CHAPTER - III

SOCIO - CULTURAL PROFILE OF TANGAIL
In every society people are bound together by various kinds of relationship—relationships that give rise to the kinfolk, friends, business or political associates, clients and patrons that make up the individual’s social universe. To see the urban locale and its cultural roles within the larger society is the major goal of the anthropology of urbanism (Fox 1967:17). An urban setting where “.... a social institution is a functional configuration of culture patterns (including actions, ideas, attitudes, and cultural equipment) which possesses a certain permanence and which is intended to satisfy felt social needs“ (Chapin 1928:48). Social life is a combination of many factors such as environment, tradition, habits and so forth which permeate through some basic institutions like family, marriage, kinship, religion, local justice system as well as some subsidiary institutions like housing pattern, furniture, dress, food, veiling system, language and literature. Viewing the standard of living and the socio-economic classes in Tangail paurashava a broad classification of upper, middle and lower classes can be made possible. The households studied in the paurashava of Tangail may be classified into three categories on the bases of property, annual income, education and occupation and social background.
Upper class people (well-to-do people/people of the upper crust of the society) with their distinct values, material possession and behaviour patterns enjoy higher social status in the life of the *samaj* (society). The upper class people of Tangail paurashava are more influenced by the process of modernization in their tastes and interests, way of life and aspirations than the rest of the classes. Their speech and mannerisms reflect the upper class consciousness in the paurashava. Effective and close social contacts are mainly confined to the members of the same class, and marry in their own class rather than with others of their *samaj*. They are found as the sufferer of *samajik onnashikatha abong biththo biobobear borai-e; krithimothai beshi shorolothar cheay* (social superciliousness and bragging for pelf and power. Artificial rather than natural).

The middle class (the people of the ordinary class) forms the core of the Tangail *sanathoni* (traditional) *samaj-* influencing the values and behaviour patterns not only of the lower calss (poorer section) but even the upper class socio-cultural activities. Educational and economic opportunities which are on the increase in Tangail paurashava have been inspiring new ambitions and aspirations in the minds of the middle class.
The lower class people (poorer section/people of the lower crust of the society) are found hard-pressed economically with the rising cost of living since their earning capability is lower than the rest of the two classes, and socially because the upper and middle classes maintain considerable social distance with them. *Pailey khat-na pailey na khai, kintho jayga pailey thikiee gomai* (if food is available - they take, if not they do not take, but if place is found they will go to sound sleep). The lower class is at the bottom of the social scale. It is found that within the sanathoni cultural matrix the lower class people of Tangail paurashava are imbued with centuries traditional religious lore.

**ETHNIC ORIGIN OF THE PEOPLE OF TANGAIL**

The ethnic origin of the vast majority of the people of Tangail is a matter of controversy. The majority belongs to a pre-Aryan stock, not necessarily Dravidian, with a strong admixture of Tibeto-Burman element. The next important element is the Indo-Aryan Stock. The fair complexion, prominent nose and forehead, straight and soft hair and the formation of the skull give sure indication of the Aryan ancestry of some of the inhabitants. There are also Turkish and Iranian elements, the introduction of which roughly corresponds to the Muslim domination of the area. There is, however,
little doubt that there has been admixture of various elements during the ages and pure specimen of any racial stock is extremely rare. Racial origin could hardly be equated with social classes, as social class distinction mainly centred round the possession of wealth and property which changed hands with the change of rulers or due to other causes (Latif, Major General M.A.ed.: 1983).

The physical features of the people clearly indicate the admixture of different racial groups. There is, therefore, no group that can claim racial purity. People in general are hard-working, brave and enterprising. Their pioneering spirit led them into the deep jungles of Assam (India) in pre-partition days for bringing virgin land under the plough.

RELIGION OF THE PEOPLE OF TANGAIL

The Muslims constitute an overwhelming majority of the population. The Hindus as minority also form a substantial portion of the inhabitants. The total inhabitants of Tangail paurashava is 106004; among them the Muslims are 88002 and the Hindus are 17602. The Buddhists are 168, the Christians are 90, and others are 142.
SETTLEMENT AND HOUSING PATTERN

Tangail is divided into different paras (a cluster living unit) such as Adalat para, Thanapara, Akurtakurpara, Paradise para etc. The dwellings are in a cluster in every para. Dwellings are generally brick built. The well-to-do persons also use corrugated iron sheets for the roof of their baris (houses) Pucca (solidly built) and semi-pucca baris are also seen. The baris of the ordinary people are made of bamboo, jute stick, straw, wood, etc. The baris of extremely poverty-stricken are erected on some earthen plinths, one and a half or two feet above the level of the grounds.

The baris of the high Government and non-Government officials, Businessmen, Professionals are well-planned and well-designed. They are maintained better and are more neat. Inside they are decorated pictures, framed embroideries, calendars, cut-outs from magazines photographs etc. And dining tables with benches on either side furniture, television, VCR, VCP, table or ceiling fans can be seen in their baris. But on the other hand, according to the paribarik obostha (family socio-economic condition) the significant portion of the people of Tangail paurashava lead their shababik jhiban (simple life).
In the paurashava area the total baris (household) number is 19,541; among the baris 1,322 is made by straw and bamboo, 14,584 is made by tinshed, 2749 is made by cement and the rest of the baris are made by other materials.

**FURNITURE AND BASHUNKOSHON (UTENSILS) OF TANGAIL**

The ordinary people are habituated to use pithol (brass) utensils like plates, cups, pots, etc. and earthen cooking vessels. They use sleeping madur (mats) and coarse lap (quilts). The poorer section sleep on the ground stretching a coarse madur called another way pati or hogla and the more affluent, on baas (bamboo) machans or chowkies or char-poys. Now-a-days the ordinary class are being familiar with enamel and aluminum bashunkoshons which are shastha (cheaper) and easy to clean. In the bari of a well-to-do paribar, one room named baithak khana (drawing room) is provided with wooden 'furniture, namely table, chair and wooden tools, where the head of the paribar entertains visitors. Of late it is the trend of the affluent paribar prodhan and other members of his paribar that they are habituated to use sophisticated furniture and bashunkoshon imported from the foreign countries.
PUSHAK (DRESS)

The pushak of an average Muslim male in the urban is pant-shirt; suburban is lungi-gamcha. On the basis of the paribarik obostha, people wear various kinds of pushaks such as, trousers, pant-shirt, punjabi-paijamas. During the garamkal (summer) the people hardly use any other pushak to cover the upper part of the body. During the shithkal (winter) the people of the upper crust of the samaj wear coat-pant, chaddar (cotton wrapper) and multifarious woolen-drapes; jacket, jumper to protect them from the hands of the shith. But the poor people use hand-made khatha, kombal and thousand-stitched clothes.

The Hindus wear dhuti occasionally but always they put on lungi, punjabi-paijamas, pant-shirt same to their prothibeshi (neighbour) Muslims. In fact there is no significant difference in respect of wearing pushak between Hindus and Muslims. The females of both the communities wear sari. The women of the upper class wear sari with nima (blouse) and shaaya (petticoat). At home, it is said that the older women, those roughly in their mid-thirties, wear only the sari with no nima or shaaya. But among the younger girls and women, wearing a sari without a nima is rare, except when
taking goshal (baths) at the kolpar (place for washing, bathing beside the tube-well). The Muslims wear the sari in two layers and bring the anchol around to cover their heads as gumta. Hindu girls leave the anchol on their shoulders and then tuck it in the waist. Among Hindus and Christians, girls do not cover their heads putting gumta. Among Christians and Hindus putting the gumta over the head signifies that the balika (girl) is married. Gahanagati (ornaments) made of gold are popular among the rich paribars. Silver jewelry and imitation gahanagati are common favourites of the womenfolk belonging to the poorer paribars. Chori (bangles) made of glass are commonly used by the women. Among Muslims naakphul or nose ring is the chinnah (symbol) of marriage.

The middle and the upper class people prefer to use a pair of trousers and a shirt, while shoes are lower middle class luxuries and the poorer section can hardly afford it. The latter are habituated to use a pair of wooden sandals, called “kharam”, while at home. But of late, the sanathoni (traditional) kharam is going out of fashion. The people of Tangail say that during the last ten years there has been some radical change in the out-look in respect of their male and female pushak. The sanathoni (traditional) pushak-culture is changing with the coming of western fashion. The youngsters wear tight-
fitted jeans pants, western shirts and shorts. The girls do not wear *ek peche saris* or *sanathoni gagra*. Girls have now started wearing Skirts, Laasa, Lehenga, Jeans pants etc.

**FOOD AND FOOD HABIT OF THE PEOPLE OF TANGAIL**

Among the Muslims the diet of all classes of the people is more or less the same. *Baath* (rice) is the staple food for all the people. Muslims are generally fond of *mangsho* (meat), whereas Hindus prefer *dood* (milk) and vegetables.

Muslims are *amishboji* (carnivorous) Hindus are *niramishboji* (vegetarian). *Baath dal* and *maach* (fish) are, however, common food of all. People of the lower crust of the *samaj* have a preference for *baath* in all meals, from breakfast to dinner. Most of the *paribars* generally take *baath* at lunch and dinner while items made of wheat are preferred for breakfast. Nowadays the preparation from wheat is also taken by the poor *paribars* for want of *baath*, as the total output of paddy is not sufficient to meet the requirements of the average household. Wheat is gaining much popularity and different preparations from this cereal is taken, specially by the well-to-do *paribars* with great relish. In the *baris* who have come from rural area take
chira (fried rice) muri and khai (puffed rice) almost every day as daily breakfast. The poorer section like daylabourer, rickshawpuller etc. take panthabaath (left over rice of previous night soaked in water) for breakfast mainly in the grishmakal. They take it with kacchamorich (green chillis), paiyaz (onion) and loban (salt) before going to work. They smoke (dhompan) "biri" and "hukha" and chew betel leaf.

On Uthsab (festival) occasions well-to-do Muslims serve Polao, biriani, rejala, roast, etc. and the Hindus serve various preparations of maach (fish), vegetables and dood (milk). Sweets made of chhana (cottage cheese) are a delicacy and the Hindus are master of this randhan (culinary) art. During the time of shraddha, the Hindus serve dai, chira, gor (molasses). And during the time of Kharach, the Muslims serve baath, mangsho (meat), dal, dai, gor (molasses). “Cham cham” of Porabari is famous throughout the country for its flavour and richness. Sweetmeats made of sugar, ghee and dood in various forms such as curds, Rosagolla, Amrita, Puntua, Kalojam are consumed by the people. Mustard oil is generally used for cooking. Fresh maach is generally available and there is little consumption of dried maach. Dood is a popular item of diet but the poorer
The people of this paurashava are changing the *sanathoni* food-taste in recent times. Some fast-food shops have been opened recently and the school-college going students are the main customers of these shops. Very recently a Chinese *restaurant* has also been opened. There is no *mod khana* (bar) in Tangail paurashava. It is said that of late *shishus* (children) are reluctant to take home made breakfast, rather they prefer to have any sort of fast food like *burger, hotcake, sandwich*.

The *athitheesathkar* (hospitality) of the people of Tangail is well-known. It is considered obligatory to entertain a *athithee* (guest) and a *agonthok* (visitor). Even the poorest will offer at least *paan, tamak* (tobacco) and *sarbat* (sweetened water). Those who can afford it, maintain a *banglaghor* (out-house), a separate hut outside the *paribaric* (family) quarter, where male *athithee* are put up and entertained.

**FAMILY**

*Paribar* (family) is the first and foremost institution to the people of Tangail *samaj* which performs a number of functions that are essential to the
survival and perpetuation of them. The minimum functions that are performed by a paribar of Tangail to be the following, 1. paribar must make provision for legitimate sexual outlets for adults. 2. paribar must perpetuate the shonthan shonthothee (children) through controlled reproduction. 3. paribar must educate and socialize the shonthan-shonthothee. 4. paribar must serve as a unit of economic cooperation.

The nature of paribar of Tangail samaj is appropriately reflected by the opinion of Lowell Holmes, who says that, "... the role of the family in the total society might be likened to that of a brick in a great masonry structure. The whole is dependent upon the strength and durability of its component parts, which fit together in a particular way to produce the desired total configuration. Just as the characteristics of the individual bricks influence the colour and style of the total structure so the individual families influence and reflect the tone and quality of the total society (Holmes 1971:283). Paribar is a social group characterized by common residence, economic, co-operation and reproduction. Although paribar is a universal phenomenon, it exists in an almost unbelievable number of forms, one of the many varieties is the Bangladeshi (Tangail) paribar, which is i) ekok (nuclear) and ii) joutha (extended) [Chowdhury 1978]. Ekok paribar consists
typically of a married man and woman with their offspring, although in individual cases one or more additional persons may reside with them.

*Joutha paribar* consists of two or more *ekok paribars* affiliated through an extension of the parent-child relationship rather than of the husband-wife relationship, i.e. by joining the *ekok* family of a married adult to that of his parents.

Among the *paribars* of Tangail paurashava, a study is conducted on “Types of *paribar*” of Char Akur Takur para, Tangail paurashava. The study is done on 436 *paribars*.

<table>
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<th>Table - 3.1 DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLD BY <em>PARIBAR</em> (FAMILY) TYPE</th>
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<td>TYPE OF PARIBAR</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 <em>Ekok paribar</em></td>
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<td>2 <em>Joutha paribar</em></td>
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<td>Total</td>
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*Paribar* structure has very important influence in the overall development of *shishus* personality. It is found from the table that the highest percentage 70.6% (n=308) *paribars* are *ekok paribar* and the lowest percentage of *paribars* 29.4% (n=128) *paribars* are *joutha paribar*. 
The urban setting represents a different yet complementary network of relations to the people of Tangail samaj. *Paribaric* life, kin ties, *prothibeshi* (neighbour), *shongi-shathi* (associations), or a group of friends are all constituted and bounded by a small-scale social field which is explicitly designed to assist and meet the needs of those, who of their own free will, have come into *shongi-shathi*, or those whose social position is fixed as, for example an adolescent under the protection and guidance of parents, siblings, or other kin in important reciprocal positions. In such a world irrespective of *ekok paribar* or *joutha paribar*, the core of cultural and social activities (i.e., intimate social and psychological processes) is the cement of the social network which act support, protection, and guidance of the individual and other members of a *paribar*.

**MARRIAGE**

*Shadi* (marriage) is the most elaborate rite of passage in Bengali *samaj*. *Shadi* marked the entrance of an individual in to most of the responsibilities and privileges of adulthood. With a *shadi* (marriage), a young man might even begin thinking of setting up his own economically separate household.
In Islam shadi is viewed as a sunnah, a virtue which helps to leash unlawful sexual desires and also provides for procreation of followers of the *Ummah*. In Islam, *shishu shadi* is allowed but with the clause that on attaining puberty the girl has the right to repudiate it. In Bangladesh, the *shadi* age has been fixed at eighteen for *balikas* (girls) and twenty one for *baloks* (boys). Consent of both in Islam is regarded as a must but as practiced in most cases it is a mere formality. A *balika* is socialized into believing that “only parents know what is best for her” and *lojja* (sense of shame) as a value operates in such a way as to make it a very exceptional case when a *balika* does not agree to the *shadi* arranged by the parents or elders. In cases, where it is a second *shadi* for the women, informing and taking her consent seems the norm and this has been as prescribed in Islam.

A Muslim male is permitted to have four wives at a time not more than this. The husband may *thalak* (divorce) his wife but a wife does not possess the similar rights. However, a woman can *thalak* her husband only if the power to do so has been relegated to her by her husband at the time of *shadi*.

Among both Muslims and Hindus, there are three main features in the *sanathoni* (traditional) form of *shadi*. These features are as follows: (i) the proposal of *shadi* is initiated by the *bor* (bridegroom) party. (ii) The marriage
usually takes place at the bride’s koney’s bari (home), and (iii) Shadi is arranged by the parents, other relatives, friends or acquaintances of the parties to be united. In the Muslim and Hindu shadi practices, however, there are certain differences. Among the Muslims one of the essential elements of shadi is mohrana (dower), variously described, as nuptial gift, shadi endowment etc., it is paid to the koney (bride) by the bor (groom). Mohrana (dower) is obligatory; in exceptional cases where it has not been settled or fixed prior to shadi, the sum must be determined and paid later. The amount of mohrana is determined by whether the koney is a komari (virgin), sthanio (local) and paribaric protha (family custom) etc. Mohrana may be fully in cash or also partly in property, both movable and immovable. Mohrana may be either muajjal (prompt) i.e, payable immediately on shadi if demanded by the wife or muwajjal (deferred) i.e, payable on the dissolution of shadi, or some specified event. Generally, the valuables given to the koney by the bor, for example alangkar, sari etc. are regarded as “ushool”, mohrana realized, and the remaining as muwajjal payment, to be cleared later on.

Among the Hindus in certain cases the bor is required to pay a certain amount known as pan or “price” to the father of the koney. The amount of mohrana as well as pan is fixed through negotiation by the parties of the
koney and bor. The payment of the mohrana amount may be made either in cash or kind or both. In the case of mohrana partial muwajjal payment is allowed. In the case of pan the whole amount is paid in cash at the time of shadi. A Hindu shadi is performed by a priest. The Muslims have no priests in the strict sense of the word; any educated person is qualified for the performance of priestly offices. Two male witnesses must be present; in the absence of one man, there can be two female witnesses but only four female witnesses that is, the absence of male witnesses is not a sufficient condition. Among Muslims shadi is a contract and usually the terms of the contract are formally documented. The Hindu shadi is a sacrament and needs no formal documentation. Muslim may change a shadi date and time; Hindus do not change the time of a shadi once it is fixed and declared by a priest except under certain specific circumstances (Aziz 1979). According to the Muslim shadi and Divorce (Registration) Act of 1974 all shadis must be registered by the Nikah Registrar of the relevant area. But in actuality only a few shadis are registered. The greater majority of shadis go unregistered. Lack of registration however is only punishable, it does not make the shadi void.

A decade ago, it was more difficult for a man to find a wife than the reverse. But now a woman’s paribar (family) commonly takes the initiative in
looking for a bor. This is essential if a woman’s paribar wishes to arrange a shadi into a wealthier one.

MARRIAGE RITUALS AMONG THE PEOPLE OF TANGAIL

For the arrangement of a shadi, the representatives of the bor’s paribar (family) make a number of preliminary contacts with the father or other male kinsmen of a prospective koney. If the shadi appears satisfactory to both parties, then the father of the young man and a few of his male kinsmen pay a formal visit to the bari of the prospective koney. The business of this pan-a-quaqua, as it is called, is to set the date of the shadi (wedding/marriage), decide on the gifts to be given the koney and bor, and set the amount of mohrana to be pledged to the koney at the time of the official registration of the shadi, in case of thalak (divorce) later on. As an indication of their sincerity at this first formal meeting with the balika’s kinsmen, the baloks kinsmen bring gifts. These gifts shall include a sari, a nima, a skaaya, and a gold nose alangkar (ornament) for the balika, plus sweets, dood (milk), shupari (betel nut) and paan (betel leaf). After the guests have been fed and agreement reached on the business at hand, the representatives of the bor are
given paan (prepared betel leaf with betel nut); and the representatives of both the sides perform qulaquli (embracement).

The night before the shadi the koney and the bor have their hands dyed with mehindi (henna) in their respective households. Their young kinsman and prothibeshis often join them in having their hands dyed to participate in the uthsab (festive) mood. Then the bodies of the koney and the bor are rubbed with a mixture of mehindi, turmeric, and mustard oil which they wear until they are bathed and dressed in their shadi clothes. The use of the mixture is said to be for cosmetic effect, to give the body a good skin tone. Another notable practice is that from the moment the bor left his own bari he is supposed to cover his mouth with a handkerchief, keep his eyes down cast, and not speak except in whispered asides. This is a show of modesty he is supposed to maintain throughout the period of the shadi activities.

TERMINOLOGY USED BY THE PEOPLE OF TANGAIL FOR MARRIAGE

Shadi is an institution which plays a central part in Tangail samaj. It is deep-rooted belief that has been practiced by the people of Tangail from the immemorial time that “jonmo, mirtho ar bia-jar jakhanay kopalay lekaha achhay shekhanai hobay” (birth, death and marriage are done in accordance
with the destined writings on our forehead). Inspite of this belief people take spontaneous initiative for the purpose of performing *shadi*. To perform a *shadi*, people take the assistance of a *ghotok* (matchmaker) at first. From the beginning stage to finishing stage there are special words and terms to denote the different stages of *shadi*, *shadi* negotiations, the parties to the *shadi* etc. Attemptation is taken to list and explain the terms and words of *shadi*.

A Ghotok (matchmaker) whose profession is *ghotkali* (matchmaking) from *ghotone ghotano*, that is, to make an event happen. A *ghotok* is a person, either sex, young or old, *shadi* or single, who a) identifies a prospective marriageable person b) sounds out the person/parents/guardian/kin c) gathers information regarding the *paribar*, kin etc. and d) depending on his/her status may be the bearer of the proposal.

The performance that is done by a *ghotok* is the first stage for a *shadi* second stage is *ghor khoja*, literally means to hunt for a “house”, that is an appropriate *bari* to marry one’s son or daughter into. At this stage, *paribar* members and relatives begin to look around and enquire about a *bhalo chheley* or *meye* (good boy or girl) *ghor asha, shombandho asha*, this means that a proposal (for establishing a relationship, *shombondho*) has been made to
the parents. Earlier, it was assumed that it was the baloks side who took the initiative in marital matters, but now a days one sees parents of daughters making approaches through third parties.

At the third stage, usually third party appears with prostab (proposal) that is a concrete proposal which is usually made only after some initial contacts have been made and information gathered, in other words, after the other side has been sounded out as to the possible reaction, so that loss of face does not occur by the prostab being rejected.

The very important stage of a shadi is its fourth stage when paka kotha is done. Paka kotha is the day on which the sthanio gonnomanno loks (local influential persons) sit down, usually at the balika's bari, to finalize the shadi day, transactions, number of guests, shorto (condition), amount of mohrana (in the case of Muslims) etc. After paka kotha almost people do not change their decision because it is much known to each and every body of Tangail samaj that “jar joban ek-thar bapu ek ar jar joban doi thar bapu doi” (whose opinion is rigid his begetter is one but whose opinion is flexible his begetter is umpteen).
Koney pakhya/meye Pakhya versus bor pakhya/chheley pakhya (bride’s/girl’s side versus groom’s/boy’s side), represent the two sides to the shadi. Each pakhya consists of, at the centre, the paribar members, kin of both father’s and mother’s side, close friends; but casually used bor pakhya may include all those who have been invited by the particular side to the shadi. Thus, one invitee may ask another at a shadi “And whose side are you (representing)?”

At this stage shadi is performed and “ek sho ekta kotha na holay shadi hoy na” (If one hundred and one words are not exchanged between the two parties, a marriage can not be performed). Almost in all the shadi it is seen that at least both the parties are entangled in a trifling quarrel.

The bor yathra (travel) is the groom’s party which travels/comes over to the bride’s bari for the shadi with much fanfare and gaiety. They may travel on foot or by boat, or by bus, and among the urban affluent by car. Jamai-bou (groom-bride, not bride and groom, as in English; in Bangla, when the two words are used, the jamai comes first), the words may be used by either side after the paka kotha has taken place, as “bouer shari kmtey
hobey” (we have to buy the bride’s sari) or jamai-ra kichu chay nai (the groom’s have not wanted/demanded anything).

Shoshur bari versus baaper bari (in-laws house versus parents/father’s house). Shoshur bari is used by both bride and groom to denote each others in-laws house. Women may often refer to it as a place to be feared or dreaded, since they are subject to control there, enjoy less autonomy, freedom, have to live upto expectations, do a lot of role-playing, whereas men refer to shoshur bari as a place where they are expected to be treated royally, with a lot of aador-jotno (care and affection). It is women who refer to baaper bari after they are shadi, since shadis (marriages) are patrilocal and involve removal of koney to the bor’s, bari after shadi. The bride’s annual visits to her parental house is called naior (Ahmed et al. 1987).

PURDAH (VEIL) SYSTEM AMONG THE WOMEN OF TANGAIL

Stereotyped notions exist about purdah observance of Muslim women. Purdah is seen to be synonymous with burkha, and many would assume that wearing a burkha is what purdah is all about. These notions have been challenged and reinterpreted in the Indian and Bangladesh context recently by Ursula Sharma (1986). Ursula Sharma identifies the concealment of
women and the segregation of the worlds of men and women as a major aspect of purdah. Purdah is observed in Tangail through complete veiling, restrictions on the mobility of balikas after reaching puberty, bodily concealment and the separation of the sexes — separation between merdana (men’s space) and zenana (women’s space) within the home. Other tactics of concealment are covering of the head and bosoms, and the slightly bowed head and the eyes lowered to avoid eye-contact with men, and the unwavering gaze at the ground a couple of paces ahead. Within the home, purdah is generally characterized by restraint, distance and aloofness, covering the head and concealing the face in the presence of adult male affines as a mark of respect. Purdah may not be confined to wearing a burkha only. If traveling by rickshaw, the women would, aside from wearing a burkha also drape and tie a sari around the rickshaw so that even the purdah-clad figure could not be seen. Purdah is a social relationship which is operative between two or more persons. Purdah is observed by women vis-a-vis men and also vis-a-vis other women. Along with regional and community variations, purdah differs according to age, role, class and situation, sexuality, fertility and mobility shape purdah.
Young *balikas* (girls) and newly wed women are expected to observe stricter *purdah*. This is relaxed somewhat for *koneys* if the *balika* (girl) is married within locality. A newly-wed wife will cover her head in front of her husband’s mother as well. The burden of *purdah* observance does not fall on the “doer” alone. The person at whom it is directed also has to abide by the rules of the game which lays down that a “respectable” woman should not be stared at. Thus, a Muslim man of another *bari* while passing by the road would pretend not to notice the grown up daughters of the other *bari* going to the schools, colleges and market places.

**KINSHIP AS A MODEL OF SOLIDARITY IN SOCIAL GROUPINGS**

Kinship is one of the universals in human *samaj* (society) and therefore plays an important role in both the regulation of behaviour and the formation of social groups. Kinship systems depend on the social recognition and cultural implementation of relationships derived from descent and marriage and normally involve a set of kinship terms and an associated set of behavioural patterns and attitudes which, together, make up a systematic whole (Eggan 1968).

People in Tangail paurashava are internally segmented into different groups, such as the *samaj, ghar, bari, para, gusthi* or *shajan, athmiyo* and
Definition of these terms can help to provide an understanding of *paribar* (family) network and social structure.

The *samaj* always sets of boundaries between “we” and “they” the concrete Muslim *samaj* often centres around a mosque and its appointed a religious specialist, *Imam*. The *samaj* is composed to lineage’s, or *gushti*. *Shishus* belong to the *samaj* as sons and daughters. They must mind its rules and conventions as they mature and increasingly “understand” their proper role in *samaj*. *Shishus* are not persons with jural rights. *Baloks* (boys) gradually acquire rights as they marry, establish separate households and bring up *shishus*. Recognition and respect in the *samaj* is tied with age, *shadi* and parenthood, but also with wealth, lineage and reputation.

The *ghar* or household, literally means the housing unit which accommodates all members of a particular family or *paribar* of any type. Members of one household may have on to four residential *baris* (houses). Each household unit is called a *chula* which means “hearth group” or “*khana*” which means “eating unit”. The *ghar* is the main living building in a *bari*. The *ghars* give some indication of the wealth, amount of land, and social rank-status-aristocracy.
A bari (basha) is a living unit of usually four to ten baris around a central rectangular compound. In Tangail paurashava a bari is called a basha. Most of the bashas are a like to the baris of rural area. And a very small quantity of bashas are multi-storied building where the high officials, professionals, business men, social-workers live maintaining their artha samajik status.

The “bari” or living unit is a combination of dwellings, kitchens, cow-sheds, and the surrounding trees, bamboo, gardens and possible tanks. Within a bari live a single kinship group, patrilocally based. For the women this means that they leave their father’s bari (house) at the time of their shadi (marriage), and go to live in the residence of their husbands. The fact that the women are non-related to each other except by shadi is the cause of many fractions and quarrels within the paribar, as Nicholas has pointed out (Nicholas 1961:105). If the relationship of the heads of households with a bari is determined, then the relationship of the households themselves can be understood from the viewpoint of kinship. Each paribar (family) has functional head but normally the bari has no recognized head. The bari members cooperate with each other specifically in crisis situations. The eldest
male and female members of the bari are shown special respect and consulted in various social matters.

Although each member household within the bari has its own economic interests, the bari usually is a cohesive social unit. Normally a bari inherits the status of the most successful living or dead member of it. The member of a certain bari may proudly declare that he is the grand-grand son of so and so Mir. Thus a bari may be known as the Mir bari indicating that some Mir is or had been its most successful or honourable member. Among the Muslims, a nista padabi (worst title) can gain in status and fame from higher achievement by one or more members of the bari. A bari member with the highest achievement is frequently deferred to with pride by fellow members of the bari. On the other hand if any member of a bari is engaged in any highly disapproved of social activity, he or she is referred to as the gusthir kalanka (blacksheep of the family).

A “para” is a cluster of living units which include out buildings, kitchens and cow barns that are set off from the rest of living place by paddy fields, bamboo groves, garden plots, or tanks (ponds).
The number of inhabitants in the dwelling place, the number of paribars (families) and kinship groups, and the land holding all probhab (influence) the number of combined living units composing a “para”. One finds within a “para” more than one kinship group. Over a period of time, the distinct relationship of paribar (family) land may become blurred, but the settlement as a “para” remains. That is, a paribar (family) may lose their land, but still remain living in the same “para” even though the men of the paribars (families) either work for other landowners or work outside the place. In Tangail several paras are available e.g. Thanapara, Adalat para etc.

The literal meaning of the term gusthi is a group of households or paribars (families) all of whom are agnatically related. It consists of all the male matrilineal descendants of a great-grandfather. Common patrilineal ancestry provides a sense of belonging that binds together the members of a patrilineage called gusthi. Members can trace their common origin to a single deceased male ancestor. It is not unusual for a prosperous household of a gusthi to build a bari (house) in a new residential plot within the same town or, rarely, in a prothibeshi (neighbouring) dwelling place. Such a new site is usually called by its occupants the nutan bari or new bari and the old site as
the *puran bari* or old *bari*. Thus, the members of the same *gusthi* may or may not live in the same homestead. Members of the *gusthi* who trace their ancestry from the single common male whether they live together or not, belong to the same *kul* (ancestry). The *gusthi* consciousness is stronger among the Muslims of Tangail.

After *shadi* (marriage), a Muslim woman in Tangail acquires the *gusthi* membership of her husband, although she retains membership in her father’s *gusthi*. Jean Ellickson (1972) has made similar observation regarding the Comilla women. Ellickson observed that a Muslim woman, upon *shadi*, acquires almost dual *gusthi* membership. Although she and her *shishus* receive gifts as members of an allied *gusthi* when they visit her parental home, she retains rights of inheritance and asylum within her natal *gusthi*.

*Athmiyo-shojan* refers to those people who are considered as “kinsman”. To define this compound term *athmiyo* and *shajan* will be considered separately as well as in a compound form. In a *gusthi* all members have a common ancestor, traceable by a genealogical tree. To become a *athmiyo* a common ancestor is not necessary. The term *athmiyo* refers to the reflexive word *athma* which men’s one’s “soul”. Within the *athmiyo* membership there may be different *gusthis*, and the membership extends
through different places, people who are affinity related claim athmiyo membership.

KINSHIP AS A FACTOR IN SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The interests and behaviour of individuals vary within each samaj, and ways of living change with time. But continuity of life is sustained through accepted patterns of social relations and common beliefs, goals and rules of behaviour.

The basic social structure and values of Bangladeshi samaj (societies) are anchored in a system of kinship relations. The degree of emphasis on kinship and paribar (family), as well as the nature of these relations, varies widely among samaj (societies) at all technical levels. Such technical levels clearly vary when the agriculture is dependent on anything from the bullock operated simple plough to the power operated tiller. Kin and paribar (family) are important everywhere and they form the basic structure of social organization in many samaj (societies). The techniques of Tangail samaj (societies), however elaborate or ingenuous they may be, are largely mechanized and non-mechanized. Under such circumstances, within the
household and within the wider kin circle, social and economic cooperation is an important aspect of life for efficient household management.

Men in general have higher status and authority over women of their households, although older women may have probhab (influence) over junior men. Until shadi a female has to remain satisfied under the authority of her parents, on shadi her husband and particularly the mother-in-law exercise authority over her until she bears several shishus. During her widowhood she usually prefers to stay under the supervision of an unmarried grown-up son. If in due course he marries then she may continue to stay with him but all sons will provide economic support. Control of property by men and freedom from shishu care allows them to enter specialized economic and political roles, such as working in the fields, fishing, buying and selling in the market, and participating in samaj leadership.

Regarding status of women Raunaq Jahan notes that men refuse to share in household work because it is regarded as woman’s job and hence inferior. A woman’s status about being inferior to a man’s, is a thesis universal accepted by Bangali. In a recently done survey of two localities, one rural and one urban, it was found that 70 per cent of rural and 80 per cent of urban men, as compared to 39 per cent of urban women agree with the
statement that 'it is natural and right for women to have inferior status to men
(quoted in Ahmed and Milu 1987).

THE ROLE OF RELIGION

If kinship functions as a way of extending social ties beyond the immediate localized group, religion has certain social features which serve to emphasize its internal unity. This may be seen in a collective religious activities.

There are a number of religious requirements of the faithful in Islam, the fulfilment of which is done in groups. One of these is the obligation to perform weekly jumma namaj (congregational prayer). Moreover, certain holidays, recurring annually and distributed throughout the year, are celebrated in groups. There are some obvious ways in which collective bandegee, (worship) of this sort serves to unite local groupings.

The shapthahik (weekly) jumma namaj is held in a local mosque. Mosque construction in the eyes of Muslim localites, add to religious merit and enhances samajik samman (social prestige), but it is clearly dependent on economic affluence and can be seen as consonant with political probhab (influence) as well. Once a mosque is constructed, however, the congregation
which comes to use it regularly and contribute in some measure to its upkeep becomes more or less fixed over time and corresponds broadly to the locality group surrounding the mosque. It is not an exclusive group in principle; in practice, too, the use of the mosque is open to any believer who wants to participate in bandagee there, regardless of his homestead’s location. Naturally, however, people tend to go to the mosque nearest their home and over time a congregation becomes stabilized.

The spatial distribution of mosques tends to affect intra-grouping and or inter group solidarity, varying in each case with respect to the localites involved. Mosques are not built on the basis of pre-existing congregations. The observance of religious uthsab (festivals), functions socially in a similar manner as does mosque location, some of them focus less on the mosque and more on collective bandagee at the homesteads of the khhamotaban (strong and powerful) lineage’s in each place. During the uthsab of Shab-i-Barat, for example, the “Night of Reckoning”, when it is said that each man’s future for the coming year is being written, it is the protha to pray long into the night, indeed all night in the case of the especially devout. At this time the localites meet at the homestead of the khhamotaban lineage, performing prayer at the congenial place.
During the month of Ramadan (Roza), when the injunct of the daily fast is operative for all Muslims, there is a tarabi namaj (special prayer) required after the breaking of the day-long fast. Localities observe their prayer collectively, at the home of the khhamotaban lineage. During collective bandegee occasion, both at jumma prayers and yearly recurring holidays, the unity of the local group is, in some cases, indirectly given support, and in other cases, a certain mixing of local groupings takes place.

But not all religious observances serve to foster group intensiveness. On important occasions kinship ties are cemented, rather than those of local or extended group membership. This is the case on the occasion of two major religious utsabs, Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul Azha (korbani Eid). Both utsabs are the occasion for special and relatively sumptuous feasting; the former celebrates at the end of the Ramadan fast and the latter commemorates Hajrat Ibrahim (s)’s devotion to Allah (God) expressed in his willingness to sacrifice his son, Hajrat Ismail (s). Consanguineal and affinal kinsmen come to these feasts and exchanges of visits between members of different patrilineages are the significant social features of these occasions. But it should also be mentioned that the Eid holidays bring together members of different village-town groupings, again depending on the location of religious
places. On both holidays, it is required of the faithful to observe jumma prayer not at their respective mosques, but rather at a special Eid congregational field, a plot of land reserved primarily for this, and few other, purposes. Following these prayers Muslims embrace each other. On this day sweet preparations are made including shemai (vermicelli), nashtha (sweetened rice). These sweet dishes are shared with friends and relatives. Both consanguineal and affinal relatives who live reasonably nearby visit each other during the day to exchange greetings and to enjoy sanathoni sweets.

Kin members play a vital role in various religious functions. In the funeral rite of Hindus the role of the son is important since he is the most preferred individual to set fire to the mouth of the dead. Among both Muslims and Hindus the kin members have certain obligations towards the deceased kinsmen. In both cases the kinsmen arrange feasts for the salvation of the departed soul. Kinship plays an important role maintaining group cohesion and solidarity and in orienting the individual members to the social maze.

EDUCATION

Education is the instrument through which cultures perpetuate themselves. It is the process through which the members of society assure
themselves that the behaviour necessary to continue their culture is learned (Spindler 1963:50). The main features of population and literacy of Tangail paurashava are found in the following figures.

Table - 3.2 Distribution of population and literacy (7+years) of Tangail paurashava

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WARDS</th>
<th>TOTAL POPULATION</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>LITERACY 7+YEARS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ward No. 1</td>
<td>19,793</td>
<td>10,377</td>
<td>9,416</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward No. 2</td>
<td>17,988</td>
<td>9,450</td>
<td>8,538</td>
<td>71.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward No. 3</td>
<td>24,388</td>
<td>13,054</td>
<td>11,334</td>
<td>55.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward No. 4</td>
<td>19,920</td>
<td>10,146</td>
<td>9,774</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward No. 5</td>
<td>23,915</td>
<td>12,222</td>
<td>11,703</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>106,004</td>
<td>55,239</td>
<td>50,765</td>
<td>56.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The school and college attendance of the 5 to 24 years old persons are 27.86% whereas in 1981 it was 25.80%.

**OCCUPATION**

In Tangail paurashava, main sources of house hold income are business (26.06%), employment (24.60%), non-agricultural labour (3.63%), agriculture
(15.02%) and the occupational identity of the rest of the people (30.69%) are unknown due to attachment with studies, superannuation, infancy or parasitic living attitude.

**STHANIO BICAR BABOSTHA (LOCAL JUSTICE SYSTEM)**

Standards for proper behaviour vary widely among cultures, but every *samaj* has rules governing behaviour and means of enforcing its rules. Rules provide order and a certain amount of predictability in social relationships, essential to the functioning of *samaj*. In Tangail *samaj* the *bicar* (justice) is controlled by the *sthanio gonnomanno loks* (local influential persons). *Bicar* attempts to settle dispute in a customary system where the *sthanio mathabbors* (local judges) ascertain the facts through questions, jokes and sermoning. Social pressures-including *dhorrah mara* (caning), *baas-dola* (molestation using bamboo), *kaney dhoray othbosh korano* (to pull one’s own ears and do the sitting and standing continuously), *hathor opor bosha* (compelling to practice kneel-down), *nakay sechur* (an act of dragging nose), *samaj-e-bandhok* (ostracizing from the society)- are applied by the *sthanio bicar babostha* when infractions of the rules do occur. When these indigenous preventive mechanisms are not applicable or do not succeed, vengeance or threatened vengeance may take place. Ultimately in this
circumstances “aramear goom haram hoy” (sound sleep turns up agony) and formal mechanism comes forward to resolve the disputes.

LANGUAGE

The people of Tangail speak Bengali (Bangla) but the educated and the khandani aristocratic people speak it with a distinctive accent.

DIALECT OF TANGAIL

Before December, 1969. Tangail subdivision was a part of the Mymensingh district on the north-western border of the Dhaka District. As such there is little wonder that, the dialect of Tangail district closely resembles that of Mymensingh and Dhaka. The population being largely Muslims, the vocabulary is freely, mixed up with Arabic and Persian words. One example is byabak, means all. The language is also much influenced by the prothibeshi Assamese; an initial “s” is pronounced and written “h”. In Assamese a sibilant whether initial or not, is pronounced as a rough “h”, something like the Persian “j”-“kh” and is transliterated by “h”. Examples are he, for se, he; haggle, for sakal, all; huar, for suar, (pigs); hamke for sammukhe before; huna, for suniya, having heard.
LOKOGITHIS (FOLKSONGS)

Lokogithis of Tangail are a big and valuable treasure of the literature of Bangladesh. Much of this literary treasure is still unrecorded and many may be lost beyond all hopes of recovery. Some efforts have, however, been made recently to record the lokogithis and literature. Services of Bangla Academy in this connection is commendable. Baul, Murshedi and Marfati songs of Tangail are regarded as of high literary value, Dr. Dinesh Chandra Sen in his Purbabanga-Gitika collected a few songs and discussed their high merits. Another commendable work on lokoshahithyo and songs has been compiled by Dr. Ashraf Siddiqui who was born in Tangail. His work, "LokaShahity" (1964) contains the rich heritage of the Lokoshahithyo of Bangladesh including Tangail.

PUTHIS

Bangladesh as a whole was once famous for its charan kobis (bards). In Tangail they were perhaps more numerous than in many other places some of these poets composed beautiful verses on universal love and brotherhood. Here are two lines from a famous poet:
English transliteration- 
“Nanan baran gabiray bai akoyi baran dood,
Jagath bormia dhakhlam akooyi maer pooth”.

English translation-
“Milk is same from cows of different colours, People are many but they are sons of the same one mother”.

The *puthi* literature written in common familiar language in rhyming couplet and triplets consists of stories of saints prophets, warriors and lovers. These are very popular with the local folk. It is interesting to come cross readers of *Puthis* printed in Bangladesh who can hardly read other printed books. Even in cities and towns they are found reading *puthis* in a musical tone in public places surrounded by a ring of appreciative listeners. This medium of entertainment serves to educate the illiterate people about moral values of life, historical events and even certain important civic and social duties.

**JARI GAN (JARI SONG)**

The *Jari gan* is a community music, often accompanied by dance, and performed generally by a group of adults who form a ring, while the *bayati* (leader), leads the song and chorus from out side the ring, When the song
reaches its climax, the dance begins, lending itself to infinite variety. The songs usually centre round the incidents of Karbala and are tragic and full of pathos.

**BHATIYALI GAN (BHATIYALI SONG)**

_Bhatiyali gans_ of Tangail also deserve to be mentioned. The life of the people is closely tied up with _nadhis_ (rivers) and boats and they have their effects on the mind and cultural life of the people. The flowing _nadhis_ have softening and relaxing effect on the mind and body. The kind of song which draws inspiration from this atmosphere is known as _bhatiyali._

**SHARI GAN (SHARI SONG)**

There is another kind of song known as _shari_ which is also connected with _nadhis_, boats and water, while _bhatiyali_ draws its inspiration from a spirit of resignation. _Shari_ is a kind of functional song. All the gaiety and liveliness of a _shari_ song are fully revealed when it is sung as an accompaniment to the boat-race. A _shari_ song is sung in chorus by _dharis_ (oarsmen) engaged in a boat race. The rowing of the oars synchronizes with the rhythm of the song.
RAKHALI GAN (RAKHALI SONG)

Besides, the nuptial songs, the rakhali gans (cow boys songs), and the love songs are quite common in Tangail.

MEYELI GEET (MEYELI SONG)

A newly-married young wife sighs for her father's home. She requests each of the members of her father-in-law's bari (house) including her husband to permit her to go to her father's bari (house). Her mind speaks out in the form popularly known as meyeli geet.

Tangail paurashava presents a socio-cultural mix of tradition as well as modernity. Although various aspects of people's life are affected by urbanization, it is found that their core values regarding family and kinship organization, marriage practices and religious rites and rituals have remained intact. The institutions more vulnerable to modern and western influences are school, colleges, places of services and occupations. The people of Tangail quite often express that of the modern influences which come through dress, food habits, furniture, exposure to movies, tempt and contribute to social deviance among the young and old it is the traditional institutions and associated norms and values that put a back check, control and even correct
the erring individuals in the society. On the onset of urbanization and westernization the subsidiary institutions of Tangail samaj are much more affected than the core institutions. The core institutions are playing a vital role as the means of social control and curbing the deviance from the society for maintaining social norms, values and order to ensure a stable society. Since other social problems juvenile delinquency too is seen as a result of the push and pull factors that are embedded in the socio-cultural fabric of Tangail paurashava.

The next chapter endeavours to focus on such factors that cause juvenile delinquency.