu communities except from Chamar, Balmiki and other scheduled castes. They share well and water resources, crematoria, religious shrines, traditional festivals and festivities with other local communities like the Jat and the Kamboj. Patron client and landlord tenant relationships are absent, but cultivator labour relationship with other communities exists. As regards modern intercommunity links, the Bairagis have members employed in white collar jobs and in defense services. Political leadership has emerged at the village panchayat level only (Bhatia: 1994).

Chippi

The Chippis are also called as Chhimbis. Rohilla is said to be their title. It is said that Taimur Lame had imprisoned some people at Fort Lohagarh in Rajasthan. When this news reached saint Namdeo, he by force of his devotion got 60 people freed, whom he took away to Rohilkhand. He further made arrangements for their stay, food etc. and instructed them to remain hidden (chhipana) there it was after the chhipana that these people and their descendants were known as Chippis. According to another version they originated from Peshawar in erstwhile Punjab. According to yet another version in Rose’s account (1919), they are descended from Namdeos who had taught them the art of dyeing, printing and washing clothes, and migrated from Pindlapur in the Deccan. But the people now recall their migration from Rohilkhand in Uttar Pradesh. They are spread throughout the length and breadth of the state of Haryana. They consider themselves at par with backward classes in social standing, but below the Brahman, Rajput, Jat, Gujar and Bania and above the scheduled castes. The Brahman, Rajput, Jat, Gujar and Bania consider them of a low social position, but the backward classes recognize them to equal status. They recognize the Verna order and place themselves with the Kshatriyas.

Service, tailoring, printing and dyeing of coarse cloth, especially quilts, are Chippi’s main economic resources. Though it is mainly a landless community, yet
some of them have small landholdings. Traditional occupation of the community is stamping and dyeing of coarse cloth and stitching. Agriculture, electric repair/fitting and petty shops and driving of vehicles constitute their subsidiary occupations. Some of them also do labour work and get their wage in cash. They have a direct link with the local market and transact business in cash.

Chippis in Haryana are Hindus. They accept water and food from caste Hindus and some backward classes, but do not do so from scheduled caste communities like the Balmikis, the Chamars, the Dehas, etc. They visit the same religious shrines and participate in traditional festivals. Receiving and rendering of services exist. Landlord-tenant and cultivator labour relationships exist. The community has businessmen, white collar jobs holders, Judges, teachers, engineers, and doctors, members in defense and police departments. Political leadership has emerged at the regional level (Garg: 1994).

**Jogi**

Jogis are called as Padha Jogi or simply the Padha or Nath. There are mainly three groups, namely Kanphate Jogi, Padha Jogi and Jangam Jogi. According to Rose (1919), the term includes two very distinct categories of persons. Firstly, the Jogis proper, a regular religious order of Hindus, which includes both the Anghar Jogis and the Kanphatta Jogi ascetics who are followers of Gorkh Nath. They worship Shiva. They are respected in the same way as the Bairagis, Gosains and other religious communities. They all are Hindus, but the Gharisthi or secular Jogi, even if Hindu, appear to be commonly called Rawal and make a living by singing, begging and telling fortunes. In the second category, the miscellaneous assortment of low caste faqirs and fortune tellers, both Hindu and Muslims, who are commonly known as Jogis, are included. Jogis are spread all over the state of Haryana, but in the district of Ambala, Padha Jogis are more common. Jangam Jogis may be identified because they wear a crown made of peacock feathers when they go begging. There are mainly three social groups which have already been mentioned. Among these three, Kanphate Jogis occupy the highest position as they are masters of gaddi. They have a lot of agricultural and residential land, so to speak, a kind of rajwada (Kingdom). They live on the income raised from this landed property. Padha Jogis, who come next in the social hierarchy, are agriculturists. They also play the sarangi. Jangam Jogis are considered of the lowest
rank as the eke out their living by begging. The community members considered themselves of equal status with the upper caste Hindus. They are recognized as Brahmins in the Verna system and other communities hold them in high esteem.

Jogis’ major economic and resource is farming and Jajmani purohiti. They used to sing gallantry songs of Kings and dynasties for a high caste people who would pay them in cash and kind. Now the community members are engaged as in grocery shops, trade/business, as labourers in factories and teachers in schools. After independence some of them have acquired land. They have also migrated to other neighbouring places in search of labour work. Labourers working in agriculture, Plantation, industry, etc. are increasing. Child labour exists stop children are mostly cattle herders. The payment of wages in both in cash and kind. Most Haryana Jogis are farmers, with very few still involved in their traditional occupation. The main work of jogis people are become a sent, wear bagwa and do jog sadana. Jogi are designated Other Backward Classes in most states, starting from 1993.

The community members exchange/accept water from other communities of high caste, but do not do so with communities like Julaha, Jhinwar, Gadaria, Kumhar, Chamar and Balmiki. Putative based kinship exists. They shares well and water resources with other communities, but not with scheduled caste Hindus. Jajmani system and cultivator-labourer relationship exist. Some members hold white collar jobs, our teachers, doing business, and are in defence services. Political leadership has emerged at the village level (Garg: 1994).

Dhobi

The community calls itself Dhobi (washer man). They use their got as titles. This is a caste group primarily belonging to India and Pakistan and are said to specialized in washing clothes. The word Dhobi is derived from the Hindi word dhona, which means to wash. They are found throughout North India, Gujarat, Maharashtra as well as the Punjab province of Pakistan, where they are known as Gazar. A dhobi is likely to be of many different origins, with those whose ancestors took the occupation of washing clothes evolving over time into a distinct caste bound by rules of endogamy. Most Dhobis follow the customs and traditions of the region they live.
The Dhobi were considered ‘untouchables’ – the lowest castes in the Hindu social hierarchy. India’s independence brought about a new constitution that lifted this age-old stigma of impurity. The new designation provides the Dhobi people with a host of benefits and quotas in various government schemes and jobs. They are a large community, widely distributed across northern, central, western and eastern India. They do not accept or exchange water and food with Badi, Balmiki, Dhanak, Chamar etc., but today food and water from other communities.

Fifty or Sixty years ago they used to wash the clothes of the landlords for which they would that 20 seers of any sereal at the time of harvesting. Thus there was prevalence of Jajmani system. Now Jajmani relations have given way to contractual relations as they received their wages in cash. About a decade ago sharecropping was also prevalent. Employer worker relationship had been deported. Community members are doing military and police jobs. Some of them are in government and private services.

Most Dhobi follow their traditional occupation of washing and ironing clothes. Some of the better-off Dhobi own dry-cleaning shops. It is common to find the local Dhobi at a convenient distance in every neighborhood. In villages they tend to occupy specified quarters from where they offer their laundering services. The stigma of the untouchables remains in spite of the new laws of the land.

In addition to working as launderers, some are engaged in cultivation and other subsidiary occupations like animal husbandry, business and skilled and unskilled labour. In the heavily forested state of Assam the subsidiary occupations include carpentry and sawing of timber. In recent years, many have joined government service at various levels helped by the official affirmative action policies.

The Dhobi of Haryana are said to have originated from Punjab and Rajasthan. They are scattered throughout the state. Like other Hindu communities, they are divided into clans called gotras. These clan names are also used as surnames. Their main occupation remains washing of and drying of clothes. A small number of Dhobi are marginal farmers. They are classified as OBCs (Garg: 1994).
The Gujar community is also called Gujjar or Gurjar. It uses Chaudhary to identify itself in Haryana. The Gujar community in Haryana also claims to have belonged to the Gurjar Pratihars who ruled Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab and Haryana in the 8th-9th century A.D. But many others in this community, especially those living around Delhi in the Aravali hills, claim to be the descendants of the Tomar dynasty which ruled over Delhi in 11th and 12th century A.D. They are known as Tanwar. The Tanwars have many villages scattered in the Aravali hills of Faridabad and Gurgaon districts of Haryana and in the union territory of Delhi.

The Gujar community live in all the districts of Haryana. The exact census figures are not available but according to political observers, the Gujar community constitutes about 11% of the total population of Haryana. There are three major social divisions of the Gujar community, viz., Hindu, Sikh and Muslims in Haryana. These three are equivalent in social status. The basis of social differentiation is mainly religion. The chief functions of social sub-division or group/sect is to render cooperation in following their different religions. The same surnames or sub-castes are found in all these three sub-divisions.

After independence, no change has been noticed in surnames and the meaning of their names and functions. The Gujar community regards itself in social status equivalent to the Jats, the Ahir, and the Rajputs, but lower than the Brahmans and the higher than the backward and scheduled castes in Haryana. Gujars share their huqqa-pani and kachcha khana with the Jats, the Ahirs and the Rajputs in Haryana, but don’t do so with Brahamans whom they treat as higher and with scheduled castes, who are lower in social status than themselves.

Land, water and forests are the major economic resources for the Gujar community living in Haryana. The head of the family and the state exercises control over land, water and forests. It is mainly a land owning community. Agriculture and animal husbandry are the main occupations of this community. The Gujar community depends on the market for the purchase of its daily needs and for the sale of agricultural and animal products. The payment to the labour is made in both kind and cash. Instead of big landholdings, small landholdings are becoming more common due to the
increasing number of families and constant land size. But landlessness is still not there in the Gujar community.

Most Gujars in Haryana are Hindus. But in the Chachrauli sub division of Ambala district, there are many villages of Muslim Gujars. In the same way in Pehowa sub-division of Kurukshetra district, there are the Gujars who follow the Sikh religion. The Gujar community in Haryana maintains its traditional intercommunity linkages in ritual, social and occupational aspects even in modern times. The community is closely linked occupationally, as agriculture and animal husbandry are the main occupations of the Gujars all over the state. The Gujars perform almost the same rituals irrespective of their religious differences. The Gujar community shares wells and other water resources, facilities of roads, schools and crematoria with all other communities of the same village. The jajmani system still exists in the community in one form or the other. Modern intercommunity linkages are very strong. The participation of the community in political activities and public functions at the local, taluka and district levels in very Marked (Nagar: 1994).

Kamboj

The Kamboj are also known as Padhe, Pradhan, Lagle and Kamboh, is a community mainly in the Northern India and eastern Pakistan. They may be related to the Kambojas, a tribe of Ancient India, mentioned in ancient Sanskrit texts and epigraphy. Kamboj is frequently used as a surname in lieu of the sub-caste or the Gotra name by the Hindu Kambojs of India. Their Muslim counterparts living in Pakistan mostly use the last name Kamboh instead of the gotra name. A good many Muslim Kamboh are also found in the Doab region of Uttar Pradesh, especially in the town of Marehra, and call themselves Zuberis.

Kambojs are the one among the agriculturists class of India. Animal husbandry is also a subsidiary occupation. Due to pressure on land, many have taken to business, government and private service. The community members have taken to white collar jobs and have teachers, entrepreneurs and members in defence and police services. The agricultural produce, and milk is sold in the market. Traditional intercommunity links are maintained with other agricultural communities. They accept and exchange water and kachcha, pucca and siddha food with all communities, but not with those classified...
as scheduled castes. They do not accept and exchange water and food with Dhobi, Nai
and Mochi. Other castes have no inhibition in accepting water and food from them.
Putative kinship exists at individual and personal level with other neighbouring
communities. They share wells and water-sources with other communities apart from
the scheduled castes. Patron client relationship, landlord tenant relationship and
cultivator labourer relationship exist. Other intercommunity links exist as they have
businessmen, traders, engineers and doctors are in white-collar jobs and in defence and
police services. Political leadership has emerged at the village, state and regional levels
(Bhatia: 1994).

Kurmi

The Kurmi are a large peasant community of farmers widely distributed in
India and Nepal. In India they are lives in the states of Uttar Pradesh (more than 5
million), Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Assam. Successive waves of land reform
legislation all over India since the 1950s abolished the landlord system which enabled
the cultivating caste of Kurmi, who were tenant farmers, into a landowning caste.
Among the Kurmi there are also businessmen, government servants at various levels,
engineers, doctors and defense personnel. In Delhi they are mainly engaged as industrial
workers, daily-wage laborers or are self-employed, running shops or dairies.

The Kurmi are listed among the Other Backward Classes (OBC) in the Indian
Constitution. This provides them many benefits such as quotas in government jobs and
development schemes, reserved seats in medical and engineering colleges, all of which
are intended to assist them in improving their lives. The Kurmi are farmers except in
Punjab where they are a landless community who mainly work as gardeners for private
and government institutions. Some are sharecroppers, rear buffalo such as those in
Bihar, while a few poorer Kurmi work as farm laborers. These days they can be found
in all professions including politics, films, medicine, law, administrative services, and
business as well as the traditional occupation of agriculture. In Delhi they are employed
as industrial workers, daily-wage labourers or are self-employed and own shops or
dairies.
These are a progressive community who make good use of the benefits provided by the government. The Kurmi of Bihar in particular have improved their circumstances and are doing well in better paying jobs, as professionals and in government bureaucracy and are now part of the middle class. They have taken advantage of loans to purchase time saving implements and changed the way they farm, using new technology for improved efficiency. They still use indigenous medicine as well as visiting clinics. Family planning is becoming more acceptable as well as formal education for their children. Children of the poor Kurmi are less fortunate. The staple food consists of meat, wheat, rice and pulses. They eat seasonal vegetables, fruit, milk and dairy products. Alcoholic drinks are socially prohibited; nevertheless some of them are addicted to alcohol.

The All India Kshatriya Kurmi Mahasabha is the Kurmi’s national level council that looks after their welfare. Since India’s independence this organization has become a pressure group for politics. Kurmi Politicians have also grown in number and status and there are Kurmi ministers at Central and State levels practicing at this time. Regional and local councils come under the Mahasabha and they exercise social control over the areas under their jurisdiction. Instances of adultery, rape, elopement, disrespect for traditional norms, contempt towards the caste council and matrimonial disputes are handled by these councils (www.peoplegroupsindia.com/profiles/kurmi).

Labana

Labana is a landholding caste whose members are traditionally traders (transporters, carriers and loaders) and mostly became agriculturists. The Labanas of Punjab region are mostly Sikhs, with a small minority of Muslims and Hindus. During British colonial times, they were declared as a martial-race. Labana is also written or pronounced as Lubana, Lobana, Lavana etc. The Labanas of Haryana have mostly migrated from the part of Punjab which is now in Pakistan. The Labanas are concentrated mostly in Ambala, Karnal and Kurukshetra, though in small numbers they are found throughout the state. They consider themselves to be of middle social status, being superior to scheduled castes and Nai, Dhobi, Lohar, Kumhar etc. Other communities also perceive them to be of the same social standing. They are aware of the Verna system but do not believe in it.
In economic activities, they are engaged in both employment and self-employment. Some are big landowners engaged in agriculture, while others are engaged in private and public sector employment. The majority of them are in the army, police and paramilitary force. Transport is another big occupational pursuit. With landholding becoming small with every generation, more and more people are opting for service after finishing their education. They have teachers, administrators, engineers, doctors and members in other white collar jobs.

They accept and exchange water and kachcha, pucca, and seedha food from all castes and communities except Balmiki, Chamar, Deha, Dhobi, Nai and Mochi. These castes have no inhibitions in accepting water and food from them. Patron-client, landlord-tenant and cultivator-labourer relationships exist between those who are landowners and are engaged in agriculture and employee agricultural labour from other communities. Other forums of symbiotic relationships exist. Modern intercommunity linkages exist as they have businessmen, interpreters, members holding white collar jobs, teachers, administrators, engineers, doctors and in defence, police and paramilitary forces. Political leadership has emerged at the regional level with community members being municipal Councillors, village pardhan, members of legislative assembly and ministers (Bhatia: 1994).

Dhiman

Dhiman is a Craftsman caste of India. Dhimans are a community or caste who have adopted engineering, art and architecture professions in India, and are followers of Lord Vishwakarma. They are found all over India. They comprise blacksmith, carpenter, metal craftsmen, stone-carver, goldsmith. Being largely descended from Brahmins, Hindu law permits them to wear the sacred thread, perform various priestly duties and accords them a position equal to that of Brahmins. Hence, they are also known as Vishwa Brahmin.

According to traditional belief, Vishwabrahmins are descended from five sons of lord Vishwakarma. They are Manu (blacksmith), Maya (carpenter), Thwastha (metal craftsman), Silpi (stone-carver) Vishvajnya (goldsmith). The community is spread widely throughout India and played a vital role in the village economy. Their socio-economic status varied from a very high level to the low level in different parts of India.
as they earned high wages in towns because of their factory employment and low in villages.

Vishvakarma is the Hindu presiding deity of all craftsmen and architects. In Hindu mythology, Viswakarma is considered as the Divine Architect. He is called 'Devashilpi' or 'The Architect of Gods'. He is the "Principal Universal Architect", the architect who fabricated and designed the divine architecture of the Universe at the behest of Brahma, the Lord of Creation. The Rig Veda describes Viswakarma as the god with multi-dimensional vision and supreme strength. He is able to predict well in advance in which direction his creation will move. Hindus worship Lord Vishwakarma as the god of engineering and architecture.

Lord Vishwakarma is pictured with four hands, a club in his right hand, wears a crown, a necklace of Gold, rings on his wrists and holds tools in his left hand. He is the personification of all creative power. Vishwakarma is also the designer of all the flying chariots, and divine weapons of the gods. He built Dwarka, Yamapuri, and Lanka. He is also said to have created the image of Lord Jagannath and left it incomplete due to interruption. He is the revealer of the science of mechanics and architecture, which is called Sthapatya Veda. Mahabharat describes him as "The Lord of the arts, executor of a thousand handicrafts, the carpenter of the Gods, the most eminent of artisans, the fashioner of all the ornaments, on whose craft all menu subsist, and who is worshipped by all."

They have claimed a higher social status for many years and believe that the trades which they traditionally follow are superior to the work of a manual labourer because they require artistic and scientific skills as well as those of the hand. According to George Varghese, their claim to high status is "one of the mainstays of Viskwakarma identity" in what is otherwise a fragmented, incoherent community that has often suffered from internal differences of opinion.

Their claim has been voiced by Edava Somanathan, a member of the community and its only historian in the written word. Somanathan's works, according to Varghese, "... are written from a pro-community perspective. Therefore, there are a lot of exaggerations and anti-brahmin tirades in them". Somanathan argues that the artisanal groups were a part of the Indus Valley Civilization, pre-dating the arrival of Brahmins and their caste-based division of society. He claims remarkable achievements
are evidenced in both the arts and sciences during that egalitarian pre-Brahmin era, including the construction of aeroplanes.

This claim to Brahmin status is not generally accepted outside the community, despite their assumption of some high-caste traits, such as wearing the sacred thread, and the Brahminisation of their rituals. For example, the sociologist M. N. Srinivas, who developed the concept of sanskritisation, juxtaposed the success of the Lingayat caste in achieving advancement within Karnataka society by such means with the failure of the Vishwakarma to achieve the same. Their position as a left-hand caste has not aided their ambition. They have been included in the list of Other Backward Classes in some states of North India (www.dhimansamaj.com/Dhiman_History.aspx).

Saini

Saini is a caste of North India who were traditionally landowners. The Sainis believe that their ancestors were Yadavas and that it was the same lineage in which Krishna was born. In the 43rd generation of the Yadavas there was a king known as Shoor or Sur, the son of King Vidartha. King Soor had a son named ‘Sain’. It was in the name of these, father and son, that the community was popularly known as Shoorsaini. It continued to be recognized as such for another five generations until Krishna took over the region of the dynasty. Even during Krishna’s time, the common people were known as Soorsainis. The Soorsainis Kingdom is believed to be located near Mathura in Uttar Pradesh.

In a fourfold division of the Hindu social order, the Sainis invariably claim a Kshtriya origin. Among different groups of Kshtriya, and the Sainis are one who consider themselves Rajputs. They Rajput links are evident from the fact that many of their clans carry the same names as the Rajputs. The community, which is identical with Sainis, is called the Mali, though the latter is also known by different names depending mainly on the type of the work they perform or the area of their origin. Like the Sainis, the Malis also claim Rajput origin and, therefore, are called in different parts Rajput Mali, Saini Rajputs or Jadon Mali. Many of their clans also carry the same names as do Rajputs. The Malis are also mainly agriculturists.

In view of similarity between the Sainis and the Malis, Ibbetson (1916) appears to believe that the former constitute a subdivision of the Malis. The Punjab
census of 1911 and the Uttar Pardesh census of 1921 reported them as one. In many areas, they do not intermarry. While, in general, the Malis and Sainis are considered one, the latter name is preferred by most of the community members. It is mainly because the term Malis is suggestive of a Gardner rather than a caste: nor does it sound prestigious. Moreover, gardening is done by many other caste groups also and hence the term does not reflect a specific identity of the community. Besides, a majority of the community members are not involved in gardening and related occupations. In view of these factors, the term Saini was referred by most of its members which also suggests a special identity, higher status and a view of community much broader than that composed of only Gardeners.

While both the Sainis and the Malis claim a Kshtriya origin, their status among other agriculturists castes is considered lower. Among the two, the Sainis and enjoy a relatively higher position since the often of an land, and are less generally mere market gardeners than the Malis are (Ibbetson: 1916). Many of them are large landowners. Besides, during the past, the Malis had served the royal courts and were mainly working as gardeners; but the Sainis did not serve others; rather they were independent agriculturists.

The Sainis in Haryana are generally known as Deshwale or Bagri. While Deshwale Sainis claims to be the original residents of Haryana, Bagri Sainis are said to have migrated mainly from Rajasthan. In Haryana, they are mainly concentrated in the district of Hisar, Mahendergarh, Karnal and Kurukshetra. In Rohtak and Bhiwani also, they are found in large numbers.

As earlier pointed out, the Sainis and the Malis belong mainly to the agricultural community. While the former are mainly cultivators, the latter are engaged in pursuits related to gardening, vegetable cultivation, flower cultivation and the like. In addition, the former invariably own land, while it is not always so in case of the Malis. In Haryana, most Sainis are landowners and agriculture remains their primary occupation. In most cases, individual proprietorship exists. However, in cities, the Sainis are involved in a variety of other occupations which include dairying, government service, private service, grocery shops, tea stalls, industry and wage labour. Many of the community members from rural areas have also undertaken the vocations as secondary occupations.

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The villages and towns in Haryana are invariably multicaste. There are many castes which are considered lower than the Sainis, while castes like Brahmans also form part of locality. Besides, other castes whom the Sainis consider equivalent in status also exist which include the Jat, Rajput, Ror, Gujar, Bania, etc. Many do so in case of selected servicing caste also including carpenters and potters. However, no such a relationship are maintained with scheduled castes. The same holds good in accepting an exchanging of food with other castes including kachcha food. The Sainis have in the recent past entered into service, small industries, business and trading in grocery articles in large numbers, the community has teachers, clerks in offices, administrators, engineers and doctors and soldiers. Some of them are members of local statutory bodies, and state legislature and wield influence and leadership. They are active in politics of state and local level.

Sainis claim to be descendants of a king, Shurasena, as well as of Krishna and Porus, and to be related to the ancient Shoorsaini clan, noted in Puranic literature. This is disputed and the 1901 census noted that people using the Shoorsaini name were by then found only in Punjab, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi. Sainis also claim themselves to be Rajputs of Yaduvanshi descent.

As both a statutory agricultural tribe and a designated martial race during the British Raj era that followed the Indian Rebellion of 1857, Sainis had been chiefly engaged in both agriculture and military service since then until recent times. However, since the independence of India, Sainis have diversified into different trades and professions other than military and agriculture. Sainis are now also seen in increasing numbers as businessmen, lawyers, professors, civil servants, engineers, doctors and research scientists, etc. Sainis profess in both Hinduism and Sikhism. They also have a national level organization called Saini Rajput Mahasabha located in Delhi, established in 1920.

During the British period Sainis were classified as both a statutory agricultural tribe and a martial race. The latter was an administrative device based on the now-discredited theories of scientific racism: ethnic communities were categorized as being either martial or non-martial, with the latter being those who were thought to be unfit to serve in armies due to their sedentary lifestyles (Dak: 1994).
Sunar

The Sunar are also known as Swarnkar, Verma and Soni. They make jewelry and ornaments that are elaborately designed and inlaid with precious and semi-precious stones. Some Sunar cut and polish diamonds, while others engrave deities on pendants and gold and silver plates. Most Sunar own their jewelry shops and showrooms while others work as paid skilled workers making delicate filigree designs. Gold jewelry is considered a good investment option for most Indians, and is in great demand for marriages, making up part of the dowry. Some believe that they are the descendants of Jatau, the warrior bird of Ramayana. They are distributed throughout the state being mostly concentrated in urban areas.

The Sunars are divided into two religious segments, namely, Hindu Sunars and the Sikh Sunars. They are aware of the Verna order and deem themselves to be a Kshtriya. The Sunars are and occupational community engaged in making jewelry of various kinds from gold and silver. They are made on orders and payments are received in cash. The local markets functions on a daily bases and are fully regulated. Those who are educated have taken to many white collar jobs in government and private organizations. Some have also become teachers and administrators, and have even opted for the defence services. After independence, many have taken to other business and trade. Some are skilled industrial workers.

The majority of the Sunars follow Hinduism, while some follow Sikhism. Some follow the Arya Samaj sect while a few are the followers of the Jainism. Being an occupational group, traditionally engaged in making ornaments and jewelry, which are required at all marriage and many rituals, the Sunars have intercommunity links with all other communities at economic levels. They do not accept or exchange water and kachcha, pucca and sidha food with scheduled castes, Nais and Dhobis. Other communities also accept water and food from them. They take part in the feasts, social functions and religious affairs of other communities. They share the same water sources, schools, religious places and crematoria. Patron client relationship exists in rural areas. They have are entrepreneurs, businessmen, scholars, teachers, administrators, engineers, doctors, and are also in the defence services.

Some wealthier Sunar are money-lenders as well. They charge higher interest rates than banks do from their clients who are from the poorer sections of
society. In cities like Delhi and Chandigarh, they have secondary occupations like tailoring, electroplating and car repairs, retail shops dealing with books and stationery, motor and tractor parts. The ones who have done tertiary education are professionals. There are some politicians at village, regional and national levels.

They are also known as Suvarnakar, Swarnakar, Sonkar, Soni, Potdar, Hemkar, Jargar, Zargar, Kapila, Tank, Verma or Saraf and Maipotra. The Muslim Sunar in Jammu & Kashmir are known as Sanur or Shakish. In Uttarakhand, they are called by the surnames Verma or Choudhury. Their population numbers around 6.5 million and they are spread over one hundred and twenty-five districts of North, Central and East India. The Sunar are distributed in large concentrations in Varanasi, Allahabad, Deoria districts of Uttar Pradesh (970,000), and Barakot, Gangolihat, Pithoragarh, Champawat, Pulhindola, Almora, Nainital and Ranikhet in Uttaranchal. There are 57,000 in Delhi, 160,000 in Punjab, 580,00 in Bihar , 70,000 in Orissa, 170,000 in Haryana, 300,000 in Rajasthan in the districts of Udaipur, Bikaner, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Ajmer and Alwar. They also reside in Chandigarh, Bilaspur, Kangra, Hamirpur, Mandi, Solan, Shimla and Una districts of Himachal Pradesh and the Srinagar district of Jammu and Kashmir. Sunar or Sunar (also spelled Suniar) is from the Sanskrit suvarnakar, meaning worker in gold. According to records from the Vishnu Purana (writings about Vishnu) the Sunar are the descendents of the youngest of five sons created by Vishnu’s incarnation, Vishwakarama, the architect of the universe.

They are categorized as Vaisya (traders and merchants) and rank third in the four-fold Hindu caste system. They are accepted by other castes as such. In Delhi, Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh, they classify themselves as Kshatriya, second in the hierarchy. In the traditional four-fold Hindu caste system the Sunar generally place themselves under the category of Vaisya (3rd highest class of traders and merchants) and are accepted by other castes as such. But in some states, as in Delhi, Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh, they classify themselves as Kshatriya. There are several community associations for the Sunar community at a local, regional and national level. These regulate social control, settle disputes and initiate welfare activities. The Sunar are mostly Hindu (95%) though there are some Sikh, Muslim and Jain Sunar. The Hindu Sunar worship Shiva, Vishnu, Rama, Krishna (8th incarnation of Vishnu), Durga, Kali, Ganesh, and Lakshmi (goddess of wealth, wife of Vishnu). Some Sunar are Sikh
followers; Muslim Sunar belong to the Sunni sect and adhere to the tenets of Islam (Bhatia: 1994).

**Rahbari**

Rabari which is also known as Desai, Dewasi, Hirvanshi, Rebari, Rebadi and Rayka, Rabari means outsiders. This is because of the occupation. Rabari's main business used to be raising cattle, like camel, goat and cow. These cattle need lots of space for barns. They cannot live in a town and have room for their cattle. They started living on the outskirts of towns beyond for this necessity. They gave name to such community Dhani. Dhani means Basati (community). As it was outside the main community. So the name became Rabari for these people.

The Rahbaris are called Rahbari Chowdhury in the adjoining state of Rajasthan from where they had migrated to the neighbouring states of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat several hundred years ago. In Haryana, they are found in Kurukshetra, Sonipat, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Jind, Bhiwani, Mahendergarh, Hisar, Sirsa and Faridabad districts. The community members considered themselves inferior to Brahmanas and Banias, but equal to Rajputs, Jats, Ahirs, Gujars and superior to Dums, Speras, Singikats, Sansis, Balmikis, Kumhars, Chamars, Dhanaks etc. The community recognizes the Verna system and considers its place with Kshatriyas. Other communities like Rajputs, Brahmanas and Banias accord them a low social position.

The major economic resources of the Rahbaris consist of agriculture, camel rearing and selling, labour, transportation of goods on camels, carts, etc. A fairly large number of the community members own land having individual control over it. This community is a combination of both land owners and the landless. Rearing, breeding and selling of camels and transportation of goods on camel carts constitute the traditional occupation of the community. Agriculture is a subsidiary occupation, but in some areas the order is reversed. Besides, community members are also engaged at factory labourers. Some of them vend green vegetables to supplement their income. For their daily needs they depend on the local market. In those who do not have any land transect business in cash, but agriculturists practice barter and exchange system. After independence, as a consequence of increase in their population, the incidence of landlessness has increased resulting in an increase in the number of labourers in
agriculture, Plantation, industry etc. Payment of wages is both in cash and kind. Consequent of the deforestation in the post-independence years, resulting in great reduction of grazing grounds, the landless labourers are migrating to other places in search of jobs.

The Rahbaris claim to accept or exchange water with the Rajputs, Ahir, Jat and Gujar, but it has been learnt that the latter do not do so. They accept kachcha food from Ahir, Gujar, Jat, Brahman, Bania and other high castes. The Rahbaris do not accept and exchange pucca/kachcha/siddha food from Dhanak, Saini, Sapera, Singikat, Chamar, Balmiki etc. Some of its members hold white collar jobs in banks and government offices. There are also community members who serve as teachers. Some members are doing very small business. Its members can be seen in defence and police services. Political leadership has emerged at the Assembly level, particularly in the state of Gujarat where a Rahbari is an MLA. Sharecroppers, landlord-tenant, cultivator-labour and employer- worker relationships also exist (Garg: 1994).

Khati

The Barhai, Taksha, Dhiman, Jangra, Lote or Khati are the various name of this caste group whose members traditionally engaged themselves in carpentry. One prevalent view about its origin is that the members of this community are the direct descendants of Vishwakarma. Croke (1896) has identified the castes engaged in this occupation as ‘carpenters and turners’. The person of this community traditionally claims descent from Vishwakarma (son of Brahma). About the term Khati, it is said that it is a derivative of a Sanskrit word ‘Kasht’ meaning wood and people doing wooden work. They were called Kashti & Khati is the corruption of term Kashti. Khati is the village carpenter, he makes and repair like Bullock cart, Hal, Juwa, Kasola, Kassi, Dranti, Khurpa, Kulahari and Shuhaga, the things used in agriculture. He also makes and repairs Barnas (Doors), Janglas (Windows) as well as many other wooden elements in the houses, items of furniture and agricultural implements. One and two Khati families found in a village is a normal thing. Their numerical strength compared with other communities was somewhat less pronounced and that perhaps could be the reason why there is not an exclusive village for this community. Some of the towns in Haryana, where this community is located in great numbers are: Rohtak, Bahadurgarh,
Rewari, Gurgaon, Narnaul, Karnal, Dadri, Gohana and Sonipat. In fact in the village of Haryana they are distributed all over, but their numerical strength in the villages is not as pronounced as that of Jats, Ahirs, Gujars, Meos and others. In spite of this there are a couple of villages where they are in the majority.

The young members of this community have started migrating to urban centres in search of jobs. These migrants have improved their economic positions and they maintain a social distance from those who still live in the village. Such upwardly mobile sections of the community do not seek marriage alliances with those who do not carpentry to earn their livelihood because they have set up workshops and employ workmen, mostly carpenters to work in their workshops. The economically prosperous sections of Khatis have changed their lifestyle to a considerable extent. Such people dominant the panchayats of the community at the village level. The dominant sections are the most powerful sections of the community and they have vested interests in the organizational activities relating to the community. In spite of this they have also been engaged in doing philanthropic work for the community at large. In the cultural field there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the economically prosperous lot of Khatis have come under the Sanskritizing influence. They have started suffixing their names with a title Jangra and some of them are using their title Sharma and titles of other higher caste groups.

The Khatis are essentially craftsman and they use their skills to earn their livelihood. Some members of the community have their own land, but they are some landholders as a majority of them depend upon their skills to earn their bread. Patron client relationships are also there (Prasad: 1994).

Nai

Nai is the village barber. The word ‘Nai’ is derived from the Sanskrit word ‘napika’, one who cleans ‘nails’. Folk etymology, however, drives Nai from nanha, which means “one who never refuses”. In Haryana, Nais are found almost in all the villages. They consider themselves Kulin Brahmans. Some of them consider themselves as ‘clean’ Shudras while other claim Rajput ancestry. Though they interact closely with all other communities, and despite a patron-client relationship, they are still regarded as a low caste community due to their occupation. Higher castes generally do
not accept food and water from the hands of the Nai and they in turn do not accept the same from some lower castes such as the Chamar (tanner), Balmiki (sweeper), Mochi (cobbler) and Bazigar (acrobat).

Nais consider themselves inferior to the Jat, Ahir, Gujar, Bania, Rajput and Brahmins, but superior to the all SC caste. The high caste Hindus consider a Nai to be of lower status. Duties of a Nai include; cropping the hair, shaving and clipping the nails of all the mail members of the Jajman’s family. In a marriage party or in a Panchayat (Assembly), whenever he is present – and he is almost invariably present on all such occasions – he has to fill in the chilam (top earthen portion of hukka in which tobacco is kept). The Nai goes to inform and invite male guests on the occasion and any function in his Jajman household. He is also a traditional match-maker. The Nai wife ‘Nain’ cleans, oils and clipping hair of female’s members of Jajman.

They work as barbers and keep animals but a large-scale occupational change is taking place. In the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh, many Nai have taken up employment in other trades or have chosen to work as agricultural labourers. Similarly, in Rajasthan, many educated Nai have taken to business and government and private service; some cultivate their land. In Delhi, they work as traders, contractors, in government service and in the private sector; some have gone on to become doctors and engineers. In Assam tailoring and carpentry are their subsidiary occupations. There are also some politicians and considering their numbers (more than 2.3 million in Uttar Pradesh alone) their role in regional politics is of some importance (Garg: 1994).

Lohar

The Luhars, as the name implies, are blacksmiths. There are Panchal Luhars, Bhubalia or Gadia Luhars, Muslim Luhars and Sikh Luhars. Socially the Panchal group is on the top among all groups of Luhars. They believe in the Varna system and claim to be Rajput by origin and communities perceives them as seva karne wale, and hold them in a low social standing.

The Lohars are traditionally iron-workers and blacksmiths, along with a subsidiary occupation of agriculture. They are skilled at making and repairing agricultural implements like the sickle, spade, hoe, axe and plough, as well as buckets, pans, knives, scissors, grills and cages. They also fix iron shoes on the hoofs of
bullocks. Some of those living in cities work in government and private service, industrial work. The landless among them are increasingly are migrating to urban centres in search of employment. They supplement their income by selling bullocks and cattle. Some Lohars keep camels. There are some common work between Khajri and Luhars as architecture (rajmistri) and some work related to iron.

They would eat and drink and smoke with castes like Nai, Dhobi, Kumhar but not with the scheduled castes. The high castes like Rajputs, Gujars, Brahamans, Ba Ahir, etc. do not smoke with them or drink and accept food from them, but eat kachchha/pucca or siddha food. Some of the Lohar practice share-cropping and work as daily-wage laborers. In some towns and cities, some Lohar own workshops that are fitted with modern machinery for making fine implements. In the prosperous states of Punjab and Gujarat, where many run small-scale industries, some have become well-known industrialists. At times the Lohar do woodwork or carpentry, as in Chandigarh, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh, or weaving, as in Jammu & Kashmir.

The community has businessmen, some are in white-collar jobs, teachers, in defence and police services and administrators. Political leadership has emerged at the village level. Patron client relationship existed about two decades ago. Production relations (sharecroppers) and landlord tenant relationship exists. Cultivator labour relationship also exists and so does the employer-worker relation. Other symbiotic relationships exist (Garg: 1994).

**Kumahar:-**

The Kumahars are also called Parjapati. The Kumhars derive their name from the Sanskrit word Kumbhakar meaning earthen-pot maker. Kumahar is the village potter and his main occupation is to make earthenware such as pitchers, matkas, baris, surahis, karvas and lots on the wheel called chaak. Besides, they carry manure, bricks, etc. on donkeys in the rainy seasons and charge for it. The Kumhar is a landless community who continue in their traditional occupation as potters, with an engaged in animal husbandry and crop farming on a share-cropping basis. Sometimes as masons and manual labour for a daily wage. Many Kumhar have abandoned their traditional occupation and are employed in government service – as teachers, engineers,
doctors, police and armed forces; while others work for private enterprises. Political leadership at various levels is also emerging among them.

When we compare the accounts of 19th and early 20th century ethnographers, we can see that the Kumhar's traditional occupation has diversified considerably. In addition, there has been a devolving of subgroups and an increasing identity-consciousness across states. They attend marriages and other ceremonies of communities such as the Dhobi, Teli, Bania, Rajput, Jat and Brahmin to whom they used to sell their earthenware. They follow the jajmani system with the caste Hindus although it has declined substantially. They attend marriages and other ceremonies of communities of backward castes but not attend the ceremonies of SCs (Garg: 1994).

Jhimar

The Jhimar in Haryana are also known as Dhimar and Kashyap Rajputs. They are believed to be descendants of Kshyap Rishi who lived during Lord Rama's time. The community broadly divided into two social parts, based on religion, namely Hindu Jhimars and the Sikh Jhimars. They are aware of Varna system and recognize their place in it as Kshatriyas. Other local communities treat them as 'clean shudras'. They are treated as superior to scheduled castes, but inferior to caste Hindus.

They are a landless community traditionally engaged as water carriers and as agricultural labourers. They have abandoned the earlier occupation of water carriers and have taken jobs mostly as unskilled labourers. Some are also engaged in animal husbandry and basket making from sahtoot's (mulberry) sticks. Some have also taken to business and others are self-employed and running a dhaba (eating place) or a tea stall or joining private or government service.

They do not accept or exchange water and food with Balmikis, Chamars, Nais, Dhobis, Julahas and scheduled castes. With other communities that they are no restriction. Landlord tenant and cultivator labourer relationships exist with local agricultural communities. They are small traders and businessmen and some of them are in the defence and police services (Bhatia: 1994).