CHAPTER-3
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SAINI CASTE

In this chapter, a brief account of historical background of Sainis has been given. Before stating it, brief outline of historical background of Sainis is described here.

Historical background is classified into various sub-headings for the convenient of clarification here. The sub-headings are: (1) Origin of 'the Saini' Caste, (2) Saini Community during Zamindari Period, (3) Their Claim for Kshatriya Varna, (4) Habitat, (5) Saini and Mali, (6) Sub-divisions of the Saini Caste, (7) Traditional Occupation, (8) Marriage Customs, (9) Caste Organization, (10) Interrelationship with Other Castes, (11) Family Types and Property Distribution, (12) Impact of Democratic Processes

3.1. ORIGIN OF THE 'SAINI' CASTE

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 Shoor had a son named 'Sain'. It was in the name of these, father and son, that the community was popularly known as Shoorsaini or Sursaini. It continued to be recognized as such for another five generations until Krishna took over the reign of the dynasty. Even during Krishna's time, the common people were known as Shoorsainis. The Shoorsaini Kingdom is
believed to be located near Mathura in Uttar Pradesh (Singh, 1994:430).

The Saini or Sayani are generally also known as Mali. According to respondents, they are called Saini, because they say that they are the descendants of Maharaja Soor Sen. They celebrate the jayanti of Maharaja Soor Sen on 22nd December every year. According to another version, the Sainis are originally Mali and lived principally in the Mathura district. When Mahmud of Ghazni invaded India, the ancestors of the Saini went to Punjab and finding the land fertile, settled down here (Singh, 1996:601). A caste of domestic and market gardeners in all India accept the South (Hutton, 1946:288). They are divided broadly into two subgroups, Hindu and Sikh. They have claimed to have served in the sena (army) of Lord Krishna and having fought the great war of the Mahabharata; they believe they got their name from sena (Singh, 1994:430).

Thus, they have claimed to be originally Yadavas, from whom originated the Shursaini. They were spread all along the Shivalik foothills, especially in Ropar, Hoshiarpur and Jalandhar districts in Punjab. They converse in Punjabi and use Devanagari and Gurmukhi scripts (Singh, 1994:421).

A native of Dhirmajra, Sh. H. P. Saini*, at present aged 58 years, has stated:

"Most of the Sainis, residing in the village Dhirmajra have a strong belief that the origin
of Sainis had been from the grandson of King Sagar, named Bhagirath. The children of the King from his queen had been called Sainis in the later period. Once Bhagirath went to the jungle for hunting where he met a beautiful lady and married to her. The children of the King from that wife had been called Malis later.

In the Historical origin of Sainis it is believed to be from the King Shoorsaini but the residents of the village, Dhirmajra, think in another way and understand that the Saini community has originated from the King Bhagirath.

There are two views about the origin of Sainis one from the records i.e. from the King Shoorsaini and the other from the persons of villages of Saini i.e. from the King Bhagirath. One of the main explanations for different names by which the Sainis are known had been caused by adverse political circumstances in history. While many powerful kings were responsible for naming the community after them, the constant invasions by the Mughals of the Hindu dominated states, and the consequent need to keep themselves unidentified, compelled the community members to move from one place to the other, take up different occupations and thereby be identified by different names associated with the vocation. During the Muslim invasion of Rajasthan, many Rajputs projected themselves as Malis and thus could save their lives and honour, but as and when the need arose they considered themselves as true Rajputs, took up military service
also. It was in this perspective that some trace the origin of the word 'Saini' from Sena or army in need (Singh, 1994:431).

The community, which is identical with Saini, is called the Mali, though the latter is also known by different names depending mainly on the type of work they perform or the area of their origin. Like the Sainis, the Malis have also claimed Rajputs or Jadon Mali. The Malis are also mainly agriculturists.

The native of Dhirmajra, Sh.J.S.Saini* who is 45 years old says:

'Before Zamindari Abolition my father was farmer and was farming on 20 bigha land. His economic condition was normal because he produced mainly seasonal vegetables. My father was expert in the farming of vegetables and flowers. Due to this farming our livelihood was going on in the normal way. The other castes of the village called his family as Mali family because the family was good producer and farmer of flowers and vegetables.'

All Malis are not identical, nor did all have Rajput descent. There are Malis who have migrated from eastern Uttar Pradesh and are found in different parts of the country. They are pursuing various occupations and by virtue of this they are known accordingly. Thus, those pursuing gardening are known as Baghwan, threshing/husking paddy as Dhankuta or Kuta Mali, doing grass cutting/selling as Sasia Mali, vegetable growers/sellers as Jadon Mali, and those growing flowers or offering flowers to the deity are known as
Phool Mali. Likewise, the Malis living near the river Ganga, Saharanpur and Haridwar are known as Bhagrathi Mali or Gola Mali. Likewise, there are Mathur Mali, Rohtaki Mali, Dilwali Mali and so on. Besides, there are Mahar Mali, Var Mali, Kachchi Mali, Lodh Mali, Jeera Mali and Dhanya Mali. They are also known as Mohal, Malaya, Malni, etc. However, the Sainis do not consider most of these related to them (Singh, 1994:431).

3.2. SAINI COMMUNITY DURING ZAMINDARI PERIOD

Prior to the enforcement of U.P. Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms Act, 1950 (Act I of 1951), in the district, Saharanpur, majority of Sainis lived at socially and economically low standards. They worked as labourers, tenants, sharecroppers etc. They owned almost no land for farming. They had to work for farming on zamindars' land, largely Muslim Rajputs and under the pressure of zamindars even their living places were not fixed because zamindars took a large share of production from farmers as revenue or share and these Sainis some times were not able to give the revenue. As a result of this zamindars evacuated them many a times. Therefore, these persons had to find work at another places in the area of other zamindars. Thereby their places of living and working were also not fixed, they shifted many a times (Saharanpur Gazetteer, 1981: 245).

In Saharanpur division, zamindars belonged mainly to Muslim community, therefore, zamindars used to torture these Sainis who belong to
Hindu religion. They used Sainis for agriculture, cultivation of vegetables and cutting grass from jungles. Most of them were also working as tenants and sharecroppers on the lands of these Muslim zamindars. They were suppressed not only as tenants, sharecroppers and forced labourers but also because they were Hindus working largely on the lands of Muslim Zamindars (Saharanpur Gazetteer, 1981:286).

Prior to the enforcement of the U.P. Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms Act, 1950, in the district there were about 2000 mauzas (revenue villages), divided into about 5,000 mahals (revenue paying units), four fifths of which were held in Zamindari. Petty proprietors again, held the bulk of this land. Of the large estates, which were not many, the prominent were the Gujar muqarrari of Landhaura with its three early branches of Thitki, Jharberi and Baledh and the five small taluqas of Kunja, Dadli, Talberi, Nagal and Deoband held by collateral branches; the estates of the five Jain (mostly of Saharanpur city) and eight other Vaish families; the Pundir (Rajput) Rana of Jasmour, the Powell estate (owned by an European Family), the Mussalman Zamindaris of Kailaspur and Kunjpurs as well as those of Pirzadas of Ambahta and Behat, Turkomans of Lakhnaunta, the Pathans of Patchar, the Sheikhs of Raipur, and the Raus of Sakruda and Kheri (Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1908, Vol. XXI: 133).
As regards cultivating tenures, about half of the area was tilled by tenants at will who were ordinary tenants without any rights; about one-third was under sir or Khudkasht, about one-sixth under occupancy tenants, and the rest under expropriatory tenants. Thus, the bulk of the peasantry comprised tenants who had no permanent or heritable rights in the land they cultivated and were at the mercy of their landlords (Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1908, Vol. XXI: 134).

A native of Nivada village, Sh. Take Chand* has stated:

'Prior to the independence the district had lied under Zamindari System. In the villages of Saharanpur district, there were two main elements, the Zamindars and the farmers, and there was practically no rich and sturdy middle class. Life centred around the Zamindar or a group of Zamindars. Factional feuds and rivalries also abounded particularly on the issues of right in and possession of land. That time Saints lived in very low standards. They worked as labourers, sharecroppers, and tenants etc. They had no land of their own for farming. They had no permanent or heritable rights in the land; they cultivated and were at the mercy of their landlords.'

In the villages, there were two main elements, the zamindars and the small farmers and tenants, and there was practically no rich and sturdy middle class. Life centered round the zamindar or a group of zamindars. Factional feuds and rivalries also abounded, particularly on the issues of rights in and possession of land.
3.3. THEIR CLAIM FOR KSHATRIYA Varna

In a four-fold division of the Hindu social order, the Sainis invariably claimed a Kshatriya origin. Among different groups of Kshatriya, the Sainis are one who considers themselves Rajputs. Their Rajput links are evident from the fact that many of their clans have carried the same names as the Rajputs. Important among them are: Chauhan, Yadav, Tamwar, Rathore, Kuchchwaha, Parmar, Parihar, Gahlot, Tomar, Solanki, Bhati etc. Many of these clans, in the past, had established their rule in different parts of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab and were named after powerful kings. For different periods, its clans or segments rather than Shoirsaini then knew the community (Singh, 1994:430). Thus, the community has come to be known by different names in different areas depending upon the area of origin, name of the king that ruled the area, or the occupation they pursued. In the course of time, these become caste or sub-caste names. Thus, one can notice that Sainis are known by different names such as Sarsaini, Rajput Saini, Sarsainik, Sainik, Suryasain, Sehni, Sahno, Sawaisaini, Chausaini, Varah Saini, Aspasaini, Asosaini, Kumarsaini, Asasaini, Choursaini, Saksaini, Sikkisaini, Saksena, Sukhsaini, Sayani, Sansanya, etc. (Singh, 1994:431).

A native of Habibpur Nivada, Take Chand*, who is 62 years old, has said:

"Before the Zamindari Abolition, the Sains living in that area had a large quantity of..."
land and used to live as Zamindars. So, we claim for Kshatriya Varna. They used to hire labourers for agriculture at their lands. My father possessed 300 bighas of land and cultivated it by hired labourers.

According to D. Ibbetson (1916:189), the Sainis do not appear to have had any large clans except in Hoshiarpur, where some of the largest clans are Boli, Pawan Gaddi, Hamarti, Badwal, Alangi, Manger, Badyal, and Barayat and in Gurdaspur many of the Sainis showed their clans Salahri. Some of the clans of Arains and of Sainis in Jalandhar today bear the same names. They are further divided into a number of gotras like Hare, Bhere, Dhur, Vaid, Lambe, Gogyan, Badwal, Daule, Togar, Benwets, Masute, Bange, Dharmhait, Pablaj, Giru, Chepnu, Kapoor, Dheak, Chauhan and Chinde. The gotras regulate marriage alliances. They claim to be Kshatriya in Varna order.

3.4. HABITAT

Saini have settled in the different districts in UP, Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana and now Uttarakhand etc. In Haryana, the Saini are spread over the districts of Ambala, Karnal, Rohtak, Sonipat; in Himachal Pradesh in the districts of Bilaspur, Hamirpur, Kangra, Shimla, Sirmour, Solan, Una; in Punjab more than two-third of the districts of the state; in Rajasthan in the districts of Alwar, Bharatpur, Jaipur; in Uttar Pradesh in the districts of Bijnor, Ghaziabad, Meerut, Muzaffarnagar, Saharanpur; in Uttarakhand in
the districts of – Hardwar, Udamsingh Nagar, Dehradun. At large scale, they are found especially in Ropar, Hoshiarpur, Ludhiana, Patiala and Jalandhar districts of Punjab (Singh, 1996: 857).

The migration of the Sainis into Delhi still continues but a few of them are natives of Delhi. They are settled throughout Punjab, U.P., Uttarakhand and Rajasthan. Their concentration is in the districts of Ropar, Hoshiarpur, Gurdaspur, Patiala, Ferozepur, Sonipat of Punjab and in Haryana. In Delhi, they are concentrated in areas such as Shalimar village, Masjid Moth, Saini Enclave, Arya Nagar (Paharganj), Lampur village, Bhogharj (Narela), Badli, Haidpur, Azadpur village, Aryapura (Subzi Mandi), Sanoth, Trinagar, Rampur, Moondka, Najafgarh, Nagloki, Gujaratpura, Seelampur, Ankur Nagar, Lakshmi Nagar, Pahari Dheeraj, Darya Ganj, Laddo Ghati (Paharganj), Naharpur, Holumbi Kalan and Lajpat Nagar (Singh, 1996, 60i). In Uttarakhand, they are concentrated in areas such as Roorkee city, Bhagwanpur village, Majri village, Masi village, Imli village, Habibpur Nivada village, Dhirmajra village, Hardwar city, Kankhal town, Jwalapur town, Dehradun city, Doiwal, Vikash Nagar, Ramnagar city, Kashipur, and Udamsingh Nagar.

3.5. SAINI AND MALI

In view of the similarity between the Sainis and Malis, D.
Ibbetson (1916:189) appeared to believe that the former constitute a subdivision of the Malis. The Punjab Census of 1911 and the Uttar Pradesh Census of 1921 reported them as one. In many areas, they do not intermarry. According to D. Ibbetson (1916:201), the Malis, the Malkara or florist of the Puranas, were generally vegetable or nursery gardeners and were most numerous in the vicinity of towns where manure was plentiful and there was a demand for his produce. He treated the Malis as most skillful and industrious cultivators who produced three or four crops from the same land. Referring to Punjab, he states that the community was known by the term Mali in the Yamuna zone, the Sainis in the eastern sub-mountain districts and Arian or Baghban, in the remainder of the province. Most of the Malis from the eastern districts have retained themselves as Maliar and some as Phulara or Phulwara. Ibbetson reports that some Sainis are Sikhs while the overwhelming majorities were Hindus.

While, in general, the Malis and the Sainis are considered one, the latter name is preferred by most of the community members. It is not mainly because the term 'Malis' is suggestive of a gardener rather than a caste; nor does it sound prestigious. Moreover, many other caste groups do gardening also and hence the term does not reflect a specific identity of the community. Besides, a majority of the community members are not

In view of these factors, the term 'Saini' is preferred by most of its members which also suggest a special identity, higher status and a view of the community much broader than that composed of only gardeners. During the field work a respondent, Sh. Kalayan Singh*, now 48 years old, settled in Roorkee City since 1980, has said:

"My grandfather was the first mover in the family to migrate to Dhirmajra village in 1911s to work as a vegetables labourer. Poverty at native place forced him to move to Dhirmajra to earn a livelihood. Life at native place was very tough and only one crop could be grown in a year. Food production from the single crop was not enough to feed the entire family for the whole year and somebody in the family had to move out for alternate sources of income. Usually poor families of Saini shifted to Dhirmajra and other different villages as manual labourers in the fields."

The Sainis consider themselves Kshatriya and trace their origin from Rajputs. Many of the clans of the two communities are found to be identical. This being the case, sub-divisions and hierarchy are found among the Rajputs should also find among the Sainis. Different clans, in which these Sainis are divided, have been mentioned earlier. However, in the study area, a clear hierarchy among the Sainis is not discernible. The Sainis community itself constitutes a sub-division of the Malis (Ibbeston, 1916). Though they have intermarried with each other, the Malis have occupied a relatively
lower social position than the Sainis. Accordingly, they generally entered into marriage relationships within their own community members (Singh, 1994:431).

A native of Dhirmajra, Sh. Tellu Ram* now 83 years old said:

‘When I was a teenager, I felt that both Saini and Mali represented the same community but there was a great difference in their social status. They did not have social status with each other and did not inter-marry. We had enough land for agriculture and produced crops and women did not participate in fields. While Mali did not own enough land for agriculture. So, they produced flowers and vegetables to earn more money for their living and their women helped them in farming. But now circumstances have changed and social inter-course between Saini and Mali has increased in the village.’

According to historical background and empirical facts, those people are called Mali who were Rajput earlier and became farmer later. In other words those people were called Mali who were doing farming of flowers and vegetables.

3.6. SUB-DIVISIONS OF THE SAINI CASTE

The Saini in Haryana are generally known as Deshwale or Ragri. While Deshwale Saini claim to be the original residents of Haryana, Bagri Saini are said to have migrated mainly from Rajasthan. In Haryana, they are mainly concentrated in the districts of Hisar, Mahendergarh,
Kamal and Kurukshetra, in Rohtak and Bhiwani also, they are found in large numbers (Singh, 1994:432).

A native of Dhirmajra, Sh. Phagan Singh*, 73 years old, stated:

'Saini had two divisions in the village named as Bhagiri Saini and Gola Saini. We are Gola Saini and considered of higher social status in comparison to Bhagiri. We possess larger land and better in economic, educational and occupational position than Bhagiri.'

The Saini also had broadly two divisions, which were of a fluid nature in the Saharanpur district, Bhagiri Saini and Gola Saini. In fact, such a division was based mainly on the area of their origin. However, their social settings were also different and accordingly, Gola Saini considered them higher in social status as compared to Bhagiri Saini. Gola Saini says 'Saini' word is especially for us and 'Mali' for Bhagiri. Four main explanations were generally offered for this: (i) The Mali were not as rigid as the Sainis in accepting food from members of other castes; (ii) Mali women were found working as agricultural labourers which was not the case with the Saini women; (iii) Educationally, occupationally and economically, the Sainis were far better placed than were the Mali, and (iv) Sainis were landowners and own large lands as compared to the Mali (Saharanpur District Gazetteer, 1965: 38).
3.7. TRADITIONAL OCCUPATION

In general, Saini and Mali are considered one; the latter name is preferred by most of the community members. It is mainly because the term 'Mali' is suggestive of a gardener rather than a caste; nor does it sound prestigious.

Moreover, many other caste groups do gardening 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 preferred by most of its members which also suggests a special identity, higher status and a view of the community much broader than that composed of only gardeners (Singh, 1994: 432).

As earlier pointed out, the Sainis and the Malis belonged mainly to the agricultural community. While the former were mainly cultivators, the latter were engaged in pursuits related to gardening, vegetable cultivation and the like. In addition, the former invariably own land, while it was not always so in case of the Malis (Singh, 1996: 125).

A native of Habibpur Nivada, Sh. Rati Ram*, at the age of 56 years stated:

'My grandfather was an agricultural labourer. He did not own land and worked as a daily wages labourer. At the time of Zamindari Abolition, he got 15 bigha of land for agriculture. He told that this land was not sufficient for our needs and he carried on

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vegetable and flower cultivation. We are farming on our land and also engaged in other occupations."

Sainis and Malis claimed a Kshatriya origin, their status among other agriculturist castes was considered lower. Among the two, the Sainis enjoyed a relatively higher position since they often owned land, and were less generally mere market gardeners than the Malis are (Ibbetson, 1916). Many of them were 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 thus; rather they were independent agriculturalists. Arian, Rain, Baghban, the Mali and Mallar constitute a mixed body of men denoting occupation rather than caste, and invariably held in very low repute. Mali supply flowers and found in Northern India (Bhattacharya, 1896:268).

3.8. MARRIAGE CUSTOMS

The Saini strictly observed caste/sub-caste endogamy. However, since they also considered certain sections of the Mali identical to them, inter-marriages also took place between them. Rules of gotra exogamy were still observed in which marriages in three gotras were invariably avoided: gotra of self, gotra of the mother, and gotra of the grandmother. Traditionally, marriages in gotra of the maternal grandmother were also avoided, but at present this rule is not strictly adhered to. Sororate and levirate marriage...
were practiced only in special circumstances such as death of the wife or husband. If the husband dies, the widow gets married to the husband’s brother. This practice is known as late dalna. Child marriages were held in the past, but they are now non-existent (Hutton, 1948:288).

The native of Nivada village, Sh. Geeta Ram*, at the age of 69 years, stated:

'My grandfather was married at the age of 11 years and my grandmother was of 9 years. The endogamy was not in tradition earlier and not in the present. Rules of gotra exogamy were still observed in which marriages in three gotras were invariably avoided: gotra of self, gotra of the mother, and gotra of the grandmother.'

Monogamy is the most common form of marriage among the Sainis. In certain circumstances, bigamy is also allowed, but that is not appreciated generally in the society. Marriages are arranged through negotiations between the parents. Married women are distinguished from the unmarried by the use of vermilion, mangal-sutra and bindi. Besides these, married women also use lac or glass bangles, nose-ring and toe-ring (Singh, 1994:433).

3.9. CASTE ORGANIZATION

The Saini has national, state, regional and local level bodies to look after the interests of the community who yielded power and influence. They take decisions on matters of common interests of the community
which included inter-family disputes, land disputes, cases of divorce, remarriage, adultery, rape, etc. The decision has to be accepted by the parties concerned. The defaulters are fined, penalized and even excommunicated. In the cities Saini Sabha have existed. In the past, there was baddani-panchayat covering fifty-two villages. However, this no longer existed. Similarly, there are Saini Sabhas in other district/areas also covering clusters of villages in varying numbers. At the state level, there is Saharanpur Saini Sabha whose office is located at Saharanpur. There is also a Delhi-Saharanpur Saini Sabha located at Delhi. At the national level also, All India Saini Rajput-Maha Sabha has existed with its headquarters in Delhi (Singh, 1996:68).

This Sabha was first established in 1920. The regional level Saini-Rajput-Sabha comprising of seven clusters of villages/town known as pats in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Harayana have also existed. At the district level, Saini Sabhas are operating. These national, regional and local level Saini Sabhas have been holding conferences in the past for the betterment of the community. Among the major functions have performed by these organizations are welfare activities such as constructions of temples, establishments of hospitals, educational instructions, libraries solving intra caste disputes, fighting social evils
prevalent in society, enhancement of the status, power and influence in the community members in different bodies is based on once economic status, power and influence in the community and linkage with the wider society. Age and experience are also given due consideration. In addition, the Sainis are represented in statutory bodies like panchayats, municipalities and states legislature. Many issues, which can not be solved by the caste bodies, are referred to the statutory bodies or law courts (Singh, 1994:437).

3.10. INTERRELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER CASTES
A native of Dhir Majra, Elam Chand*, 57 years old, says:

‘I attend the marriage party of Rajputs, Gurjars and Jats castes, but I did not attend the Schedule castes marriage party. We did not eat with SCs. Earlier SCs could not enter in Saini’s homes. They called us from outside the house. SCs could not sit with us on the same cot. As education is growing up in society, the relationships with SCs are becoming friendly. The election is also the main factor to increase the inter-relationship among different castes.’

The villages and towns, in undivided Saharanpur district, are invariably multi-caste. There are many castes, which are considered lower than the Sainis, while castes like Brahmins also form part of the locality. Besides, other castes that Sainis have considered equivalent in status also existed which included the Jat, Rajput, Gujar, etc. Besides servicing castes
are found in each village and town. They have accepted water and exchanged it with higher or equivalent castes also including car painters and potters. However, no much relationship is maintained with Scheduled castes. The same holds good in accepting and exchanging food with other castes including kaccha food. The system of dharm bhai and dharma bahin is found among them. They use the same crematoria that are used by other Hindus (Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1908, Voll. XXI: 135).

3.11. FAMILY TYPES AND PROPERTY DISTRIBUTION

The joint family is widely prevalent in the Saini community. Though nuclear families are also prevalent and are on the increase, the community members do not view this trend with appreciation. In the joint family system, the most common form is the mixed extended families. Joking relationships with the husband's younger brother and wife's sister are permitted within limits. Interpersonal relations are generally cordial and feeling of sacrifice for the family exists (Singh, 1994:144).

The native of Nivada, Sh. Jagdish Chand* has stated:

*In earlier times, mostly people lived in joint family. But now rarely we find joint family in our village. Only my family is the joint family in the village. The people were living in joint family due to agriculture or farming. At that time people had got a lot of land. The requirement of more persons was a need of farming that time. But this time (time of machines) people have got small segment of land. So many people are not necessary for
The eldest male in the family normally enjoys power and respect. In all-important social and family matters, he is consulted. The educated and higher income-earning members have started asserting their supremacy in family matters, but it has yet become a general practice (Singh, 1994:438).

The property of the father is generally distributed among all the sons equally. In case there is no son, the daughter can inherit his father's property under the law. If the mother is alive, she also gets a share in the property along with her sons. The eldest son has succeeded as the head of the family on the death of the father. If any disputes about the property distribution arise, the matter is resolved with the help of relation or the community panchayat (Bhattacharya, 1896:285).

3.12. IMPACT OF DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES

Since independence, great changes have been coming in social, economic and political aspects of life of all communities. Sainis have also experienced these changes. The changes have been more rapid during the last five decades by democratic processes. One of first legislation in democratic processes was U.P. Zamindari Abolition in 1952. After Abolition, Saini became owners of land they cultivated, started paying revenue direct to the government, and did not have to render forced labour to the Ex-zamindars. Saini have bigger land holdings in undivided
Saharanpur district after this Abolition. The high prices of agricultural produce have also helped to improve their economic condition and thereby social status.

Another provision in democratic process came as reservation for OBCs. When Saini came in the OBCs reservation they would claim more posts in government jobs. Some of them have become engineers, doctors, bank officers and got other prestigious government jobs. Though few of them had already achieved some positions Saini in the undivided Saharanpur district, participated in the active politics as well.

Education is also the key factor and an issue in the above achievements. Now many of younger Sainis are getting higher education and they are becoming successful in getting various government jobs, competitions and also participate in the active politics.

Thus, the above democratic processes are the main processes, which changed their (Saini) socio-economic position. After that Saini have become master of land, they are cultivating. Their position has been better than their condition ever before.

**SUMMING UP**

The Sainis are generally also known as Meli. They are called Saini, because they say that they are the descendants of Maharaja Soor Sen.
Sainis were originally Mali and lived principally in the Mathura district. They came to be known as Saini because they were such good agriculturists that the natives called *savane* meaning clever or skillful. Prior to the enforcement of U.P. Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms Act in the district, majority of Saini lived at socially and economically low standards. They worked as labourers, tenants, sharecroppers etc. They owned almost no land for farming. They claim Rajput origin and classify themselves in the Kshatriya order of Varna system. They have settled in the different districts in U.P., Panjab, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Uttarakhand etc. They have broadly two divisions, which are of a fluid nature in the Haridwar district namely Bhagiri and Gola. Saini strictly observe caste/sub-caste endogamy. Monogamy is the most common form of marriage among the Sainis. They have caste organization at the national level - *All India Saini Rajput-Maha Sabha* and at the regional level - *Saini-Rajput-Sabha*. Generally, the Saini used to live in joint/extended families but nuclear families were not uncommon and it is reported that there is a tendency towards the breaking up of joint families. The reason for this are supposed to be the growing individuality of the family members and rapid economic and social changes that are leading to the disintegration of joint families. The Saini freely participate with members of neighbouring communities in all kinds of social, political, and occupational activities. They have free access to schools, crematoria, temples and other
public place. Political leadership has emerged at the regional and national levels. Traditionally, the Sainis were agriculturists. With improvement in education and decreasing size of landholdings, they have diversified into trade, industry and private and government jobs. By all these they have achieved positions in the political organizations and institutions. All these consequently resulted into a better social for them as individuals and as a caste group.