MATERIAL CULTURE AND ECONOMIC ORGANISATION OF THE KORA.
In describing the material culture and the economic life of the Kora, I shall limit myself mainly to observations on the village of Ragma which was intensively studied. In certain matters connected with the economy, I have taken into consideration the observations from other villages. The Kora share the basic inventory of material culture of the region to such an extent that it would be impossible to identify any distinctive Kora style in settlement pattern, housing, dress and ornaments, household articles and in the basic technologies of agriculture, fishing, hunting etc. Their pattern of material culture only indicates the limiting factors of their economic class. Therefore, what we are describing in the following pages is not the distinctive material culture of the Kora, but how the Kora share this pattern from their own economic rather than ethnic vantage point.

1. HOUSING:

The general settlement pattern of houses in this area has already been described in Chapter-IV.

The Kora live in partial isolation from the other high caste Hindus. In Ragma, the Kora live in two hamlets (Ref: Village Map), namely, Laya Kuli and Mudi-dih. The Kamar (blacksmith) live in proximity with the Kora. In the village of Sankhari the Kora Mudi live in association with the Santal, Bauri, Bhuiya, at a considerable distance from the house of the Brahmins. In Karmabera, the Kora Mudi live interpersedly with the Mahato.
The Kora houses are quite similar to those of the other castes or ethnic groups in this area and it is not possible to identify a distinct Kora pattern of household architecture. Their huts are huddled together in linear fashion on one or either side of the main village lanes or bye-lanes. The back portion of the hut faces the lanes and a small passage right from the entrance leads toward a small courtyard. The only door of the hut invariably faces this courtyard. Sometimes, two or three huts are so arranged as to make the enclosure themselves. Brothers generally share these huts with separate hearth forming a domicile cluster or bakhoil. The door is of low height. Windows are not usually found in these huts. The small gap between the walls and the framework of the roof serves the purpose of ventilation. But this is so insufficient for the entrance of light and air that the inside of the room is almost dark. Most of the huts are of low height and with rectangular ground plan. Plinth is also low. The single hut serves the purpose of sleeping, cow-shed, kitchen and fowl-shed. The walls are made of mud and are sufficiently thick. The wooden framework of the roof with proper sloping rests on the four walls. It is generally thatched with straw. In every Kora hut, there is a tulsī-than in the courtyard, where they light lamp just at dusk. The erection of hut as well as the repair works is done by the Kora themselves in agricultural off season, February to April.

Selection of site is the starting point for the construction of a house. Nothing devinatory is done for the selection of a site for hut construction. When the space of their former hut becomes insufficient, or family friction started, they generally come out of it and construct a hut by the side of the former one in the same plot of land. After selecting a site for the construction of hut, they begin to dig up the plinth upto knee depth. It is then filled up with sticky clay and stones. The raised plinth varies between 11" to 16" inches height from the surface of the ground. On this plinth, the walls are constructed first. Clay lumps are put in a regular line and after one layer no work is done till the next day. The frame of the roof is done by the wooden poles. One long and strong wooden ridge-pole is supported on both the sides by upright short poles which rest on the walls. It gives the shape of slopings of a hut. Short wooden sticks are closely placed and tied with
ropes to enmesh the entire framework of the roof. Thatching of straw is done on it. Well-to-do villagers make country-tile or even corrugated tin thatching but all the Kora huts have thatching of straw.

The entire construction of a hut for a three-membered family requires about one and a half month's time. If we consider the cost of labour given by the family members for the erection of a hut, then it comes to about Rs.350/- to Rs.400/- including the cost of the materials. They start this construction in off season when they get hardly any work outside and that is why for them the cost of hut construction comes to only Rs.50/- to Rs.70/- which is required for the purchase of materials. Wooden poles are generally procured from the local forest defying the vigilance of the forest guards preferably during the night.

At the time of a new hut a feast is given to close relatives. But no ritual is performed in this connection.

A hut generally lasts about 10 to 15 years if it is properly maintained. On festive occasions they plaster the walls with mud and paint colour wash (with ranga-mati or coloured clay) on it. They generally change the thatching of the roof after every 5 to 6 years.

By entering into a Kora hut, one can see the following articles :- one or two cots (wooden frame with cocoanut fibre enmeshing bed-rest), a plough, a few agricultural implements, a few dirty beddings, a mirror, a wooden comb, a few cooking utensils, mostly of aluminium and a few of bell-metal and a few earthen containers, and a kupi (kerosene lamp). There may be a space for husking lever (dhenki). Sometimes a hanger for keeping clothes might be seen which is nothing but a bamboo stick hanging from the trellis by means of rope.

Sometimes small plot of kitchen garden is found to be attached with a Kora hut.
Members of a Kora family including the women attend nature's call in the open field at some distance from their habitation site.

2. THE SOURCES OF FOOD SUPPLY:

Rice is the staple food of the people living in this part of Manbhum district including of course the Kora. And agriculture forms the basis of the local economy. The social life, philosophy and thinking, rites and rituals of the people in this region centre round different agricultural activities. Though the Kora are traditionally earthworkers, some of them are permanent agriculturists to-day. They claim that from time immemorial they are practising agriculture along with their traditional calling of earthwork. With scanty landholding most of the Kora families find it hard to make the both ends meet from the yields of their agricultural fields. They have to depend on hire of their labour as the main source of livelihood. As experts in earthwork and specialists in digging tanks and embankments, the Kora have an advantage over the other labouring castes. They very often participate in seasonal migration to the neighbouring districts in order to subsidise their income by manual labour in agricultural as well as non-agricultural vocations.

Hunting and fishing have very little significance in the Kora economy at present. During and after the rainy season when the ditches, canals, paddy fields etc. have water, they catch fish with the help of traps. One or two such traps could be found in every Kora hut. They also occasionally hunt small games to replenish their normal diet. Formerly, they used to participate in ceremonial hunting or desh-sikar in Ajodhya hill forest in the month of Baisakh. For the last 3 or 4 years they are not participating in it as they go in seasonal migration during that period.

2.1. Day-labour and Wage-system:

In Barabhum, we find the Kora to earn their major livelihood mainly as day-labourers. They are considered as the experts in
digging tanks, erecting embankments, making road etc. They themselves think earthworkings as their traditional calling (britti). Some of the Kora made this remark, "we had absolute monopoly in the past in the matter of earthwork. Previously we did not have to starve. But now the Santal, Bauri, Orang-Mudi are trying to encroach upon our traditional occupation of earthwork. This has actually put us into economic hardship. We do not get day-labour every day". But it is felt that the Kora enjoy some amount of preference over the earthworkers of other castes. The local people cherish favourable opinion regarding the working habits of the Kora day-labourers. There is a general notion in this area that whatever obstruction may come in the way of digging up tank, the Kora will not leave it and they will not stop their pick and hoe until they can trace out some perennial source like a natural spring underneath the tank. The Kora are never found to abandon any kind of earthwork midway, which is often the case with labourers of other castes. In addition to this, a specific ritual role i.e. bandh-biha has been assigned to them by upper Hindu castes in the area which is beyond the reach of the day-labourers of the other castes. It has actually prompted me to search out, how and when did such a social group with very low status (Ref: Chapter-X) and with a very poor numerical strength and obvious origin from a tribal stock (Ref: Chapter-III) secure such a specific ritual role.

My interest gets intensified when I find that the Kora living in different parts of West Bengal and Bihar, outside Barabhum Pargannah are just settled agriculturists. Of course, they subsidise their agricultural income by working as manual labourers in different kinds of vocations. The Kora of Mudi-dih (P.S. Jhalda, Purulia district, West Bengal), Chandi-dih (P.S. Sili, Ranchi district, Bihar), and Khezurdanga (P.S. Bolpur, Birbhum district, West Bengal) possess fair amount of cultivable land in comparison to the Kora of Barabhum. Of course, the Kora of Jhargram (Midnapore district, West Bengal) stand on the same economic footing like their brethren at Barabhum. Moreover, in these places they do not cherish the notion that they are experts in earthworks and that earthworking is their traditional calling (britti). Similarly, the local people do not consider the Kora as expert earthworkers. It is more significant to us that the Kora living in these area outside Barabhum do not have
the right of performing the ritual act of bandh-biha which is connected to all newly excavated tanks (for details—see Chapter-IX). In pursuing this matter in Barabhum, we get the following facts:

In the above-mentioned places outside Barabhum where the Kora are more or less permanent cultivators, they try to live compactly in a few adjacent villages. They form the numerically dominant group in the village they live. In a village of average size near Chandidih (Ranchi), out of 40-45 families 38-40 belong to the Kora while the rest belong to the village blacksmith and some other castes. The same is the case with the adjacent villages and thereby they try to form compact area dominated primarily by them. In Bolpur and Jhalda also, the Kora (numerically) dominate those villages they live. A few families of other castes live along with them. In Jhargram the Kora occupy second or third place in numerical dominance in the villages they live. But in Barabhum, we find (Ref: Chapter—IV) that the Kora constitute only a minor fraction of the village population. In a village of average size they form only 1/10th or 1/12th of its population and on an average we find maximum 5-10 families living in a village (mostly multi-ethnic) of Barabhum Pargannah. If we consider the overall population figure of Barabhum, we can have the following statistics:

The total number of 570 Kora families with a total population of 2,677 constituting about 1.09% of the total population of Barabhum Pargannah are found to be scatteredly distributed in 65 villages. It can be represented more clearly under the following points:

(a) The Kora live in 65 villages out of 596 villages of the Pargannah i.e. in every 9th village we can meet the Kora.

(b) In those 65 Kora inhabited villages, the average number of Kora families and their population per village comes to 8 and 41 respectively; and in the context of entire Pargannah it will come slightly below than 1 family and 4 persons per village.
(c) The Kora constitute about 1.09% of the total population of Barabhum in contrast to the Mahato, the Santal and the Bhumij who are having 29.38%, 16.44% and 15.51% respectively.*

(d) Density of Kora population in Barabhum per square mile is 4.2 as against the real density of general population of 386 per square mile.

It might be due to the fact that agricultural economy encourages a larger population to live together in a somewhat compact manner (which is the case with the Kora of Chandi-dih, Jhalda, Bolpur). But the wage-earners like the Kora of Barabhum who are constantly in search of manual job cannot live in a compact fashion. Probably for that reason they are found to be scatteredly dispersed in different villages.

If we consider the overall population figures of the different tribal groups of the States of West Bengal and Bihar, the scattered distribution pattern of the Kora population will be apparent to us. In contrast to the Kora, the other major tribal groups like the Santal, Oraon, Munda, and the Bhumij live in more or less compact blocks in different regions of these States.

Though a fragmentary section of the Kora own small plots of cultivable lands and still less number of them are substantial cultivators, the majority of them are landless labourers in Barabhum (it might be true if we consider the entire Kora population of West Bengal and Bihar). Under this circumstance, they are forced to be scattered in different villages and to live interspersed among the other wealthier groups as a subservient caste. Constant source of securing job is absolutely vital for this labouring class who lead a more or less "hand-to-mouth" existence mainly as wage-earners. It holds probably true for those who live partially on agriculture.

From the earlier reports on Barabhum and from the local situation, we can easily surmise that the major earning of this estate of Barabhum used to come from agriculture. The substantial portion of the best quality of cultivable lands was under the khas possession of the Raja (chief). Even now, a large portion of the best quality land is under the direct possession of the lineage of the former chief. It was customary for the cultivators of this Pargannah to give one day's free labour in the khas land of the chief with their own plough (Ref: Chapter-II). Thus in order to raise the income of the estate, the chief of Barabhum was largely bent upon successful outturn from the agricultural fields. As this success, in its turn, was dependant upon successful irrigation, a large number of artificial irrigation dams, tanks were constructed. Very old artificial irrigation dams of this area some of which are still there, provide us with the definite proof of it. In making a village to village survey in all 49 villages within the radius 3 miles from Ragma (the village under intensive study) we can have the following idea about the inter-relationship between the artificial irrigation system and agriculture.

In those 49 villages (covering an area of 28.2 square miles) surveyed by me, I have found a total number of 308 artificial irrigation tanks of various size, which include 117 bandh (water reservoirs with dam on one side), 124 sayer (water reservoirs with raised dam on all four sides) and 167 goira (small sayer). The number of 15 bandh, 10 sayer and 5 goira of Barabazar town itself have also been included in it. We are told that a large irrigation tank may be extended to a total area of 20-25 bighas* of land. Amongst these only 57 are "very old" origin and were constructed not earlier to 150 years (traced through the genealogy of the owners). 132 tanks may be labelled in the category of "old" i.e. constructed within 80-100 years from now. The rest fall in the "recent" category i.e. within 50 years from now. From these figures average comes to about 2 bandh, 2 sayer and 3 goira per village and

*1 acre = 3.3 bigha.
3 bandh, 4 sayer and 5 goira per square mile. From these, we can have an idea about the immense importance the local cultivators attached to the artificial irrigation dams in order to stabilize their agricultural income.

By pursuing it in 10 out of 49 villages surveyed by me, I could not gather correct information regarding the castes of the labourers employed in digging up all these irrigation tanks. Yet I got some interesting information. In Ragma, Ranshi, Rampur and Sankhari, the Brahmin bandh-owners told us that it was at the time of Raja Ramkanai Singh Deo Bahadur, the Kora got the monopoly over bandh-excavating service. The kind-hearted Raja made an announcement before a festive gathering at Barabazar probably on the eve of Ind Parab that the people of Barabhum should employ Kora Mudi exclusively in excavating new irrigation tanks and in other kinds of earthworks from then onwards. It was on the advice of the Brahmin, the Raja assigned the ritual act of bandh-biha to the Kora. It could be gathered from them that in excavating 9 very old bandh in four villages around Ragma, the Kora man-power was exclusively utilized. Even now, it is customary on the part of the cultivators of this Pargannah to call at least three Kora labourers to offer the ceremonial opening strokes with a new pick and hoe in digging up any tank. Each of them gets a new set of pick and hoe, a cloth and a basket for the ceremonial opening of the excavation of a tank. If they continue the digging work they shall get the usual remuneration for their manual labour. We have already mentioned about the preferential treatment which the Kora earthworkers get from the local cultivators.

It is also learnt from a few caste leaders like Kalipada Mudi of Krishnanagore, Ratan Mudi of Sankhari, Manik Mudi of Ragma that it was at the time of Raja Ramkanai Singh Deo Bahadur, father of the present Raja (about 80-100 years from now) the Kora could get a tamar-pat (copper plate inscription containing the written sanction of the chief) from the chief, on the strength of which they had almost monopolized in earthworkings specially in digging bandh (tanks). Moreover, from then onwards they are entitled to the ritual act of bandh-biha, the consecration ceremony of a newly excavated tank. The above-mentioned tamar-pat was handed over to
late Dolu Mudi of Sankhari village by the Raja himself who had gone there to attend a special caste-meeting of the Kora Mudi Samaj. In addition, the kind-hearted Raja offered small plots of land to those Kora families, who did not have any land under their possession and asked them to settle in Gortoli taraf. When I interviewed Hikin Saheb (youngest brother of the Raja), he told me that he had heard of tamar-pat offered to the Kora by his father. He was not sure about the other details with regard to the provisions and privileges offered to the Kora.

Thus it is at the initiative of the Hindu Raja of Barabhum, the landless Kora labourers get somewhat economic security and thereby they find a place in Hindu productive system. It is indeed unique for the Kora of Barabhum. In other places we have visited, even in the neighbouring police station of Jhalda within the same district of Purulia, the Kora do not have such economic facilities and ritual act like their brethren at Barabhum. In addition, they get the privileges of performing the ritual act of bandh-biha, as noted earlier, owing to the active support of the local chief. The above facts lend support to the model of Bose (Bose: 1941). The local people, in their turn, encourage such a landless labourers' class like the Kora to settle over here in order to get their expert manual service in their own agricultural fields.

Now let us cast our attention to the Kora of the village of Ragma. Though some of them own small plots of cultivable lands (dealt in details under the point on Agriculture), they depend largely upon day-labour, as the main source of their income. As the average land-holding per family is small, the Kora spent comparatively lesser time in their own cultivable fields and they devote their major time of the cultivable season in earning wages by working in other's fields. They earn 2 to 2½ seers of paddy in exchange of their labour including one full meal in the house of the employer. The major employers are Suphal Gop, the Brahmin families (former landlords of the village), Balaram Napit, Bhuson and Amulya Gorain of this village. In the remaining months of the year
they go out in search of day-labour in non-agricultural vocations. In earth-cutting, they get 75 paise per 100 cft. from the road contractors. In other matters, they get Rs.1.25 to 1.50 or even Rs.1.75 per day cash remuneration for their day-labour. But in the month of Bhadra (August-September) it is quite dreadful to them as they very often have to starve due to lack of any employment. They generally try to tide over this crisis by taking paddy loan from the rich cultivators of the village on compound interest. A few days of this month, they live entirely on mokoi (maize). They also engage some of their young lads as bagal (cow-boy) in the house of the rich cultivators from whom they get ½ maund of paddy annually. The bagal boy is maintained by the master as a member of his domicile.

In the months of Bhadra and early part of Aswin (August-September), when local employment is not easily procurable, some of these Kora families at least move out to Dhanbad-Asansol coal-mine areas to earn as casual labourers. In Ragma, Sankhari and Karmabera only 12 out of 52 families participated in such seasonal migration last year. A Kora male earns Rs.1.25 while a female earns Re.1/- per day. They generally stay there for two months and then they return home. The Kora admit that they carry along with them some new trinkets and urban habits acquired during the period of their stay in the industrial areas.

2.2. Agriculture:

An account is given hereunder of the technology, social and economic organisations of paddy cultivation and rituals connected with different agricultural operations as found among the Kora of Ragma village.

2.2.1. Land:

The soil of this area is mostly lateritic and podsolic. The weathering processes have not yet been completed in many patches of high lands and vast waste lands are found in different parts of this locality. The diversified and undulated topography of this
area has formed prominent contours on the land surface and thus different categories of lands have been formed, suitable for cultivations of different varieties of crops. These categories of lands are primarily divided into four broad classifications and locally termed as follows:

**Bahal**: Land situated in the lower strata and the water holding capacity of this soil is very high and remain stagnant with water during rainy season. Mostly *aman* paddy is being cultivated in these lands.

**Kanali**: This is also low, fertile variety of land like the former but it is situated slightly above it. *Aman* variety of paddy is cultivated in these lands.

**Baid**: Land situated between low and high land. Early *aman* or *aus* are usually cultivated in this category of land.

**Danga** or **gora**: This is high land. The soil is sandy loam or loamy. This is generally treated as waste lands. Some vegetables are cultivated in fertile zones otherwise inferior types of cereals are grown in these lands. *Aus* variety of paddy may also be grown if there is suitable rainfall.

In some *danga* plots, wheat, *gram*, onion, garlic, sugar-cane, potato etc. are also grown, if there is sufficient irrigation facilities or optimum rainfall. These are also grown in homestead or *bari* land. Kitchen garden products like brinjal, tomato, beans, *sak*, gourd, pumpkin etc. are generally cultivated in *bari* land.

2.2.2. **Rainfall**:
The annual average rainfall of this area is 53" inches of which major fall occurs in the months of June, July, August and September.

2.2.3. **Agricultural operations**:
The Kora are living in this area in close association with high caste Hindus for generations. They have adopted many cultural
traits of the Hindu including their method of cultivation. So, excepting for some minor variations, their process of cultivation is almost similar to that of other groups of this area. We shall limit ourselves to the procedures adopted by the Kora for the cultivation of aman, the major variety of paddy, extensively cultivated in this area.

The soil being very hard for its lateritic origin, cannot be ploughed under without suitable moisture in the soil. As artificial irrigation facilities are insufficient, the cultivators generally depend on rain water for tilling of lands and cultivation of crops. Ploughing begins practically on the onset of monsoon when the soil contains optimum moisture. If the soil is sufficiently moist due to suitable rainfall after harvest, then the Kora cultivators usually plough their lands once or twice immediately. The unreaped portion of paddy-stalks which are generally left in the field, are put underneath the soil by means of this ploughing. It helps in increasing the fertility of the soil. The first ploughing is associated with the ceremony of Akhan Jatra on the 1st of Magh. Major agricultural activities do not begin before the end of May. At this initial phase, the natural undulating land surface is required to be broken down into terraced plains by erecting dikes or ails in order to retain rainwater. After erecting dikes, the undulating slope is subjected to heavy ploughing with a relatively large share and it is then followed by levelling. A good shower in early May enable the cultivator to get his land dug over and ploughed. Both bullock and buffalo powers are used in cultivation. Ordinary wooden ploughs with large iron-share are used by the Kora cultivators. The wooden parts are made by the village craftsmen with sal or accacia tree. Iron-share is either purchased or procured from the local blacksmiths. Ladder is made of two wooden planks joined together in a slanting position to form a curvature in between. Yoke is made of sal wood or other available kinds of wood. Harvesting is done by serrated sickle made of iron.

Then a Kora farmer prepares his seed-beds (beej-tala) at the end of May when fairly heavy rainfall is expected. The seed-beds are ploughed four to six times from alternate directions at right angles to each other. In these nursery beds he sows seeds for
preparing seedlings. Sowing is done in the month of Jaistha (May-June), very rarely in Ashar (June-July). Ceremony of first sowing is observed in a sacred date on the last fortnight of Jaistha preferably between 13th to 19th.

The young plants grow up to a length of 8" to 10" inches within the latter half of June. These seedlings grow rapidly by the middle of July when transplantation (roano) is generally started. Prior to the actual operation of transplantation, the land requires four successive ploughing under normal conditions of rainfall. The first ploughing is known as ugal which is done just after the onset of monsoon. The second ploughing (samal) is done after a few days with a few more showers at right angles to the direction of ugal. The samal is followed by the process of levelling (moi). Again after a few days more downpour, the third ploughing or javar is done at right angles to the directions of samal. It is followed by another ploughing which is known as kada (literal meaning 'making mud') at right angle to the direction of the former. The last ploughing is preferably done when there is adequate water in the land and transplanting should have to be done on the same day otherwise the soil is likely to become hard. In the meantime, the dikes of the land are generally repaired to ensure retention of water. At first the seedlings are uprooted (tala ukhreno) and are then tied in bunches or gachhi. Several gachhi are brought to the cultivable plot by baskets and then seedlings are transplanted in rows (gachhi-gara). Ten to twenty seedlings are planted together per hill. The distance from plant to plant and row to row generally varies from 10"-12" inches. The starting of transplanting operation is associated with the performance of panchati ceremony. Thereafter, all that is required is sufficiently heavy rain at intervals to keep the young crop almost continuously standing in a few inches of water.

Transplantation of aman paddy is somewhat common now-a-days but thupi (by broadcasting) cultivation is also prevalent side by side. On estimation it may be said that about 25% aus and 70% aman are transplanted and the rest are sown by broadcast method. Generally 15-20 kilograms of seeds are required in broadcast method and 10-15 kilograms of seeds in transplantation method per acre of land.
but in improved method which is unknown to the Kora requires only 8-10 kilograms of seeds per acre.

Only cow-dung manure is extensively used by the cultivators. This is also not prepared according to the improved method. Composts are also prepared by a few Kora cultivators. The use of chemical fertilizer mixture and Ammonium Sulphate though not unknown to them at present, they are not at all inclined to use it. Generally 4-5 cart-loads of cowdung is applied in per acre of land.

No weeding is generally done in the paddy fields except mulching once or twice which they call as kodlan. Generally no preventive or curative measures are taken for crop pests and disease excepting in epidemic condition.

Harvesting is done usually in the months of Kartick (October-November) and Aghrayan (November-December). The Kora sometimes harvest their crops before full maturity as they have constant scarcity of food-grains. Completion of the operation of harvesting is accompanied by the ceremony of khet-utou. After threshing the crop by manual or bullock power they usually store it in circular pure, specially made from straw-rope or in deli, big bamboo basket.

The ceremony of eating the new crop is known as natun-khaoa is performed when the first harvested crops are brought home. Husking is done by husking lever (dhenki) by the female folk of the family.

Most of the cultivators have no marketable surplus, still they are sometimes forced to sell it either to local mahajans from whom they use to take loan in 'bad' days or in the open market to earn cash in order to meet up other necessities of day to day life. The yield is generally low and lands offer them marginal return. The average yield from the different categories of land is as follows:— Bahal (most fertile) – 10 to 15 maunds, Kanali (fertile) – 8 to 12 maunds, Baid – 6 to 8 maunds and Gora – 3 to 5 maunds per bigha. Some change is now perceptible in the cultural practices on the part of some of enlightened Kora cultivators with the introduction of improved methods of cultivation.
Casual labourers of both the sexes are available here. The daily wage varies between Rs.1.75 to Rs.2.25 per day with one free meal during busy agricultural season when demand for labourers is high. In every cropping season large numbers of local ordinary or poor and landless cultivators are found to migrate in the neighbouring districts of Midnapore, Bankura, Burdwan, Hooghly to seek part-time job in agricultural fields. In some other kinds of non-agricultural occupations, they also try to sell their manual labour to substantiate their earnings. They also visit the coal-mines in Dhanbad-Asansol belt where they work as casual labourers. These Kora families who do not possess plough, they usually hire it on payment of Rs.1.50 in cash or 3½ seers of paddy per day from the bagal families who are in practice of giving plough (with bullocks) on hire.

2.2.4. Social organisation of rice cultivation:

In almost all the cases, nuclear family is the unit that organises production of paddy in the field. In some cases, close agnatic kins having separate hearth co-operate and work together in order to minimise the cost of production. In the matter of sharing of hired ploughs or in exchanging the agricultural implements these families are found to co-operate. Some of the Kora families who do not have sufficient man-power to cultivate their owned land, generally give it to bhag-chas (share-cropping) preferably to their agnatic kins.

Division of labour could be clearly marked in the matter of paddy cultivation. Both male and female take part in the different agricultural operations. Women participate in light works like transplanting, husking, winnowing, storing etc. Ploughing, levelling, sowing are always the task of the men. Women are debarred from touching the plough but they can touch the leveller. Ploughing is generally done from the early morning till 1 P.M. with a break for baisam (mid-day meal) which is generally carried to the field by a female inmate of the house.

As theft of unreaped or freshly harvested paddy is not uncommon, the cultivators who have adjacent plots keep over-night watch in the
field by rotation. They stay in kumbha, dome-shaped hut with leafy branches. In this matter, generally agnatic kins living in same hamlet and the ceremonial friends (phul) come in such reciprocal aid.

Agricultural operations bring the Kora Mudi cultivators in close contact with several artisan groups from whom they procure their craft-products in exchange of cash or in kind (paddy). The Kamar supplies them the iron-share and sickle and has a fixed clientele relations with a number of farmer families. The Mahalis supply them big basket, winnowing fan etc. From the Dom, they procure small baskets. The Sahis provides them with bark-rope.

These Kora families do not have that number of domestic animals to engage a full-time bagal. But young boys of these families serve in a number of rich Brahmin and Gop (Mondal) families as bagals. Though the bagal belongs to lower caste, he is considered as an equal member of the master’s family during his tenure of service.

2.2.5. Rituals in agriculture:

The following rituals are found to be somehow associated with the different agricultural operations. They try to appease different gods and goddesses as well as different benevolent and malevolent spirits in order to get their blessings to ensure sufficient rainfall and bumper crops. This has got tremendous effect on the psychology of these people who are by no means technologically advanced. They have to depend solely on the mercy of nature in this respect. Different religious beliefs and practices as well as some social observances help them to get sufficient mental strength to withstand this sort of insecure economy.

As the agricultural activities start from the month of Magh (January-February) with the first ploughing of land and finish with the operations of harvesting and storing in the months of Agrahayan and Pous (November-January), the annual cycle of agricultural festivals of the Kora is arranged accordingly. Some of these festivals are performed individually by the senior most member of the family
while the others are observed community-wise or village-wise.

**TABLE NO.9**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Months (English equivalents)</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name of the festivals</th>
<th>Associated agricultural operations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Magh (January-February)</td>
<td>1st day of the month.</td>
<td>Akhan-Jatra (Hal-punya)</td>
<td>It is performed just before first ploughing of land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaistha (May-June)</td>
<td>No fixed date.</td>
<td>Rahin Parab (Beej-punya)</td>
<td>The ceremony prior to first sowing of paddy seeds in seed-beds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashar (June-July)</td>
<td>10th or any date in the 2nd fortnight.</td>
<td>Jantal Hairo (Panchati)</td>
<td>The ceremony associated with the first transplanting of paddy seedlings from nursery bed to the field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sravana (July-August)</td>
<td>On the full moon day of the month.</td>
<td>Gomha Parab</td>
<td>It is performed in the tulsi- than(sacred spot in the household) individually to avert evil eyes from the granary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhadra (August-September)</td>
<td>11th day of the bright fortnight.</td>
<td>Karam Parab</td>
<td>The worship of the presiding deity of the Karam tree is performed to overcome economic hardship and also to ensure agricultural success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On the following day of Karam.</td>
<td>Ind Parab</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aswin (September-October)</td>
<td>Any date.</td>
<td>Natun-khaoa</td>
<td>It is the first rice-eating ceremony of the Kora with the new crop i.e. bhut-muri variety of paddy of baid land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agrahayan (November-December)</td>
<td>No fixed date.</td>
<td>Khet-utou or Thak-rain-Ana.</td>
<td>The last act of reaping is marked by this festival.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2.6. Economics of paddy cultivation:

Taking a lead from our previous work on a Bhumij-dominated village in the southern portion of Barabhum during 1957-60 (Ref: Sinha et al: 1961; pp. 24-26), we have calculated the cost of growing paddy per bigha of different categories of land and the marginal profits obtained therefrom by the Kora. Excepting some minor changes owing to the increased wages for engaging labour, higher rates of paddy etc. in making this calculation in the present day context, slight variation in marginal profit can be marked. The net profit in cultivating per bigha of Gora, Baid, Kanali and Bahal lands for the production of paddy at present comes to Rs.21.50, Rs.32.00, Rs.64.00 and Rs.91.00 respectively.

As already mentioned that the Brahmin (former zamindar of the village), Gop (milkmen), Gorain (oilmen), Mahato and Ifapit are in commanding position so far landholdings of the village are concerned. The total landholdings of the Kora inhabitants of Ragma are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landholdings</th>
<th>Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bahal</td>
<td>5.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanali</td>
<td>2.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baid</td>
<td>21.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gora</td>
<td>8.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The distribution of size of landholdings of the Kora farmers is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of land (in acres)*</th>
<th>Percentage of Kora families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No land</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 to 3</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 4</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 5</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Kora Nudi families residing in Karmabera (18 families) and Sankhari (16 families) mostly fall in the category of 2 to 3 acres.

*1 acre = 3.3 bighas.
size of landholding. And the rest possess less than this. Thus the Kora of Ragma is comparatively in a better position so far the landholding is concerned.

Major bulk of the labour supply generally comes from this village. It is quite interesting to note that the Kora under no circumstance employ hired labour for the cultivation of their plots. On the contrary, they serve as agricultural labourers in the house of rich farmers of other castes. In spite of their hard works, the yield is generally low and lands offer them marginal return. Rainfall and other conditions, if favourable, then alone they can get these outturns from the agricultural field.

The crops grown in the field is distributed in the following channels: Repayment of loan (with high compound interest), reserving seeds, household consumption etc. The Kora farmers do not have marketable surplus, still they are forced to sell a substantial portion of their paddy to local mahajans from whom they use to take loans. Forced by certain urgent circumstances, they sometimes sell paddy for cash. Thus we find 3 or 4 months after harvest, the Kora pass their times quite comfortably and thereby they prepare themselves for the hard days ahead.

Moreover, these people have not the positive tendency to increase agricultural lands which is marked among the Santal and the Mahato. As agriculture proved to be quite inadequate cope with the population pressure and increasing economic hardship, the Kora like other groups of ordinary or poor farmers attach less importance to it. Unless the landholdings are substantially big, it is very difficult for them to make both the ends meet. As we have already mentioned the Kora depend on day-labour as the main source of their livelihood. Agriculture forms practically their subsidiary source of income.

2.3. Fishing:

The Kora of Barabhum give little importance on fishing due to lack of sufficient water resources. During the rainy season, when
these people get ample time after the completion of transplanting operation, they practice some amount of fishing in rain-filled ditches, ponds, canals as well as in paddy fields. They use two kinds of fishing appliances (1) cast-net (chohen jal) and (2) valved fishing trap (ghugi) made of bamboo splits or kash. If big fishes are caught, they go directly to Barabazar daily-market for selling to earn ready cash. Small fishes are generally consumed by themselves and that helps them in breaking the monotony of their routined diet.

2.4. Hunting:

Hunting has no regular place in the economic life of the Kora due to lack of forests nearby and for the reservation of forest. Only occasionally, in the agricultural off-seasons, they go to nearby Sughnibasa jungle or even Goborghusi jungle for hunting small games, mostly the wild hares, sasa and wild boar, shuor. Previously they used to participate in annual hunt on Ajodhya sikar in Ajodhya hill situated about 15 miles away. As already mentioned they have given up participating in it for 3 or 4 years. As they are heavily engaged with their day to day duty for their hand-to-mouth existence, they get hardly any spare time to indulge themselves to this sort of pastime. In desh-sikar held in the month of Baisakh (April-May), they used to go in batches from this village. After offering puja to Goram than (village deity), they used to start at midnight with tangi, tabla (battle axe), ballam (spear). Even at present, we find these weapons in the house of the Kora. During the ceremonial hunt, in the past, the hunted animals were usually distributed among the participants equally except for the fact that the man who first shot the animal used to get an extra share. Before actual hunting, the participants assembled over there (mostly the Santal and Bhumij) used to propitiate the tutelary deity residing in Ajodhya hill. Following some incidents during the Ajodhya sikar, Government of West Bengal has recently put a ban on it.

3. DOMESTIC ANIMALS AND BIRDS:

The Kora of Ragma possess the following animals: bullocks,
goats and fowl. Out of 16 families, only 4 families have 4 pair of bullocks which they keep for cultivation. 12 goats and 20 cocks and fowls are shared by 7 Kora families. Almost all the families possess a watch dog. Though the Kora attach importance to keep domestic animals and birds, their economic condition does not permit them to own sufficient number of these animals which are occasionally sold for cash. Cock fighting in different festive occasions, is also important to them as they gain sometimes out of this gambling. Eggs of the poultry birds are mainly sold for cash and only on rare occasions are consumed by them, or sometimes used in different rituals and ceremonies. Those Kora families possess bullocks, usually give hal (plough with pair of bullocks) on hire on daily basis to their fellow poor villagers who do not have it. They get Rs.2/- per hal per day. They also employ bullocks in both agricultural and non-agricultural seasons for drawing cart as well as for bringing reaped paddy from the field to granary, threshing etc.

4. DOMESTIC UTENSILS AND HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE:

After making a door to door survey among the Kora families of Ragma we could find the following domestic utensils and household furniture were used by them:

For cooking and storing purposes:

- Hari (earthen) ... For cooking rice.
- Big Hari (earthen) ... For keeping water.
- Kalshi (earthen) ... For keeping water.
- Karai (earthen) ... For cooking vegetables, fish etc.
- 'Germon' Hari (Brass) ... For cooking rice.
- Dekchi (Brass) ... For cooking pulse.
- Chatu (iron) ... Large spoon.
- Chaul-ula-khole (earthen) ... For frying rice to prepare mudi.
For keeping cooked food:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thale</td>
<td>(bell-metal)</td>
<td>Plate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bati</td>
<td>(bell-metal)</td>
<td>Cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuka</td>
<td>(earthen)</td>
<td>For keeping molasses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For cutting purposes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Banti</td>
<td>(iron)</td>
<td>Vegetable cutter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chhuri</td>
<td>(iron)</td>
<td>Knife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Da</td>
<td>(iron)</td>
<td>Cutter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurar</td>
<td>(iron)</td>
<td>Axe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bedding:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chakra</td>
<td>Leaf-mat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khait</td>
<td>Cot (rope matting in wooden framework).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kambal</td>
<td>Rug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaddar</td>
<td>Wrapper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kantha</td>
<td>Made of torn pieces of cloths.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For lighting purpose:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kupi</td>
<td>Kerosene lamp.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For latrine purpose:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mog</td>
<td>Water pot made of tin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghoti</td>
<td>Water pot of bell-metal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For protection from rain and sun:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chhata</td>
<td>Umbrella.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toka</td>
<td>Big-sized umbrella made of leaves.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For religious purpose:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pradip</td>
<td>Lamp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimcha</td>
<td>For keeping puja articles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For religious purpose (contd.): -

**Kup** (earthen) ... Required to divert the attention of evil spirit on granary.

**Dhup-sara** (earthen) ... Incense burner.

5. **DRESS, ORNAMENTS AND TATTOOING** :

5.1. **Personal cleanliness** :

The Kora are not very particular about personal cleanliness. However, along with their children, they regularly cleanse their teeth with neem twigs or the ash from burnt cow-dung cake after getting up from bed in the early morning. Regular bathing is practised during summer and rainy seasons in the nearby ponds or bandh. They apply sorso oil (mustard oil) on the head at the time of bathing. In winter, bathing is not so regularly done. The women folk comb their hair neatly after taking bath and the married ones use vermilion on the parting line of their hair. They try to keep their clothes clean by washing it in khar (ash), soda (Sodium Carbonate) etc. In rare cases they use soap to clean their body.

5.2. **Dress** :

Dress and pattern of wearing of the Kora are similar to those of the other poor castes in the village. The men ordinarily use a type of short dhuti, procured from the local Jolha or Tanti weavers. The upper part of the body is kept bare. In winter, they put on genji or a cotton chaddar (wrapper). When they go to the fields, they wear a loin cloth, six to nine cubits long. This is passed between the legs and over a string encircling the waist. A small portion of the cloth is allowed to hang in front. Children also use similar loin cloth keeping the upper part bare.

The Kora females generally use a long piece of coarse cloth, sari round their waist allowing a portion of it to pass diagonally over the upper part of the body (after one complete round) to cover
the breasts. Normally they do not use blouse except for festive occasions as well as in the winter. The married and unmarried women use saree with coloured borders while the widows use plain saree. The latter do not use vermillion or put on gold or silver ornaments.

Ordinarily they do not use any foot or head gear. A few Kora have ordinary leather choti (slipper) which they use at the time of going to distant places.

The dress on the occasion of marriage is simple. On the day of marriage, the bridegroom wears a brand new dhuti (cloth), a yellow chaddar (cotton wrapper) and a pagdi (turban). The bride puts on saree and blouse, coloured yellow by dipping them in a solution of turmeric paste with water.

5.3. Hair-dressing:

The Kora women keep long hair on their head. They use oil at the time of bathing and comb their hair with wooden comb kakui or mochka procured from the Sahis. The hairs collected at the back of the head are made into bun-shaped knot (topa-khosa).

The males crop their hair short. Many of them keep moustache, but they do not keep beard. Gostha Napit (barber) of Rola-dih comes every fortnight for shaving or cropping of hair. The barber also pairs the nails of women and men. He gets half maund of paddy annually from each of his clientele families.

5.4. Tattooing:

The Kora women usually take tattoo marks (ulki) in order to beautify themselves. A bajikar from Rashiknagore occasionally visits the Kora hamlet for the purpose. The tattooing is done on the middle of the forehead, a part of the chest just above the breast, back of the shoulders, upper part of the arm, back of the hand. The designs are floral and somewhat conventionalized and vary
from person to person except for the tattoo marks on the forehead which are the same for all women. The bajiker takes Rs.3/- to Rs.5/- for full arm, chest and back of the shoulder tattooing.

5.5. Ornaments:

The males of this community do not have any ornaments. The females wear churi (bangle), bala (thick bangle), sut (necklace), nak-chabi (nose-flower), makri (ear-ring), mol (foot bangle), taga (armlet) made mostly of silver and of brass. Recently they are also using glass or plastic ornaments. It may be mentioned here that the married women wear iron kharu (bangle) on the left wrist and sankha (conch-shell bangle) on both the wrists as the sign of marriage along with vermilion on the head like the upper caste Hindus. These are procured either from the local goldsmiths at Barabazar on payment of cash or they get through marriage from their parents.

6. CLEANLINESS OF HOUSE:

The Kora cleanse and often purify their houses by sweeping and also by plastering of the floor and walls of the huts and courtyard with cow-dung, earth and water. It is specially done during religious festivals and social ceremonies. They also paint with coloured wash (ranga-mati) the outer wall of their huts. After the completion of the pollution they wash their household utensils and clothes.

7. FOOD, DRINKS AND NARCOTICS:

7.1. The diet:

Rice is the staple food of the Kora as is the case with all the other castes living in this area. They take boiled rice (bhat) all round the day. Generally they take three main meals: in the morning (baisam), at noon (dupoira) and the other in the evening.
(sanjha). In the morning, generally stale rice (bashi bhat) is taken. They generally cook rice only once in the late morning. At noon they consume a part of it along with gruel (mar-bhat) and preserve the rest in cold water for the evening meal (jal-bhat) and for the next day's morning meal. They generally take rice along with little amount of salt and green chillis. The latter is grown in their kitchen garden while the former is procured from the market at Barabazar. 3 kilograms of salt (price annas six) is required for the week.

Along with bhat, pulses (kulthi, raher, mug, rambha) and vegetables like potato, brinjal, sak, mula, onion etc. are occasionally taken. These are mostly cultivated by them and rarely procured from the market. Mustard oil (sachi tel) is used as the medium for cooking. The amount used for various preparations is very little. 100 grams of oil is sufficient for the whole week for an average family. They purchase it at the weekly market. They take meat and fish rarely. Very little quantity of spices (lanka - chillis, haldi - turmeric, jira, rasun - garlic) are used in cooking. The average Kora family requires only 4 to 6 annas spices for the entire week, which they purchase from the grocer's shop at Barabazar on the day of the weekly market. On festive occasions they generally take some animal protein in form of the meat of goat, fowl or from fish. Sometimes, they supplement rice with millets like kodo, gundli and maize grown in their own fields as well as procured in exchange of their day-labour.

7.2. Method of cooking:

The Kora use modern safety matches to make fire. They collect fire wood from the forest and dried leaves for their fuel. They often prepare cow-dung cakes. The hearth of the Kora consists of a pit about one feet in depth with three-cone like structures on the sides of it. This hearth is regularly pasted with cow-dung solution. There is a mouth for feeding the hearth.

In preparing their food, the Kora adopt the following three methods: - boiling, roasting and frying. They use parboiled rice and eat it whole after it has been boiled in an excess of water.
They take boiled rice along with gruel (mar-bhat). The millets (koda, gundli) are also taken in the same manner. On festive occasions, rice is ground down into flour, boiled or steamed in small lumps (pitha) and taken along with molasses. It is sometimes taken as a supplementary food. Vegetables are sometimes taken by frying in little quantity of mustard oil. Otherwise they are boiled by putting excess of water after frying. Grounded spices and salt are also put into it to make the vegetable curry tasteful. Pulses are taken in boiled form in excess of water with small quantity of turmeric paste, green chillis and a little salt. Fish and meat are prepared in the same method as that of vegetable curry. Meat of small game animals and birds is also taken after roasting it. Wild potato, brinjal, maize are also eaten in roasted form. As mentioned earlier, the Kora generally take their three principal meals with bhat (along with gruel or in stale form) only with a little amount of salt and green chillis. Pulses and fried vegetables are taken occasionally while the animal protein is consumed rarely.

7.3. Food-value:

From an analysis of the Food Charts taken from 5 samples representing different economic classes for a period of seven days in summer, rainy and winter seasons, the following things could be gathered:— the Kora diet mostly contain starch and carbohydrate. Comparatively less amount of protein is consumed by them. This protein in their diet is gathered mostly from vegetables. On an average calculation, the calorie value* per day per unit is found to vary between 1308.5 to 1672.01 calories. In the above calculation an adult male is taken as 1 full unit, .8 for a female and .4 for a child. This survey was carried in families of average size having 3.4 to 4.0 units.

The cooking and other household duties are done by the housewife. It requires about 2 hours time to finish up the jobs of the kitchen.

*1 gram Protein = 4 calories.
1 gram Carbohydrate = 4 calories.
1 gram Fat = 9 calories.
7.4. Eating customs:

The Kora take their meal inside the room or in the open courtyard during winter. The male members as well as the children generally take the meal first. The housewife serves them. Then the women take their meals. Of course, if any one is found to be late in coming home, women and children take their meals earlier. They take their meals either by sitting on the ground (squatting position) or by sitting on legs. They generally mix up boiled rice with pulses and vegetable curry and take their meals by right hand. Children take food four times a day. The adults take three times, baisam or morning meal (between 9 A.M. and 10 A.M.), dupoire or mid-day meal (around 1 P.M.) and the other sanjha or evening meal (around 7 P.M.).

7.5. Drinks and narcotics:

On the day of the weekly market at Barabazar, it is a common practice for some of them at least to drink rice-beer. They prepare haria at home on festive occasions. Of the drinks, haria (rice-beer) is considered as most important and is essential for a number of socio-religious activities. The haria which they use, is prepared by fermenting rice in a brew with the help of a kind of yeast pill bakhar. This serves both as beverage and as food. They also purchase distilled liquor from the shop of Ganesh Sahu at Barabazar. But ordinarily, due to shortage of rice, they are inclined to prepare it at home. This custom of distilling liquor is looked down upon by other high caste Hindus. For that reason, even if they prepare it, they do it quite secretly and they are not ready to disclose it to the outsiders.

Men smoke biri and chuti. These are prepared by them out of locally cultivated tobacco. This tobacco powder is rolled up in sal leaves.

8. Economic conditions of three sample Kora families:

In ascertaining the economic conditions of the Kora, the annual income and expenditures of three sample Kora families belonging
different economic classes have been taken. In this matter, I have taken into consideration the following economic classes: **Ordinary cultivator**, **Poor cultivator** and **Landless labourer**. These economic gradations are quite arbitrary and have been judged by the size of their land-holdings. In this affair the author had taken lead from the settlement records made available to him by the office of Junior Land Reforms Officer at Barabazar. Family-wise holdings have been found clearly in the *parcha khata* maintained by *tahsildars* of different village blocks. The author also got the help from the local Block Development Office in verifying certain aspects of the statements made the informants. Moreover, being a Brahmin by caste, the author got all co-operation from the Brahmin zamindar families in correcting his data on such crucial matter of the Kora life.

The broad framework of annual income and expenditures of these sample families have been given below. This will undoubtedly help us to know how the Kora live and the basis of their economic structure.

TABLE NO. 10a.

I. **Class: Ordinary Cultivator** :-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land-holding</th>
<th>Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bahal</strong></td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kanali</strong></td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baid</strong></td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gora or Danga</strong></td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>4.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Cattle: 2 bullocks.*

*Goat: 2 Nos.*

*Powls: 7 Nos.*

*Plough: 1 set.*

**INCOME FOR 1965-66**

1. **Paddy**: Expected outturn from different categories of land:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land-holding</th>
<th>Outturn (mds.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bahal</td>
<td>44 mds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanali</td>
<td>14 mds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baid</td>
<td>44 mds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gora</td>
<td>32 mds.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total:- 134 mds.**
Actual outturn:
Due to insufficient rainfall last year, the production in different categories of land has been reduced to 30%. Nitai Mudi got about 9 pura of paddy last year.

Total: 90 maunds.

2. Straw:
About 150 pans (bundle).

3. Cash:
(a) Out of agricultural labour during Aser, Sravan, Agrahayan, Pous, Kartick months. In this season, he gets about 20 days’ labour in a month @ Rs.1.50 per labour unit

Rs.30/- x 5 = Rs.150.00

(b) Non-agricultural labour during Magh, Phalgum, Chaitra, Baisakh, Shaitra, Aswin and Kartick months. In these months, he gets 10 days’ work a month @ Re.1.00 per labour unit

Rs.10/- x 7 = Rs. 70.00

(c) Selling of land (5 kata) to Amulya Gorsin in order to meet up the loan taken at the time of son’s marriage @ Rs.25/- per kata

Rs.125.00

(d) Selling of potato (3 mds.) and other vegetables produced in the kitchen garden

Rs. 60.00

Total: Rs.405.00

Then, Nitai Mudi’s income for the year 1965-66 comes to: Paddy – 90 mds., Straw – 150 pans and a Cash of Rs.405.00.

EXPENDITURE FOR 1965-66

Paddy:
1. Repayment of 6 mds. of paddy loan taken from Suphal Gop (Milkmen Caste) of Ragma with interest

......

12 mds.

2. Repayment of beej-dhan (seed) ¾ md. loan taken from Milkants Rajak (Washermen Caste) with interest

......

1 md.
3. Payment made to blacksmith ..... ½ md.
4. Payment made to washerman ..... ½ md.
5. Payment made to barber ..... ½ md.
6. Payment made to midwife (for the occasion of the delivery of son's wife) ..... ½ md.
7. Repayment of paddy loan taken from Government grain-gola (4 mds.) ..... 6 mds.
8. Payment of paddy in lieu of cash loan taken from Suphal Gop for arranging son's marriage ..... 10 mds.
9. The amount of paddy required for the household consumption annually @ 8 to 10 seers per day (7 mds. x 12) ..... 84 mds.

Total:- 115 mds.

Cash:
1. Final instalment payment of cash loan taken from Suphal Gop for arranging son's marriage (14½ kuri) ..... Rs.290.00
2. Purchase of one bullock ..... Rs. 90.00
3. Purchase of spices, salt, oil and other necessities of day to day life @ Rs.5/- per month ..... Rs. 60.00
4. Purchase of clothes and other garments ..... Rs.100.00

Total:- Rs.440.00

The deficit of approximately 25 maunds of paddy and Rs.35.00 cash has been met up partially by selling the straw (@ Rs.10.00 per pan of straw) and the rest by taking a fresh paddy loan of 10 maunds from Nilkanta Gop and Bhusan Mahato after harvest. As he expects comparatively rich harvest this year, this deficit can be easily met up.

N.B. (a) Rate of interest:- Principal 1 md. = Interest 1 md.
(b) Labour rate:- Agricultural season: Rs.1.50 per labour unit.
Non-agricultural season: Re.1/- per labour unit.
(c) Paddy: Rs.12.00 per maund.
(d) Straw: Rs.10.00 per pan.
(e) Plough hiring rate (with bullock): Rs.1.50 per day or 3½ seers of paddy.
II. Class: Poor Cultivator:

Head of the family: Lal Mudi.
Village: Ragma.
Hamlet: Layakuli.
Date of recording: 16.10.66.

Land-holding:
- Bahal - .9 Acres
- Kanali - .4 "
- Baid - Nil
- Gora - 1.2 "
Total: 2.5 Acres

1. Family members ..... 6
   No. of earners ..... 3
   No. of earning dependants ..... Nil
   No. of dependants ..... 3

2. Livestock:
   Cattle - Nil
   Fowl - 3

3. Plough:
   No. He works with hired plough
   @ Rs.1.50 per day or 3s seers of paddy.

INCOME FOR 1965-66

1. Paddy: Expected outturn from different categories of land:
   - Bahal ..... 34 maunds
   - Kanali ..... 14 maunds
   - Gora ..... 15 maunds
Total: 63 maunds

Actual outturn:
(Due to reason mentioned earlier ... 50 mds. (5 pura)

2. Straw: About 70 pans (bundles).

3. Cash: (a) Agricultural labour for 5 months,
average 20 days' labour for three
labour units @ Rs.1.50 per labour
unit ... 60 x 5 = 300 labour units ... Rs.450.00

(b) Non-agricultural labour for 7 months with an average of 10 days' work in a month for three labour units @ Re.1.00 per labour unit ... 30 x 7 = 210 labour units ... Rs.210.00

(c) Participating in season migration for about 30 days i.e. about 20 days' work for three labour units @ Rs.1.50 per labour unit ... 60 labour units ... Rs. 90.00

Total:- Rs.750.00

Thus, Lal Mudi had an income of Paddy - 50 mds., Straw - 70 pans, and a Cash of Rs.750.00 for the year 1965-66.

**EXPENDITURE FOR 1965-66**

**Paddy:**

1. Repayment of paddy loan taken from Government grain gola (3 mds.) ... 4½ mds.

2. Beej-dhan (seed) taken from Suphal Moral (10 seers) ... ½ md.

3. Repayment of paddy loan taken from Bamunghar (10 mds.) ... 20 mds.

4. Payment for hiring of plough for 3 days ... 10½ seers.

5. Payment made to blacksmith ... ½ md.

6. Barber ... ½ md.

7. Repayment of loan taken from Nilkanta Rajak (10 seers) ... ½ md.

8. Amount of paddy required for household consumption about 12 seers a day i.e. 9 mds. a month (9 x 12) ... 108 mds.

Total requirement:- About 145 maunds

**Cash:**

Entire cash earning out of day labour of the family as well as amount got from selling of straw was required to meet up:

(a) Paddy deficit of nearly 100 maunds.

(b) Spices, oil, clothes and other necessities of day to day life.
Even then, a fresh paddy loan of 6 maunds had been taken from Akshaya Gop (Milkmen Caste) for his household consumption.

TABLE NO. 10c.

III. Class: Landless Labourer :

Head of the family: Lokhu Kora.
Village: Ragma.
Hamlet: Mudi-dih.
Date of recording: 17.10.66.

Land-holding: Nil, excepting a small amount of bastu.

1. Family members ..... 3
   No. of earners ..... 1
   No. of earning dependant ..... 1
   No. of dependant ..... 1

2. Livestock ..... Nil

3. Plough ..... Nil.

Lokhu Mudi works as day-labourer all round the year. As he has no fixed income, it is very difficult to calculate his annual income and expenditure table. In the agricultural season, he works in the lands of the Brahmans (former zamindar of this village). He gets regular job for 5 months, Asar, Sravan, Agrahayan, Pous and Kartick over here. His wife also works in the transplantation operation, weeding, harvesting etc. under the same employers. In non-agricultural seasons, he finds it very difficult to secure employment throughout the month. He also participates in seasonal migration to earn his livelihood when it becomes very difficult to get day-labour over here. Last year he went to khadan (coal mine) in Dhanbad along with his family members. He stayed there for three months. Wage system of this area has been mentioned in the earlier table. In the khadan, he and his wife could earn an amount of Rs.3/- per day.

Practically, Lokhu leads a miserable life of hand-to-mouth existence. He had some small plots (6½ kata) of Bahal land which he had to sell under pressure of economic hardship. Moreover, he has
taken some paddy loan from the Brahmin families in the days of unemployment. He admits that these Brahmin families are very kind toward him. No one is ready to give him a loan either in cash or in kind as he possesses no land at all. They want some sort of security before giving a loan. It is quite painful to note that Lokhu and his wife had to starve for a few days at least before the harvesting season.

Thus his annual income falls short to meet the family expenditure.

A study of the above income and expenditure table of these three sample families of different economic classes would reveal the following characteristics:

All of these Kora families depend mainly on day-labour as the primary source of their livelihood. Those who hold some land, depend partially upon agriculture as their subsidiary source of income. Of course, ordinary cultivators like Nitai Mudi depend mainly on agriculture. Earning by selling manual labour forms the subsidiary source of livelihood. As already mentioned, they require about 15-20 days in all, distributed in the months of Baisakh, Jaistha, Asar, Agrahayan and Pous, to round up their work in their own fields. The remaining days in these months of agricultural season, they generally work in others' fields. They earn 2 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ seers of paddy or Rs.1.50 cash in exchange of their labour including one free meal in the house of the employer. The major employers are of the following castes:— Brahmins, Gop (Milkmen), Gorain (Oilmen), Napit (Barbers), Rajak (Washermen) and the Mahato of this village.

In the remaining 7 months of the year they go out in search of non-agricultural labour. Earth-cutting, raising the embankment, digging of bandh, thatching of roof, erection of walls, road construction etc. are the various types of job, they generally get during these months. The rate of wage varies between Re.1.00 to Rs.1.75 and depends upon the nature of work.

Almost all the Kora families run into debt. They take paddy
loan from the substantial cultivators of the village, mainly of Brahmin, Gop (Mondol), Gorain, Mahato, Rajak, Napit castes. They offer loan at 100 per cent interest payable within the next harvesting season. Sometimes the Kora have to take cash loan. After harvest, very little amount of paddy is generally left for their household consumption as the major portion of it required to meet the repayment of loan with interest. Thus, a cycle could be easily marked in taking loan and repayment of it in the next harvesting season. If the outturn from the agricultural fields is up to their expectation, then both these ends are found to be well-balanced. But owing to some reasons, if the production falls short of expectation, (as in last two seasons), the Kora find it too difficult to make the both ends meet.

In fact, the outturn from the agricultural fields can feed these families for 4 or 5 months at the most. Thus, the major part of the year, they depend on the earnings of selling manual labour in different types of vocations. Those families who do not possess land, their conditions are absolutely miserable. They practically live a hand-to-mouth existence by selling labour. They simply starve when they fail to get any job to earn their bread. The months of Bhadra and Aswin are actually very dreadful to them when a Kora gets 10 days' employment at best.

The cash-earnings of the Kora are mostly utilized for the purchase of paddy for household consumption. It is interesting to note that none of these families has any savings whatsoever. They consume whatever they earn. The ornaments, drought animals, poultry birds, goats and their cultivable lands they own, form their assets. In their days of economic hardship they depend upon these assets to fetch some cash to tide over the crisis.

9. WEEKLY MARKET:

As has been already mentioned the entire area of Barabhum Pargannah covering an area 634 square miles is studded with 12 weekly markets, that means, every 52.8 square mile area contains 50 villages and has a weekly market to distribute local and
imported goods. Such a weekly market is located at Barabazar about
2 miles from Ragma. It sits on every Sunday. This market was estab-
lished about 100 years ago. According to local tradition when these
markets were not there, the contact of the remote villages with the
products of the town was maintained through Gandha Banik traders
who used to come from Bankura and Midnapore districts with pack-
bullocks loaded with salt and handloom cloths. A detailed study of
the weekly markets of Barabhum had been made during 1957-60 and the
report had been published also (Sinha et al: 1961).

Through this institution of weekly markets, the system of
exchange of the local products and of imported manufactured items
comes into operation. It is the major institution for the products
of the major productive endeavours of this area, namely, agricul-
ture, crafts etc. In the midst of the economy of this area prima-
arily based upon agriculture, the cultivators get the opportunity to
sell surplus rice, cash crops like tobacco, oilseeds and kitchen
garden products, the artisans to sell their wares and others to
sell lac resins through this kind of weekly market. Rice and lac
are the main items exported to outside through professional traders.
In recent years, vegetables are also sent to in large quantity to
Tatanagar. Mill made cloths flooded the market but the local weavers
still struggling hard to hold part of their ground although they
gave up spinning their own yarn from local cotton and began using
mill-made yarn. Kerosene oil began increasingly to be used for
lighting lamps and lanterns. Aluminium and metal-alloy utensils are
gradually replacing the earthen pots.

In Barabazar weekly market, both sellers and buyers from even
distant villages within a radius of 10-12 miles usually come. The
peak period of this market is between 2 to 3 P.M. and from 4 P.M.
the gathering becomes melted away.

On 16.10.66 and 23.10.66, a fresh survey of this market was
taken. It revealed the following facts :

(1) **Commodities brought for selling**

- Imported goods: Mustard oil, Salt, Potato, Matches,
  Washing soap, Lock and Key, Lace, Hairpins, Bidi,
Brass-plate, Coconut oil, Tea leaves, Biscuits, Onion, Ready-made garments, Mill-made cloths, Betel-nuts, Glass bangles, Plastic toys.

(2) Local products:
   (a) Raw materials: - Vegetables, Lentils, Fish, Meat, Lac seeds, Molasses.
   (b) Manufactured items: - Earthen pots, Sweets, Broom-sticks, Wooden comb, Handloom cloths, Iron implements, Rice, Flattened Rice, Bark-rope, Baskets (small and big).

From a calculation the average purchase by a visitor was found to be roughly 14 annas. On the other hand, from an average value of sale proceeds of 36 sample sellers, the sale comes to roughly Rs.1/8/- per head.

On the basis of 2 days’ counting of sample number of visitors, the male-female proportion came to almost equal. The following 23 castes were recorded from a random count of both sellers and buyers: Kumhar (Potters), Kamar (Blacksmiths), Mahali (Basket makers), Dom (Small basket makers), Jolha (Muslim weavers), Tanti (Hindu weavers), Moira (Sweet-meat makers), Vaisnava (Sweet-meat sellers), Jaisowal (Marwari cloth merchants), Ghuinya (Fishermen), Napit (Barber), Lohar, Chatra, Brahmin, Santal, Mahato, Muchi, Gorain, Sahis, Kora, Bhuiya, Muslim.

Sale of a few articles were found to be restricted to a few specific castes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Castes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Earthen pots</td>
<td>Kumhar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bell-metal ware</td>
<td>Swarnakar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big baskets</td>
<td>Mahali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small baskets</td>
<td>Dom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron implements</td>
<td>Kamar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing baskets</td>
<td>Santal,Kora,Kharia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bark-rope</td>
<td>Sahis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flattened rice (chida)</td>
<td>Bagti</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Amongst these, the artisan groups are: - Kumhar, Mahali, Dom, Sahis, Jolha, Tanti, Muchi, Kamar; Santal, Kora, Kharia are the tribals while the rest are trading castes.

Most of the visitors came to the market for the purpose of buying daily necessities rather than for selling goods. Quite a high proportion of the visitors came to attend the market, come only for the fun of meeting friends. Young women with special good dresses enraised the romantic mood amongst the visitors by their frolic movements. A few professional prostitutes were also found to loiter here and there in the market. Picking up friendship with women at the market place is not quite uncommon. The announcement of cinema shows were made in loudspeaker in the market by the local cinema authority. A postman from the local post office was found to disburse his mails to the people of distant villages in the market. Important social gatherings, caste meetings sometimes are announced in such markets. I found a barber to shave a visitor in the site of the market. But in this market, the element of entertainment was found to be subordinated to interest in material transactions. The permanent shops of country-liquor, sweet-meat, stationery and grocery articles as well as tea stalls were found to be very busy in entertaining the gatherings of the hat. Highest weekly sale in these shops made on the hat day. Right from the morning, the small town of Barabazar was found to be busy and usually heavy gatherings could be marked on the streets. In fact, the entire town might be considered as an extension of hat. Gossipings before the tea-stalls, betel shops, sweet-meat shops could be noticed.
Transactions in this market were found to be predominantly in cash. Barter also operated in the case of a few minor local items. The chief article used as a medium of exchange for a variety of products is paddy. Lac was sometimes used as a medium of exchange.

It may be mentioned here that on certain important fairs, such as Ind Parab, Maker Parab, artisans and people from near and distant villages usually set up temporary stalls around the festive site and continue business transactions while enjoying the fair as well.

Moreover, before certain festivals, Kalipuja, Tusu Parab and the like, this weekly market becomes more colourful. Huge gathering and higher business transactions can be marked during these periods.

It may be mentioned here, nothing could be found new in this market in respect of our previous study on it during 1957-1960. The same venue, the same people with almost similar commodities made me to belief as if I was visualising a thing of the past even after 5 or 6 years.

The people of Ragma were found to attend this weekly market regularly on every Sunday either to sell their products or to purchase necessities of day to day life.

In the procurement of artifacts and other necessary articles, we find that the Kora of Ragma generally come to the weekly market at Barabazar on every Sunday. They also attend the weekly markets at Bamundiha and Balarampur. They purchase earthen pots, baskets, vegetables, oil, salt, napkin, cloths and other day to day requirements from these weekly markets, specially the former one. The permanent shops of various categories at Barabazar semi-town also cater to their needs. The Kora, although occasionally, bring their kitchen garden products, broom-stick of bamboo splits, ghugi (fishing trap) of kash sticks for sale in the weekly market,
specially in non-busy season. When they do not find any regular buyer in the market, they sell their products directly to some female traders of different villages, namely, a Napit of Bamundiha, a Santal of Bamnidiha, a Kumhar of Barabazar. It may be mentioned that the potters of Manpur, Mahali (big basket makers) of Rupapsita, Dom (small basket makers) of Barabazar, Jolha (muslim weavers) of Barabazar and Dhadanga and the Tanti (Hindu weavers) of Rangtanr pay occasional visits to this village to hawk their produce. The two Gorain (oil pressers) families also supply different categories of oil to the Kora Mudi in their special needs. The Mudi families of Ragma take the help of the two Kamar families (blacksmiths) who live in their hamlet, in order to procure or repair their iron implements. They pay them either in cash or in kind in lieu of their service (at the rate of 20 seers of paddy for plough).

Beside the above-mentioned groups, the Kora of Ragma come in contact with the following castes in the weekly market at Barabazar: the Sunri (wine distillers and wine sellers), Ghunia (fish sellers), Muchi (leather workers), Jugi (woolen weavers), Bagti (chida sellers), Moira (sweet-meat sellers) and the like.

In addition to the material transactions, these weekly markets serve as the meeting places for different castes in the Kora. They come in contact with not only the farming communities and artisan groups but also with the relatives, friends, government officials, political leaders. Their mutual exchange of thoughts is by no means limited to mere impersonal economic transaction. Picking up friendship with some girls at the market place is not uncommon among the Kora of Ragma.

10. ECONOMIC ATTITUDE OF THE KORA?

We have already discussed that the basic economy of Barabhum is agriculture. Besides the typical cultivator castes, artisan and priestly castes live mainly on the income from agriculture or agricultural labour.

Living in such an economy, the people of this Pargannah exhibit a wide range of variation in the matter of economic attitude. The first level is represented by the Gandha Banik (traders), Sunri
(wine distillers), Brahmin (who enjoy extensive brahmottor lands), Vaisnava (religious initiators). These people are too much calculative, thrifty, miserly and true exploiter of the sentiment of the local peasants. Owing to these qualities, most of them have accumulated sufficient wealth to command over the local economy. They lend paddy and money to the local peasants. The Kora come no way near to these groups.

At the next level, the Mahato, the Santal and Bhumij may be put. These three agriculturist groups sharing about 60% of the total population of the Pargannah. Amongst these groups, the Bhumij are the earliest to settle. The Bhumij formerly controlled the major political offices as fief-holders under the Raja of Barabhum and used to possess the major bulk of the cultivable land of this Pargannah. The Bhumij, as most of them are spend-thrift, impulsive, extravagant and non-accumulative in nature, are gradually losing their landhold to the hands of other ethnic groups of the area. The Mahato on the other hand, are more hardworking, clever, calculative and thrifty by nature. As a matter fact, the Mahato are definitely better-off than the average cultivators of the area. They are always in search of increasing their landholding by accumulating the surplus of their products. Though the Santal are found to imbibe the tenacity and accumulative nature of the Mahato to some extent, they should be levelled in between Mahato and Bhumij. In the field of economic competition the Bhumij, Santal and other cultivator groups are lagging behind the Mahato (Sinha : 1962).

It is followed by the lowest level of economic initiative represented by the groups like Kharia, Pahira (hunters and food-gatherers) and the Kora, Orang Mudi, artisan groups like Dom, Mahali, Jolha, Tanti, Sahis, Kamar and most of the groups who earn by day-labour. They have neither the capacity to earn more to retain something as surplus nor the tendency to accumulate a portion of their earnings. They consume whatever they earn. I gathered at least 4 or 5 cases, where the Kora Mudi had substantial land-holdings which passed away from their hands after death of their father within a span of 10-15 years. They frankly admitted that they had consumed it (bikey-kiney kheyechi). Even now, I had found several cases, where a Kora sold out or lease out a portion
of their cultivable land in exchange of small cash amount to arrange son's marriage or to perform the post-funeral ceremony. Under the pressure of economic hardship, they were found not to hesitate even to sell their drought animals without thinking of the past. "Na peley bhokey thakbo", "We shall starve if we do not get anything to eat" - was the answer from a Kora in the form of casual remark. They were found not to think either of past or of the future. They were found to be busy with the present. It could be marked that they always try to tide over the present crisis and once it is overcomed they feel absolute psychological ease. In matters of taking loan, they were never found to think, how they would meet up this along with compound interest. Thus on ground of non-payment of loan, considerable amount of parental land has been passed away from the hands of the Kora.

The Kora who lead miserable life of "hand-to-mouth" existence, get little scope to indulge in luxury habits. Even then, they are spend-thrift and impulsive. They quite generously give alms to the Vaisnava initiators and the Brahmans who exploit the sentiment of these poor people. They are not so efficient cultivators like the Mahato, Bhumij, Santal, yet they give their whole-hearted energy to their cultivable lands. Rapid deforestation and reservation of forest by the Government, have left the Kora practically with no scope for hunting and gathering which require less technological skill and do not involve them to any sort of competition. The only source of their subsistence left before the Kora, is to earn by selling manual labour. It is quite interesting to note that the Kora do not cherish any ill or jealous feeling towards the other castes and they have accepted their low economic position quite ungrudgingly. According to local police report, not a single case has been recorded against the Kora participating in theft or robbery as yet.

11. ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP OF THE KORA WITH THE OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS IN THE REGION :

The following are the various kinds of economic relationship that exist between the Kora of Ragma and other social groups, within
and outside the village. The majority of these social groups are Hindus and speak Bengali.

The land-owning Kora of Ragma used to pay taxes for their respective plots to the Brahmin zamindars had the 'Brahmattor' tenure right over this village. At present, they pay taxes to the Revenue Department of the Government of West Bengal which has an office, namely, the Office of the Junior Land Reforms of Officer, at Barabazar. The Kora are at present coming in contact with the staff and officers of this office and also of the Settlement Department of the State Government through the important concern of land-holding. As we have discussed in one of earlier Chapters that the majority Kora of this village own small plots of cultivable lands and depend mainly on the earnings by selling their manual labour on daily wage basis. These Kora families work in the fields of some of the substantial agriculturist families of the Brahmin, Gop (Mondol), Gorain (Oil pressers), Mahato, Napit (Barbers) and the Dhoba (Washermen) castes. Most of the labourers have some fixed families whom they serve every year in cultivating the agricultural fields as well in other kinds of works like the repairing of the roof and walls of old huts, new construction of huts. They earn 2 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ seers of paddy and one full meal in the house of the employers or a cash remuneration of Re.1.25 to Re.1.75 P. (varying upon the demand for labourers) in exchange of their manual labour. They also move out of the village in search of day labour both in agricultural and non-agricultural vocations where the Kora come in contact with a good number of other castes. The Kora also migrate mainly in the months of Bhadra and Aswin (August-October) in the neighbouring districts of Bankura, Midnapore and in Dhanbad-Asansol coal mine areas to earn as casual labourers. A Kora male earns Re.1/- per day over there. Through this seasonal migration the Kora come in close socio-economic contact with various social groups. Though they cannot save any significant amount from their earnings over there, they carry along with them many sophisticated urban habits acquired during the period of their stay in the industrial areas.

Almost all the Kora families engage the young lads as bagal (cow-boy) in the houses of the rich cultivators in one year contract
to help in agricultural activities, namely of the following castes: the Brahmin, Gorain, Napit and Gop (Mondol) of the village. They have also send their boys to the houses of a few Brahmin families of Dumur-dih and Sankhari, a Napit family of Dumur-dih and a few Mahato families of Karmabera. They get § a maund of paddy for every bagal boy excluding the maintenance of the boy. This is interesting to note that a bagal boy is maintained by his master as a member of his family.

In the matter of share-cropping (bhag-chas) the Kora are found to be in contact with the land owners of the following castes:— the Kamar, Bagal and the Bhumij of Ragma, the Sahis and Bauri of Sankhari, Lohar Majhi and Tanti of Barabazar. Some of the Kora families who do not have sufficient man-power to cultivate their owned land, generally give them to bhag-chas preferably to their agnatic kins or to the landless Bagal families of the village. An amount of 18.79 acres of cultivable land of the Kora had been given to share-cropping during the year 1965-66.

In the dreadful month of Bhadra when they are put to tight corner owing to scarcity of employment, they try to tide over the crisis by taking paddy loan from the rich cultivators of the following castes of the village in lieu of high compound interest:— the Brahmin, Gop (Mondol), Gorain and the Napit. A few Moira and Marwari families of Barabazar town and also a few Brahmin families of Dumur-dih and Sankhari villages also offer such paddy loan. Some of them also take loan of seed-grains from the grain-gola of the Tribal Welfare Department situated at Barabazar and repay it after harvest with interest (at the rate of 2:1).

Under the pressure of adverse financial situation, some poor cultivators sometimes give a portion of their cultivable land under mortgage (bandhok) for a period ranging from 3 to 5 years in lieu of cash loan. During the 1965-66, a total amount of 1.37 acres of land of the Kora was found to be mortgaged to the rich Brahmin and Gop (Mondol) families of the village.

In the procurement of artifacts, we find that the Kora of Ragma generally buy all the necessary things from the weekly market.
at Barabazar on every Sunday. They purchase earthen pots, baskets, vegetables, oil, salt, napkin, cloths and all other necessary things from this weekly market lying about 1½ miles away. The permanent shops of various categories at Barabazar also cater to their needs. The Kora although occasionally bring their kitchen gardens products, broom-sticks of bamboo splits, *ghugi* (fishing trap), *kash* sticks, for sale in the weekly market. When they do not find any buyer in the market, they sell it them directly to some female traders of different villages, namely, a *Napit* of Bamundiha, a Santal of Bamni-dih, a Kumhar of Barabazar. It may be mentioned that the potter of Manpur, *Mahali* (big basket makers) of Rupapaita, *Dom* (small basket makers) of Barabazar, *Jolha* (Muslim weavers) of Barabazar and of Dhadanga and *Tanti* (Hindu weavers) of Rangtanr pay occasional visits to this village to hawk their produce. The two *Gorain* (oil pressers) families also supply different categories of oil to the Kora Mudi in their special needs. The Mudi families of Ragma take the help of the two *Kamar* (blacksmiths) who live in their hamlet, in order to procure or repair their iron implements. They pay them either in cash or in kind (paddy) in lieu of their service. A Kamar gets from each of the fixed client families 20 seers of paddy per plough. In the case of preparing new implements, the supply of iron must be made by the party concerned. Iron is usually purchased in the weekly market.

Besides the above-mentioned group, the Kora also come in contact with the following castes through the procurement of their products in the weekly market:— the *Chhutor* (carpenters), *Sunri* (wine distillers and wine sellers), *Ghunia* (fish sellers), *Muchi* (leather workers), *Jugi* (woolen weavers), *Bagti* (*chida* sellers), *Moira* (sweet-meat sellers).

The Kora Mudi also attend other weekly markets of the neighbourhood, particularly in ceremonial occasions:— Balarampur weekly market (specially for the purchase of livestock and poultry birds) and Bamundiha.

Beside the material transactions, these weekly markets serve as the meeting places for different castes. The Kora Mudi come in
contact with not only farming communities and artisan groups but also with the relatives, friends, government officials, political leaders. Their mutual exchange of thoughts and goodwill is by no means limited to mere impersonal economic transactions. They also pick up the current political trends, in which they are also involved, in such common meeting ground. The offering of country-made cigarettes (bidi), betel, and country liquor to the friends and relatives at the time of gossiping is also marked. The picking up friendship with some girls at the market place is not uncommon among the Kora of Ragma.