

CHANGING AGRARIAN STRUCTURE IN BANGLADESH

SHIMULIA: A STUDY OF A PERIURBAN VILLAGE

by

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology in the Graduate School of Syracuse University

August 1983



Approved

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August 19, 1983



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ABSTRACT

This monograph examines the process of change in agrarian structure in a village in Bangladesh. The locale of this study is Shimulia, a village near Dhaka and its industrial belt. It is situated within the site of the Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra (D.N.D.) irrigation project which transformed agriculture to intensive wet-rice cultivation. Among the factors responsible for these changes, the most important were the partition of India in 1947, the decline of the jāmdānī industry, the communal riot of 1964, the increase of land productivity by over 200 percent, the inflow of urban investments in land, the birth of Bangladesh, and finally the subsequent scarcity. These have brought about radical changes in agrarian structure and its improved relations.

Investigation of the social organization shows the following modifications. Kinship organization is weak and increasingly replaced by class relationships.

Analysis of village land tenure over a period of 33 years (1945-1978) supported my conclusion. After the communal riot (1964) a non-traditional Muslim landowning class emerged. It is characterized by entrepreneurial behavior. Its members consider agriculture to be a commercial enterprise, inviting technological inputs as well as employing wage laborers for high production. This class now produces surpluses.

Author : 22.4.93.

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channelled into the acquisition of additional acreage as well as in diversified businesses. After the riot, the inflow of investments in Shimulia land took place through a group of speculators from Dhaka who bought vacated Hindu lands at exceedingly low prices through the help of local rich farmers as middlemen. As a result, (1) a close alliance developed between the village rich and urban landowners, (2) new tenancy relationships arose, and (3) a market wage labor emerged.

I project that this village will lose its identity in the not too distant future and merge into the greater Dhaka urban complex.



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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this monograph is to examine the process of change with regard to agrarian structure in a village in Bangladesh. The locale of this study is Shimulia (pseudonym), a village near Dhaka city. The time period covered is 33 years, from 1945-1978.

A study of the agrarian structure of one village will enable me to formulate guidelines for understanding the agrarian problems of Bangladesh. In addition to providing a detailed ethnography of a seldom studied area, this research will contribute to the growing literature on agrarian problems in South Asia.

Study of Agrarian Structure in the Subcontinent

The study of agrarian structure in the Indian subcontinent by sociologists and anthropologists began in the late 60s. Beteille (1974) was among the first who gave serious thought to the study of the agrarian structure of Indian society from an anthropological point of view. While studying a South Indian village Beteille (1971) noticed the transformation of land into a commodity, creating a change in the relationship between caste and agrarian hierarchy. He investigated the population of his research village from two points of view. First, from caste relations, such as Brahmin, non-Brahmin and Adi-Dravidas. Second, he examined the class relations among land owners, tenants and agricultural laborers. He analyzed the process of change with respect

to agrarian relations in these two systems of hierarchy. Later, Beteille attempted some theoretical formulations of agrarian structure. Although he avoided defining agrarian structure, he pointed to "ownership", "control," and the "use of land" as focal points in studying agrarian structure, and defined agrarian hierarchy as the production process, based on family labor, wage labor, and tenancy (1974: 25).

Alavi (1973) dealt with the issue of agrarian relations in the context of Pakistan. He observed three classes of people operating within a dominant mode of production. These classes are rich, middle, and poor peasants. Their class positions are structurally different from each other. He is cautious enough to point out that the class categories overlap and their distinction is not clear and sharp because of the slow growth of the capitalist mode of production which coexists with several other modes of production.

It is pertinent, in this context, to mention that studies of agrarian structure in the Indian subcontinent have generated a debate on the question of mode of production in agriculture, particularly among Marxists social scientists. Various scholars made an attempt to assess the nature and significance of structural changes that came in the wake of agricultural transformations following the Green Revolution in the subcontinent.

In the Indian context Patnaik (1971a; 1971b; 1976) has designated this transformation as the emergence of the capitalistic mode of production as she has noticed a small but growing segment of rich farmers who use agriculture as a business enterprise. The growth of

rich farmers also accentuated the polarization process, generating two opposing classes which she termed capitalists and rural wage laborers. Unlike Patnaik, Bhaduri (1973) and Chandra (1974) termed the mode of production semi-feudal, since the tenants are dependent on land owners and perennially indebted to the latter. Bhaduri and Chandra also point out that the poor farmers do not have access to the markets since they operate outside the market process.

Alavi (1975), on the other hand, has termed the mode of production colonial, a "deformed" capitalist mode dependent on and subordinate to the metropolitan center.

In Bangladesh, investigations in the process of social change have generated a debate similar to the Indian context. One group, represented by Westergaard (1978), Abdullah et al. (1976), and Abdullah (1979), designate the mode of production semi-feudal and the other group Rahman (1972), Wood (1977) and Jahangir (1978, 1977) identify the mode of production capitalistic.

Agrarian Studies in Bangladesh

There is at this time a fair number of completed studies on agrarian structure in Bangladesh (Bertocci 1970, 1972; Wood 1976, 1978; Arens and Van Beurden 1977; Chowdhury 1978; Jahangir 1978, 1979; Westergaard 1978; and Hossain 1979). In addition, there are two earlier studies -- one in the 40s (Mukherjee 1971), one in the 60s (Qadir 1960). Mukherjee studied six villages of Bogra district in Bangladesh from a historical perspective. He first studied these villages in 1942, and later he revisited them in 1945, after the famine of 1943. Mukherjee traced the agrarian structure back to 1922 to assess those changes in agrarian

relations. He noticed the differentiation between two economic classes was intensifying, leading to polarization. Mukherjee states that:

The specific feature of the change in the economic structure during 1942-44 the differentiation has been further accentuated leading to a sharp polarization The slightly inflated group at the top, which controls the vast mass of people at the bottom, is being swelled more and more and is having a gradually weaker link through the middle layer (1960:187).

This observation is significant in demonstrating patterns of economic change through a "disturbed" period. He noticed that the disturbed period (the famine of 1943) had made the rich peasant richer and the poor peasant poorer, a malise known from many other regions around the world.

Qadir (1960) made a longitudinal study in Comilla district showing changes in agrarian relationships over a period of three generations. His observations, however, are simplistic since they merely demonstrate a trend toward the loss of lands by two-thirds of the village population. He claims that this was partly due to demographic change and the operation of inheritance rules resulting in the fragmentation and subdivision of holdings. He predicts these trends would cause serious problems to the overall economy of the country unless measures were taken to forestall and counter them.

Bertocci (1970; 1972) studied two villages in Comilla district and showed that landholding follows cyclical patterns resembling "cyclical kulakism". By this, he means that landholding in this Comilla village has been based variably on Islamic laws of inheritance, ecological factors, and the impact of mortgages. As a result, it appears that "class" (economic category) and "status" (titled groups with high status) in the Weberian sense have been moving in repetitive

the other hand, found in his study of two villages the presence of capitalism based on a commodity economy and, unlike Wood, found capital from agriculture was being used in productive processes through investment in agriculture as well as in urban finances. While Wood designates differentiation as a pauperization, Jahangir identifies differentiation as a polarization process among the peasant classes. He also has stated that post independence inflation, the application of modern technical inputs, investments and reinvestments of capital in agriculture as well as in the urban sector, have hastened the polarization process in rural Bangladesh.

Abdullah, Hossain and Nations (1976) have delineated some important features of the agrarian structure of Bangladesh. They have noticed the development of market principles in agriculture since farming has been treated as a business venture through the increased use of wage laborers. They point out that these features have emerged due to the increased use of modern inputs in agriculture in the form of irrigation facilities, improved seeds, chemical fertilizers and credit, cooperatives, etc., all of which help in the formation of a new type of farmer. Since the social formation is feudalistic, they think this has arrested the growth of true capitalism in the rural areas.

Arens and Van Beurden (1977) have studied the agrarian structure of a village in Kushtia district. Unlike Comilla and Dhaka districts, the agrarian structure here has retained some feudal traits, particularly the higher landholding range of the rich peasants. They noticed a greater number of share-croppers in Kushtia village than in the villages of Comilla and Dhaka. They also noticed capitalistic trends in agriculture following the independence of Bangladesh with high inflation,

scarcity, and application of more and more inputs in agriculture. As a result, they have found a decline in share-cropping.

Westergaard (1978) in her study of the village of Bogra has observed pauperization, not polarization. She looks at Bogra agrarian relationships from an historic perspective by showing that Mukerjee's landholding data support her point of view, viz that an overall pauperization has been continuing. Westergaard contradicts her thesis on pauperization as she points out that richer families have been involved in various businesses which indicates that the rich peasants have been able to keep their surpluses.

Chowdhury (1978) studied a village in Dhaka district with a view to social stratification. He discussed agrarian relationships but his main focus of interest was social stratification. According to him, in his village the khāndāns among the Muslims, and the upper castes among the Hindus control most land of the village. The girhastā (small peasants) work as share-croppers and kāmlā as landless laborers for the landowners in the village. His functional stance regarding agrarian relationships does not provide us with useful data about changes in agrarian relationships due to the partition of India in 1947, the abolition of zamindari in 1951 and birth of Bangladesh in 1971. Despite these occurrences, his study shows there has been little or no change with regard to agrarian structure in his research village.

Hossain (1979) has studied tenancy markets in Bangladesh by drawing data from two areas -- Mymensingh and Dinajpur districts -- to understand the patterns of share-cropping in those areas. His observations indicate that share-cropping in Bangladesh is exploitative in nature. For example, land owners rent out their land

mostly to marginal farmers who have to sharecrop because of the pressures to meet the expenditures of their families; therefore, the small farmers have little bargaining scope in the tenancy markets. He also observed that land parcellization has been pervasive, which has curtailed the bargaining scope of the tenants. Hossain found that overall share-cropping in his research areas is declining as the landowners prefer to manage their lands themselves by employing wage and migrant laborers. Such preferences are due largely to high profit accrued from agriculture through the application of modern inputs.

In the above discussion, I have tried to distill agrarian problems from the significant works on this issue to observe the trends of change in agrarian structure in Bangladesh and the positions taken by various authors.

Field Work

I was in the village for 12 months: from July 1977 - August 1978. I was introduced to Shimulia village through a friend. Shimulia is his native village, and his reference helped me to obtain an entry. My friend arranged for me to live with his family and I stayed there throughout my field work. His high social status (khāndānī), higher education and high ranking government job gave him a special esteem in the village. Similarly, by virtue of my relationship with him, I was also esteemed by the villagers. This helped me tremendously to establish rapport with them regardless of their class positions. It should be mentioned that my friend's class position did not interfere with my access to different classes of people. For example, my participation with villagers in their activities allowed me to be

very close to them (see below). Interestingly, I had more access to the poor than to the rich although I was identified with the rich. Even though I was identified with the rich, the poor people accepted and seemed to perceive my empathy toward them. Likewise, the rich people understood that my relationships with the poor would never jeopardize their own class interests. Hence I was able to associate freely among all villagers regardless of class.

The methodology I used was participant observation along with a variety of other techniques. Systematic efforts were made during my stay to participate in all aspects of the daily life of the village. I talked, made friends, gossiped, and ate with high and low. I inquired about their life patterns, participated in the seasonal cycles of their agricultural activities, watched with them the sunrise and sunset. As a result, I internalized the cycle of daily life in Shimulia village, enabling me to understand the people and their culture. At the same time, I retained an outsider's perspective toward understanding the social phenomena in the village.

Interview and Conversation

Oral information was obtained from a number of informants. Frequently I directed the conversation in accordance with my own interests. On many occasions I simply listened to the flow of conversation of the villagers. I found these techniques very useful. In the evening I wrote down my daily interactions and experiences with a longing for tomorrow's surprises. In addition, I collected valuable information through formal interviews with prominent and old people of the village concerning different areas such as village history, politics, land tenure,

agriculture, and social change. In this connection, I should mention here that my friend's father (who died recently) educated me about village agriculture and its changes following the D.N.D.¹ irrigation project.

Study of Village Kinship

I made a systematic effort to collect data on village kinship covering 22 patrilineages in Shimulia. I constructed the history of 22 patrilineages of the village through interviewing leading persons of individual patrilineages. Kinship data not only provided information on Shimulia Muslim social organization, but also on village history and recent changes in the social and economic organization of the village. History of patrilineages provided me with a broad historical perspective of social and economic organization of the village.

Village Census

I conducted a census by employing a structured questionnaire to gather basic information about family, age, sex, landholding, tenancy relationships, livestock, assets and liabilities and the occupations of family members. In the census, I covered the whole village including the Hindu and Natunpārā people, although my primary focus of study was the Muslims of Shimulia.

Study of Village Land Tenure

The collection of land tenure data in the village was difficult. It is also a very sensitive issue for the rich. At first, I made a few visits to the tehsil office (revenue) with the hope that all information

¹Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra Irrigation Project. The project was completed in 1968 at a total cost of one million dollars (IDA credit) to irrigate 1500 acres of land.

relating to village land tenure would be available. However, facts in the tehsil office were scattered and disorganized, so it was very difficult even to identify what I wanted to collect. My primary aim in this regard was to construct the land tenure history of the village. Upon failing in this effort, I tried to gather information on village land tenure history by interviewing people. For example, when interviewing and talking to people, I discovered that they had sound knowledge about village landholdings. I found that most individuals could remember clearly the transfer and transactions of land from one person to another for quite a long period. Thus, I selected six prominent persons of the village whom I considered very knowledgeable regarding village lands. I gathered information with the help of the mouza (revenue area) map. Pointing to a single plot of land on the mouza map, I asked my informants to explain its history with reference to the transfer of ownership over the years. In this way, I collected information on 80 percent of the plots of land in the village. I could not gather data on the remaining 20 percent as their owners were from the neighboring villages.

In late August, 1978, my field work was done. It was painful for me to leave the villagers and it was equally painful for them to leave me. I had become a member of the village. To me, they are part of my life. Back in Syracuse, I often think of Shimulia; a village where I stayed for a year, a place where, nostalgically, I think I belong.

Significance of This Study

A few words should be said about the significance of the present dissertation. With regard to the overall research carried out on agrarian problems in South Asia, Bangladesh is the least studied area.

This is equally true for anthropological research in this region. Hopefully, this study will contribute to our knowledge of the changing kinship organization, land tenure and class structure in rural Bangladesh. This study will also serve practical purposes for planners and policy makers of the country who are seeking to understand the changing nature of the rural society of Bangladesh.

Organization of the Study

The study has been divided into six chapters. Chapter I is the introduction to the dissertation. Chapter II provides the background information of the village, particularly the ecological and social spheres. Chapter III discusses the social organization of the village. It focuses on the basic elements of social organization such as gōsthī, bañśa, status designations, family, marriage and supra-kinship organization like samāj, and also on the changing kinship relation in the village. Chapter IV provides cases of 22 gōsthī of Shimulia to give a historic perspective as well as their present day operation in kinship organization. Chapter V deals with the overall land tenure problems of the village since 1945 with particular reference to shifting patterns of land ownership in the village following (1) the partition of India in 1947, (2) the communal riot of 1964, (3) the advent of modern inputs in agriculture, (4) the independence of Bangladesh, and (5) the post-independence famine and inflation. In chapter VI, the conclusion, I have summarized the findings of this study with regard to the process of change in Shimulia.

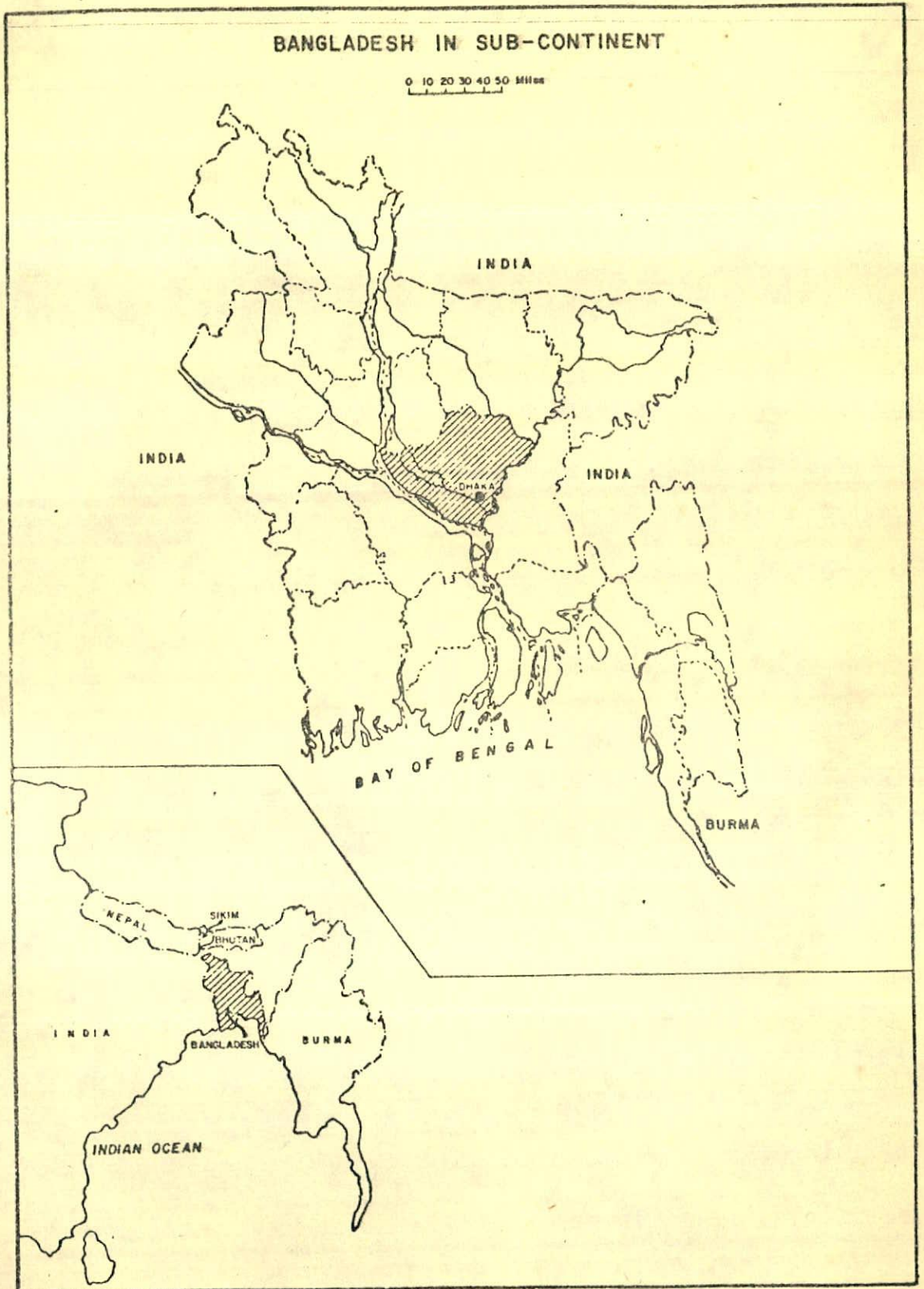
Chapter II

SHIMULIA VILLAGE: THE ECOLOGICAL AND
SOCIAL BACKGROUNDLocation

Shimulia is a village near Dhaka City; situated in the Dhaka sadar south subdivision, it is under the Demra Police Station and Matuail Union Parisad.¹ The village is six miles to the southeast of Dhaka city, and one mile to the west of Sarulia Bazar (see Map 2). Formerly, Sarulia Bazar was a closely adjacent village like Shimulia inhabited by local people, but at present its major inhabitants are mill workers hailing from different parts of Bangladesh. The Bazar in Sarulia opens daily in the morning and evening. In addition, there are two hāt (market days) days held each week which attract people from surrounding villages to buy their weekly supplies. A second nearby Bāzār is Demra. This locale is known for jāmdānī sarī.²

¹ Name of the local governing body in Bangladesh.

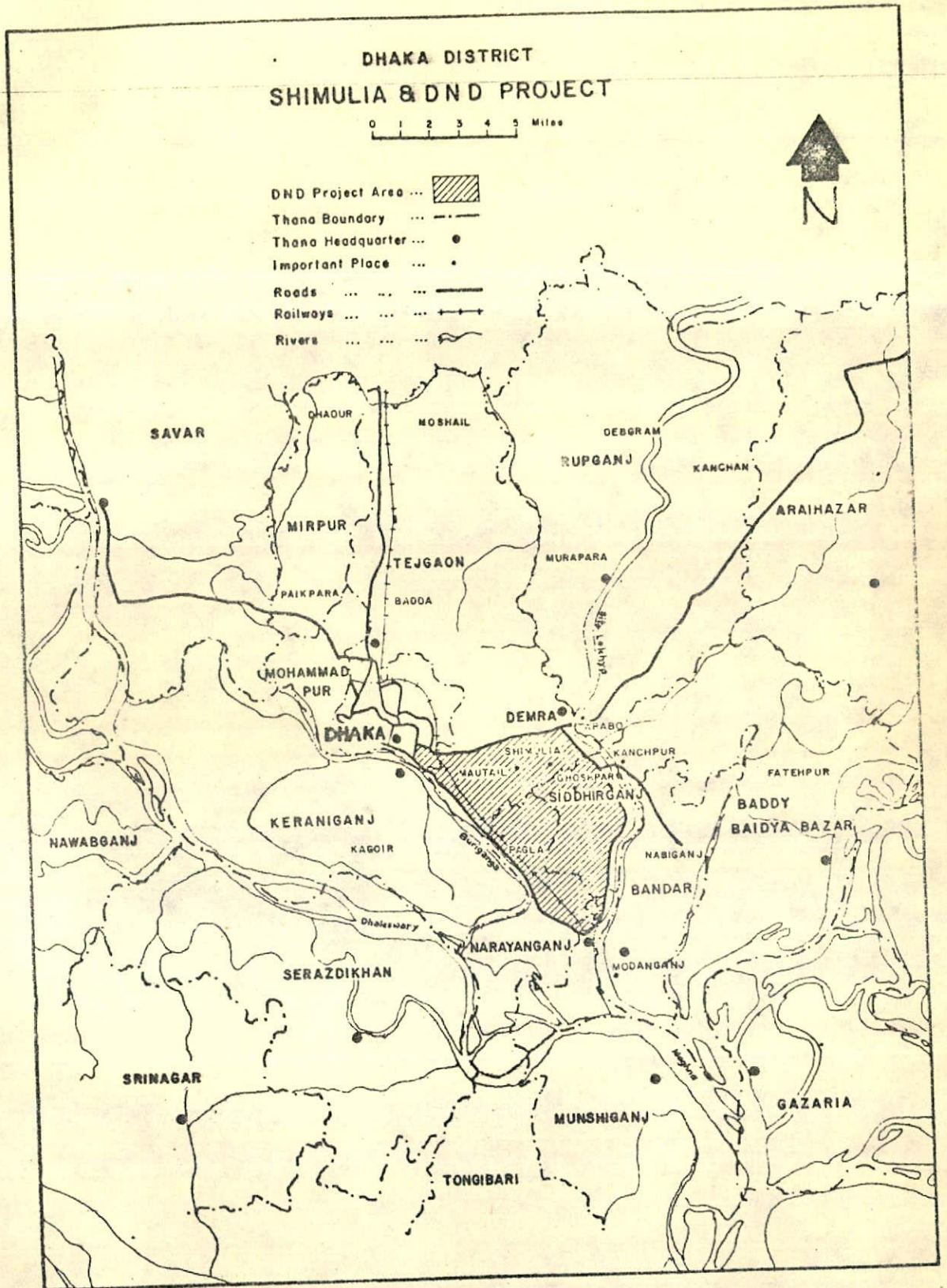
² Jāmdānī or figured muslin is a kind of cloth which has been produced since the second or third century A.D. in the region which now comprises Dhaka District. The intricacy and fineness of the Dhaka Muslin is lauded in different accounts. Even the Ain-i-Akbari mentions the flourishing muslin industry in Dhaka and noted its extraordinary quality. It is said that the royal courts of Europe used to import muslin clothes from Dhaka. The Mughal emperors patronized this industry highly. Rizvi (1975), the author of the Bangladesh District Gazetteers, Dhaka, relates this story of the Dhaka muslin industry. He quotes: "The excellence of Dacca muslins can to a certain extent be judged from the oft quoted story of a daughter of Aurangzeb being reproved by the emperor for appearing naked before him when she had no less than seven folds of this cloth on her body." (Rizvi 1975: 191). The muslin industry flourished in this region because of the humid climate and the availability of a fine quality of spinning cotton. Two factors which contributed directly to the decline of the muslin industry are: (1) capture of the market by machine-made yarn and cloth from England, and (2) the British Government's deliberate policy of destroying the muslin industry so that it could popularize its cotton clothes produced in the mills and factories in England. It is said that the British Government adopted the most inhuman method of chopping off the hands of weavers so they could not manufacture muslin anymore. Although the Dhaka muslin of old days is no longer in existence, the art is not lost. For a history of the muslin industry in Dhaka, see Taylor (1851); Allen (1912); Rizvi (1975).



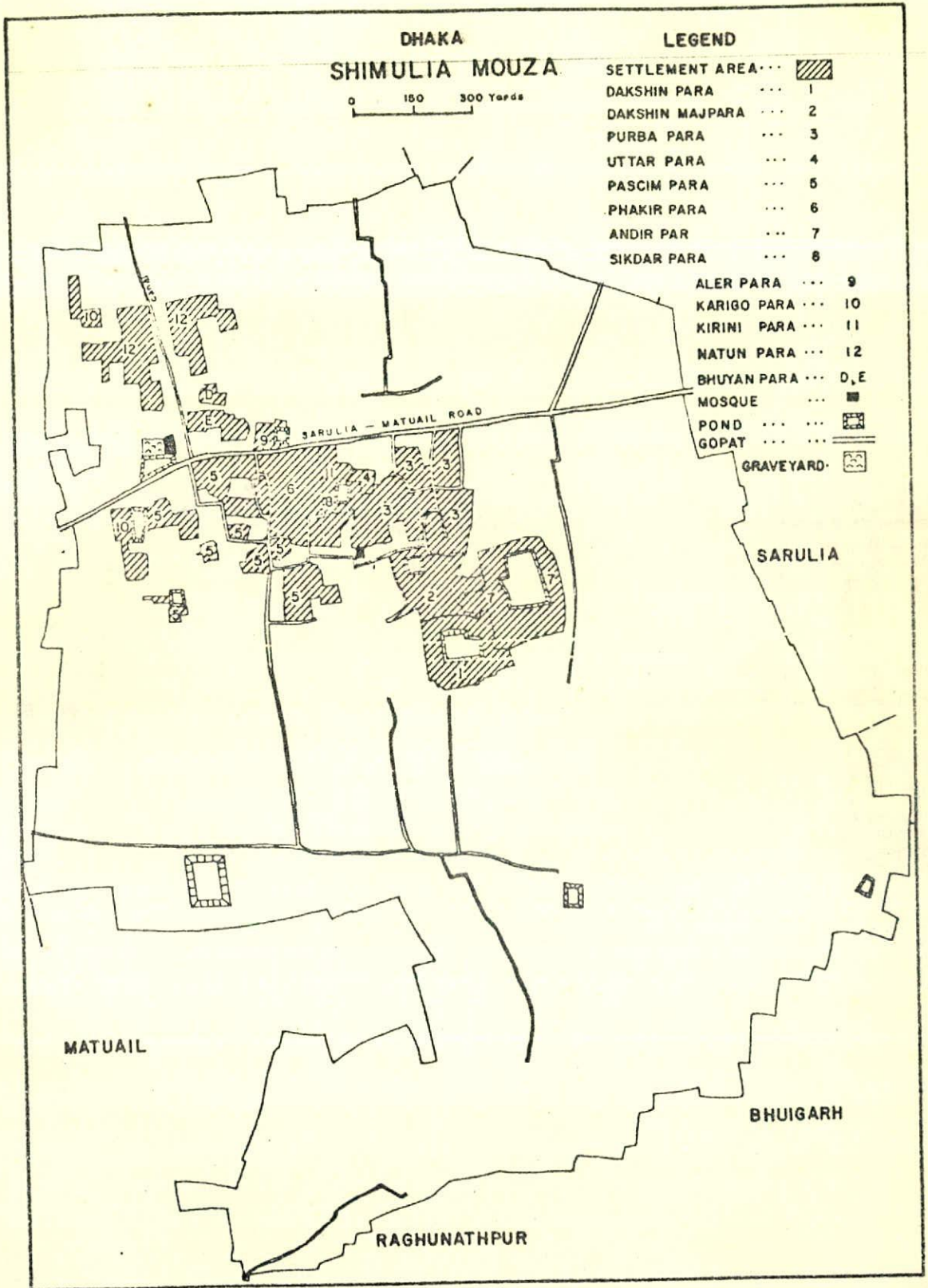
MAP 1

The village can be approached by an unpaved road from Sarulia Bazar which runs through the village toward the west and culminates at Matuail, the village next to Shimulia. This road was once a hāloṭ (village road), and at the time of my investigation, the work of brick laying had been started on the Sarulia end of the road. It is expected that the road will be completely paved in the next two years. The road passes through the northern edge of the housing area so that almost the entire area lies to the south of the road. Only the village graveyard (kabarstān), the western pārā mosque, the Aler pārā, a physical unit, a few bārī belonging to the Bhuiyan gōsthī 1 and 2 (gōsthī D and E, see Chapter IV) and Natunpārā are on the northern side of the Sarulia-Matuail road (see Map 3).

The Dhaka-Chittagong highway lies a mile to the north of the village, and runs east before taking a sharp turn at Demra ferry station to the south of Siddirganj power station. Again, upon reaching the Siddirganj power station, the Dhaka-Chittagong highway takes another sharp turn to the east to the newly constructed bridge over the river Lakhya. A branch of the Dhaka-Chittagong highway continues south from Siddirganj toward Narayanganj (a subdivisional headquarters and a river port) via the Adamjee jute mill. The village can be approached from the Dhaka-Chittagong highway at a place called Deilla which is about a mile to the north of the village. A mud road meanders through the village of Bamail originating from Deilla and heading toward Shimulia. Many villagers take this road to catch the bus at Deilla for Dhaka city.



MAP 2



MAP 3

south pārā), (iii) Pūrba pārā (eastern para), (iv) Uttar pārā, (v) Pascim pārā (western para), (vi) Phakir pārā (pārā of phakir gōṣṭhī), (vii) Āndir pār (lit. bank of a big tank: pārā on the bank of big tank), (viii) Sikdār pārā, (x) Karego pārā, (xi) Kirinī pārā and (xii) Natun pārā (new para). People of the village identify the localities using these names.

In Shimulia, the concentrations of the Hindu and Muslim population varies from pārā to pārā. For example, the Muslims of Shimulia are heavily concentrated in eastern pārā, northern pārā, Aler pārā, Sikdār pārā, Phakir pārā, Karego pārā whereas the Hindu population are concentrated in mājh Dakhsin pārā, Āndir pār and part of Pascim pārā (see Map 3). Recently some Muslim families have moved into some of the Hindu localities because of the latter's migration to India. It seems, moreover, that the penetration of Muslims into areas with pure Hindu majorities is increasing.

Shimulia village has two mosques, a primary school, and a high school. The older mosque is situated in the eastern part of the village and was built during the early part of the century by a powerful member of the Shoud patrilineage. The other mosque was constructed in 1972 and is located in the western part of the village. The village graveyard stands very close to this mosque. Both mosques are located on raised land and tanks adjoin them. People use the tanks mainly for ritual ablutions, although some villagers use them for bathing and washing. Both mosques have some land left by the founders of these mosques as wakf⁵ property for their maintenance.

⁵ when a Muslim dedicates certain property for any purpose recognized by the Muslim Law as religious, pious or charitable.

The primary and high schools are located in mājh Dakhsin pāā. The primary school is old and was established in 1935, while the high school was founded in 1973. These schools draw students mostly from Shimulia village.

Climate

Shimulia has the same climatic conditions as the city of Dhaka. It is hot and humid most of the year: the maximum temperature recorded in Dhaka district is 108°F, the minimum 41°F, and the average 78.2°F. The maximum rainfall is 103.68 inches, the minimum 47.13, while the average is 73.36 inches a year.

Table 1
Monthly Rainfall, Temperature and Relative Humidity*
Temperature (°F)

Months	Normal Rainfall (inches)	Maximum Temp.	Minimum Temp.	Mean Temp.	Mean for Month Relative Humidity (%)
January	0.33	87	43	65.5	75.5
February	1.8	95	41	69.9	69.8
March	2.45	103	50	79.3	63.5
April	5.18	108	54	85.7	72.3
May	9.67	108	56	84.6	82.0
June	13.30	99	62	83.3	87.1
July	12.74	97	72	83.5	88.0
August	13.20	100	60	83.5	89.3
September	9.54	97	68	83.2	87.9
October	4.74	102	53	80.8	84.7
November	0.83	100	48	72.9	79.8
December	0.20	86	42	66.4	82.5

* The above data were computed on the basis of records for 1958-62. The temperature extremes are based on longer periods. Reported by Rizvi (1975) the author of the Bangladesh District Gazetteers, Dhaka (5-6).

Seasons

The Muslims of Shimulia follow the Bengali calendar with regard to agricultural activities and follow the Islamic lunar calendar only for ritual purposes. Mill workers, urban workers, students and educated people also use the Gregorian (western) calendar. Quite commonly, a person uses three calendars interchangeably.

There are six seasons in Bangladesh, each extending over two months. The first season in the Bengali calendar is grīśma or summer. This begins around the 15th of April and lasts until the 15th of June. Boiśākh and joistha are the two Bengali months which constitute grīśma kāl (summer time). This season is very hot and humid. At times, the temperature goes above one hundred degrees. This is also the season of storms and cyclones. When the temperature becomes unbearable, the ensuing atmospheric depression results in cyclones associated with rains. This is called kāl boiśākhī. After these storms, people get a little relief from the oppressive heat. This is the mango season. Each family has one or two mango trees and people also buy mangos from the market. In Shimulia, grīśma kāl or summer is one of the busiest seasons of the year. Early summer brings the harvesting of the borō crops which were sown in late autumn and early winter. Then, in the late summer, the farmers sow the āuśā (summer paddy) crop.

Barṣā, the rainy season, comes as a relief after the oppressive summer. Aṣār and Srābon (15th June-15th August) are the two months which constitute barṣā kāl. During this season the sky remains cloudy and rains are continuous. Before the D.N.D. project most of the village lands were flooded and the homesteads looked like little islands. In

those days the only means of communication from one homestead to another and from one village to another was by boat. With the flood control project, the land in Shimulia rarely becomes inundated. With the onset of barṣā, the soil of Shimulia becomes muddy, sticky and slippery. One has to walk very cautiously for slight carelessness may cause one to slip and fall. Also, during the barṣā the ponds of the village become full, and the water becomes clear. The whole community turns green as it were. With the coming of barṣā kāl, the temperature drops a little, but the humidity increases (see Table 1), resulting in dampness. The early barṣā kāl is a slack time, but the late rainy season is busy for Shimulia farmers as they begin sowing and harvesting the āman (winter paddy) and auśa crops, respectively.

The end of barṣā kāl brings sarat kāl, or early autumn, starting with the month of bhādra and ending with āssin (middle of August-middle of October). This is the season of clear skies. Although it still rains, it never continues without let up as in the rainy season. The first month of sarat kāl is bhādra. During sarat kāl, farmers sow the āman crop and continue harvesting the auś crop.

After sarat kāl comes hemanta kāl or late autumn which extends from the middle of October to the middle of December. This is a relatively cool period. The Bengali months of kārtik and agrahan constitute this season. It is dry with little or no rain. The roads and paths of the village remain dry and there is no sign of mud anywhere in the village. The early hemanta kāl is not a busy period for Shimulia people. During this time, the paddy starts to ripen and the farmers get ready for the harvest. The late hemanta is the busy period as the harvest of the āman is going on in full swing.

With the conclusion of hemanta kāl, comes śīt kāl or winter. This is the driest and coolest season of the year. Powṣ and māgh are the months which constitute śīt kāl. Powṣ is one of the busiest months in Shimulia. In the month of Powṣ people are busy harvesting their āman crop. At the same time, they sow the āuś crop. Nevertheless, people have a relaxed attitude. Even the poor people have a good time because they need not worry about food. Even the villagers who usually have difficulty providing one rice meal a day can have two meals. The women of the village celebrate by preparing different kinds of sweets and piṭhā (cakes). During this period, all are busy threshing, drying and storing crops.

Basanta kāl or spring comes after the conclusion of winter. The months of phālgun and coitra constitute basanta kāl. With the onset of spring in Shimulia, the temperature starts to rise. This is a slack period. Farmers have little work in the field. During the later part of this season villagers become somewhat more active in harvesting their rabi crops. The seasonal cycle concludes with the end of basanta kāl.

Historical Background

There was little information available about the history of Shimulia. The present statement about the history of Shimulia is based on information obtained from ethnographic materials such as kinship, politics, the jāmdānī industry, and village land records. Also, I have collected bits and pieces of material for the village history while talking to informants.

It appears that the village originated from the silts of a river about 500 years ago, which the villagers vaguely recall as Knagṣa.

Table 2: Seasonal Cycles and Agricultural Activities in Shimulia

Season in Bengali	English Equivalent	Bengali Months	Months in Western calendar	Agricultural Activities (Men)	Agricultural Activities (Eomen)
<u>Griṣma</u>	Summer	Boiśakh & Joisṭha	Mid-April - Mid-June	Harvesting <u>bōrō</u> and sowing <u>āuśā</u> crop. Also involved in thrashing paddy.	Post-harvest <u>bōrō</u> crop: threshing paddy, drying, tending, help men, storing, etc.; cooking for agricultural laborers.
<u>Barṣā</u>	Rainy Season	Āṣār & Śrabon	Mid-June - Mid-August	In <u>āṣār</u> , farmers sow seeds for seedlings for transplanting <u>āman</u> . In <u>Śrabon</u> , farmers transplant <u>āman</u> crop and harvest <u>āuśā</u> crop.	Busy drying, tending, storing paddy, etc. Also help men in the preparation of seedlings for transplant paddy.
<u>Sarat</u>	Early Autumn	Bhādra & Āssin	Mid-August - Mid-October	<u>Āuśā</u> harvest continues. <u>Āman</u> transplantation continues till <u>bhādra</u> ; in <u>āssin</u> farmers are involved in weeding <u>āman</u> crop.	Meal preparation for agricultural laborers; drying, tending, storing; etc. of paddy.
<u>Hemanta</u>	Late Autumn	Kārtik & Āgarahan	Mid-October - Mid-December	In early <u>kārtik</u> weeding <u>āman</u> crop; harvest of some <u>āman</u> ; sowing <u>rabi</u> crops; in <u>āgrahan</u> farmers harvest <u>āman</u> crop; sow seeds for seedlings for planting <u>āuśā</u> crop.	Meal preparation for agricultural laborers; help men in post-harvest activities such as threshing paddy. Drying, tending, storing paddy, etc. Help men in preparing seedlings for <u>āuśā</u> crop.
<u>Śit</u>	Winter	Pōw' & Māgh	Mid-December - Mid-February	Harvest <u>āman</u> crop, transplanting <u>āuśā</u> crop, tending <u>rabi</u> crops.	Help men in post-harvesting <u>āman</u> threshings, help men in preparing seedlings and transplanting <u>āuśā</u> crop, drying, husking, storing, etc. of <u>rabi</u> crop.
<u>Basanta</u>	Spring	Phālgun & Coitra	Mid-February - Mid-April	Weeding <u>āuśā</u> crop; preparation of seedlings for transplanting <u>āman</u> harvest of <u>rabi</u> crop.	Meal preparation for agricultural laborers; help men prepare seedlings for <u>āman</u> , drying, husking, storing, etc. of <u>rabi</u> crops.

I have found historical support for the villagers' contention that Shimulia was once under a river bed. Bhattasali (1936) found out from the Mirza Nathan's⁶ account that one of the branches of the present day Buriganga which met the Lakhya at Khizirpur flowed over the area which is presently the northern part of Narayanganj. I suspect that this erstwhile river covered the present day Shimulia area. I have found Mirza Nathan's account consistent with the villagers' contention that Shimulia lands were under the river bed. Bhattasali makes the following observation (from *Bharistan-i-Ghaibi*) regarding the river system of the locality;

There is no mention of the Buriganga, which is the present name of the river on which Dacca stands. The old name of the river was Dulai and in the absence of contemporary evidence, it is impossible to decide if the name Buriganga was known. Buriganga now makes a sharp turn towards southwest from Fatullah (old Dhapa) (i.e., from the point at which it turned towards Khizirpur) and joins the Dhaleswari. There are good reasons to hold that this outlet is a later growth and did not exist when Islam Khan came and occupied Dhaka (1606). The river on which Dhaka stands emptied itself into Lakshya by two mouths, one falling at Khizirpur, the northern part of the present Narayanganj; the other at Demra, about four miles up (Bhattasali 1936: 504-51).

This highlights the deltaic character of the Bangladesh river system with constant changes of river courses leading to continuous migration of the population.⁷ In fact, half the Muslim gōṣṭhī

⁶The author of *Baharistani-i-Ghaybi* which is the history of the Mughal wars in Assam, Cooch Behar, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa during the rule of Jahangir and Shah Jahan. The author himself was an admiral under the Mughal governor of Bengal, Islam Khan, who later became a mendicant by renouncing the world. Nathan's account reflects some interesting facts with regard to the history of Dhaka city and its rivers and canals. His account strongly suggests that Shimulia village was once under a riverbed. For details see Nathan (1936).

⁷An excellent account of the migration of people in Bengal during the 17th and 18th centuries is found in Heather Kathaleen Ion's thesis Some Aspects of Religion and Culture in Bengal. An Historical Study of Relation Between Rituals and Dangers. Unpublished doctoral thesis, Faculty of Anthropology and Geography, University of Oxford. The author based her research on ethno-historical material. For details see Ion (n.d.).

(patrilineage) of Shimulia migrated from other places within Dhaka district. I will discuss this matter in the chapter on village gōṣṭhī in operation (Chapter IV).

Unfortunately, I was able to gather little information on the history of the first settlement of the village. Some ethnographic and historical sources do enlighten us about more recent events. The people of Shimulia, both Hindus and Muslims, were not bhadralōk⁸ (lit. respectable/gentleman) in the formative stage of the settlement. The village notes of 1912-1915 report: "There are no Bhadroloks either Hindus or Muhammadans residing in the mouza". In fact, the Muslims and Hindus of Shimulia belonged to the lower rungs of society. The Muslim population of the village belonged primarily to occupational groups of weavers who worked in the jāmdānī and kāsida industries. Data on Muslim societies of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan show that weavers as an occupational group have always been low socially and are commonly known as jolah.⁹

⁸ At the beginning of the 20th century in Bengal, there emerged a dominant elite who were recognized as superior in social status by the common people. These people were the bhadralōk, literally the "respectable people", the gentlemen. These people were distinguished by their style of life including speech, dress, housing, eating habits, occupations and their associations. Broomfield (1968: 13) estimated that in 1900, the bhadralōk constituted 3 to 4 percent of Bengal's population of between 1,300,000 and 1,700,000 people. See Broomfield 1968.

⁹ Most of the materials on the Muslim population in the subcontinent show that weavers, commonly known as jolah, are considered to hold a low status occupation. The decennial Census Reports from 1872-1931 amply mention this fact. A similar notion is found in major ethnographies of the Muslims of India. For details, see Ansari 1960; Barth 1960, Bertocci n.d.; Karim 1961; Khan, F.R. 1962. Further, recent ethnography on Oman in the Southern Arabian Peninsula by Barth (1978) led me to think that the weavers' low occupational status is not unique to Indian Muslims. Barth observes that in Oman weaving is considered to be a low and unclean craft.

Out of 22 Muslim patrilineages, members of 18 were involved in jāmdānī and kāsīdā manufacturing in some manner. Not only were these people poor but they also had a low status because of their weavers' occupation which generally conferred a low status in South Asian societies.

The Hindus of Shimulia belonged to the namaśudra¹⁰ group, that is, they followed fishing as an occupation. While collecting information on the Hindu hierarchy of Shimulia, I found that half of the Hindu population admitted (with great hesitation) that they were jēle dās,¹¹ i.e., fishing was their original occupation. The other half of the

¹⁰The word nama means very respectable (lit. "to bow with respect." Bandyopadaya (1966:1178). Interestingly, when it is used as namasudra it has a derogatory sense as being very 'low' (Bandyopadaya 1966:1178), which is the opposite of what it actually means. However, another interpretation of the meaning of the word nama (sudra) is suggested by Prof. Tej Bhatia, a linguist at Syracuse University. Prof. Bhatia suggests that the word nama probably originated from the Sanskrit word nimna which means a low or inferior category. This explanation has some credibility, as namasudra of Bengal are considered as inferior or second class sudra. However, namasudra of Bengal do not belong to a particular occupational caste. They are found in various occupations, including cultivators, fishermen, boatmen, carpenters, etc. In fact, they do not belong to the Sudra varna of Bengal. Until recently, they were known as candālas. The higher castes of Bengal regard them as "untouchables." However, they have succeeded in incorporating themselves with the sudras of Bengal, although with a status of second class sudras. Although they adopted the name sudra, they are commonly known as namas. Incorporation of namasudras with the sudras of Bengal reflects their efforts for status relation. See Dutt 1965:131-160. For a concise discussion on caste mobility in Bengal based on ethno-historical material, see Sanyal 1971, 1975.

¹¹While taking a census of the Hindu population, I found two jāti ranks were used locally - jila dās (jila means fisherman) and hila dās (hila means cultivator). It seems that they referred to jālikā or jāliā kaibarta for jila dās and hālikā or cāsī koibarta for hila dās. The literature on castes in Bengal shows that cāsī or halikā call themselves mahisya cāsī. The distinction between jālikā and cāsī koibarta is that the latter's occupation is considered cleaner than the former. As a result, cāsī koibarta or mahisya claim higher rank than jālikā koibarta. Material on caste in Bengal shows that like other jāti these two groups have made special effort to upgrade their ranks vis-a-vis their ritual status. For details see Risely 1891; Majumdar 1963; Dutt 1965; Chowdhury 1967; Sanyal 1971, 1975.

Hindu population considered themselves to be mahisya cāsī¹² with cultivation as their occupation. They also claim to be sat (clean) sudra (of the lowest varna). The mahisya cāsī referred to other Hindus as unclean calling them "nama" in a derogatory sense to emphasize their own pure ritual status. It is possible that mahisya cāsī were once fishermen with unclean status, but with the build up of silt of the river Knagsā these groups changed their occupation from fishing to agriculture and gradually started to call themselves Mahisya cāsī. The ancestors of the present Hindu landowners in the village were mostly Mahisya cāsī.

Before the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, the Hindus of Shimulia owned 57.87 percent of the village lands. But the land distribution among the Hindus was not even; only a few families owned land. Hence, many Hindus were landless sharecroppers and day laborers. Even the poor Hindus worked as day laborers in the agricultural fields of the Muslims. It is said that Hajee Ainuddin Shoud, a wealthy and prominent member of the Shoud patrilineage (gōsthī T) maintained a separate establishment for the Hindu farming laborers. Also, a number of Hindus of Shimulia are carpenters (chutārs) and blacksmiths (karmakār) These occupational groups in Shimulia are unclean and were originally jale dās. They could not change their ritual status because of the nature of their occupation.

In the early part of the 20th century, two Hindu Mahisya families became prominent. They became the gomsta (zamindar's revenue collecting officials) of zamindary estates of Bhagyakul and Roaila. For almost half a century these two families played an important role in village

¹² See Note 10.

politics and local self-government.

The history of Shimulia is also closely associated with the jāmdānī industry. The members of 18 Muslim patrilineages were at one time involved in jāmdānī and kāsīdā manufacturing (see below). Many Muslims above the age of 50, both male and female, were jāmdānī and kāsīdā workers. Allen, the author of the Dhaka District Gazetteer, left a brief but clear description of the jāmdānī and kāsīdā manufacturing industry in Dhaka district.

Fine muslins are prepared at Nawabpur, Tanti bazar Kalta bazar in Dacca city and in the following villages: Dhamrai, and Sabhar in Sabhar thana ... Demra, Matial and [Shimulia] in Keraniganj thana ... These clothes which are embroidered in the looms are known as jāmdānī. A piece of ordinary workmanship costs from Rs. 5 to Rs. 15, but as much as 400 may be asked for one in which the pattern and materials are of exceptional excellence. Kāsīdās are clothes embroidered by hand with silk or colored cotton thread. The embroidery is very roughly done, generally by poor Muhammadan females, and the clothes are exported to Bassora, Jiddah, Constantinople and Aden where they command a fair sale. There is also a considerable production of chikan work of muslin embroidered with cotton for which there is some demand in Europe (Allen 1912: 113-114).

Elsewhere Allen also observes the precarious conditions of jāmdānī weavers and how they were in debt to the dālāl (brokers) and paikār (wholesalers). In Shimulia, the majority of the jāmdānī workers remained poor and this state continued until the breakdown of the jāmdānī industry during the 1950s. In Shimulia, the Shoud patrilineage (gōṣṭhī T) worked as the paikār of jāmdānī weavers. By doing so, its members amassed considerable property. One result is that the Shoud (gōṣṭhī claims (see Chapter IV) śarāphatī or khāndānī status (nobility of descent. This gōṣṭhī originally lived near Demra across the Lakhya river. During the latter part of the nineteenth century, it moved to Shimulia. It had a big jāmdānī and kāsīdā manufacturing factory.

It also had business connections with Calcutta and Bombay and, furthermore, was in the money lending business. Much wealth was invested in land. This case illustrates the status elevation of a patrilineage due to the acquisition of land and wealth.

The jāmdānī industry started declining in the early 50s and became extinct in the late 50s. The following factors caused the decline of the jāmdānī industry. First, the partition of India in 1947 coincided with the establishment of textile and jute industries in and around Demra. The establishment of factories in the locality created opportunities for well-paid employment for the villagers in the mills and factories. Second, the jāmdānī manufacturers could not compete with cheap clothes, produced by textile mills on a large-scale, as the jāmdānī industry was basically a cottage industry run mostly by family labor. Third, the jāmdānī cloth lost the profitable and large Calcutta market after partition in 1947. Finally, the rise in the cost of raw materials for the jāmdānī manufacturing gave the death blow to the continuance of this cottage industry in Shimulia.

The Partition of 1947 had little impact on the Hindu population of Shimulia as there was little migration at that time. Rather, the Hindus of Shimulia migrated in large numbers after the communal riot of 1964. Prior to 1964, the Hindus of Shimulia actively participated in village politics and other affairs. The 1964 riots, incited by the Pakistani government, involved the workers from the nearby mills who came to the village in a body swinging clubs, spears, and other lethal weapons. They burned and looted Hindu houses and killed some Hindu villagers. The Muslim villagers in general were sympathetic to

the Hindus, and they saved most of the Hindus from the rioters by giving them shelter.

~~During the time of the riots, a few clever Muslim villagers took~~ advantage of the crisis and acquired Hindu lands at nominal or no cost. Most of the wealthy persons of the village acquired their present wealth in this manner. After the riots village lands were sold on the market and a number of urban people bought Hindu village lands. The shift of landowning from Hindus to Muslims continues even today as the remaining Hindus sell off their lands.¹³

Demography

The village is inhabited by both Hindus and Muslims. Historically, it has been a village with a Muslim majority, but until recently the Hindus of Shimulia were a strong minority constituting roughly 40 percent of the population. At present, they constitute 20.46 percent of the total population, with the decrease in their numbers largely due to the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 and the communal riots of 1964. The migration among the Hindus just after the Partition of 1947 was not high compared to the migration just after the communal rioting of 1964. Yet despite their minority status, the Hindus of Shimulia were once dominant economically and politically, and their control over the village was evident. For example, before 1947, 57.87 percent of village land was owned by the Hindus. Details are given in Chapter V.

¹³ A few words should be said on present day inter-community relationships, particularly between the Hindus and Muslims. Although both communities live side by side, there is little social and economic interaction between them, particularly following the communal riot of 1964. Apparently both communities live in harmony in Shimulia, but they are covertly hostile to each other.

In 1978, the total number of inhabitants of the village was 2556. Of these, the Muslims and Hindus comprise 1831 and 523, respectively. An additional 202 persons live in an area in the western part of the village commonly known as natun pāṛā. Unlike the Muslims and Hindus, the inhabitants of natun pāṛā are non-local people.

Table 3

Demographic Composition of Shimulia
1978

Demographic Unit	Male	Female	Total	Number of Family/ Household Percent	Percentage
Muslims (original)	1015	816	1831	253 (68%)	71.63
Hindus	281	241	523	88 (24%)	20.46
<u>Natun bara</u>	112	90	202	31 (8%)	8.00
Total	1408	1147	2556	372	100.0%

These demographic units of Shimulia represent different social units. For example, the natun pāṛā is a new settlement and its inhabitants come from many different districts of Bangladesh. Most of them hold jobs in Dhaka city and commute to their workplace every day. They hold petty jobs (clerks, etc.) and own no agricultural land in the village. They have settled in Shimulia because most are low paid employees who cannot afford to rent or buy houses in Dhaka city. They form a distinct social group with hardly any interaction with the original inhabitants of Shimulia.

For the purpose of the dissertation, this group will be largely ignored. Likewise, the Hindu population with its own social organization is not a focus of study here. This chapter presents materials that deal solely with Shimulia's Muslims.

Sex, Age and Work

In Shimulia, the division of labor is based on sex, wealth, and age. With few exceptions, men and women have separate work domains. Men in Shimulia work in the fields, factories, or in Dhaka city. They are the main bread-winners. Their duties are well-defined and they seldom encroach on the domain of women whose pre-occupation is household activities. Women cook and rear the children. Women also help in drying and storing the harvests. The division of labor between them is not rigid. In certain areas they participate equally, for instance in the threshing of paddy. A man's job is to cultivate, prepare and weed the crops. Women of poor families often participate in agricultural activities with men if land is close to the homestead.

Boys and girls are expected to assume adult responsibilities at an early age. But the training of girls begins earlier than boys. Girls, generally speaking, get married after their first menstruation (Bāleg). Therefore mothers take special care to prepare them so that they can assume responsibility after their marriage. One of the common practices in the village is for the girls to take care of younger siblings. Little girls help their mothers in household chores, in cooking, or cleaning fish and vegetables or bringing water from the tubewell or from the pond.

Boys of comparable ages are given other responsibilities. Often they take care of livestock -- both cows and goats. Or they may help their fathers in agricultural activities such as carrying small loads to the land and carrying a midday meal to their father.

Elderly men often help in the agricultural activities of the households. Also, they care for the cattle. Sometimes they help women to

dry and store agricultural products. Old women usually take care of children, particularly little ones. Also, they usually help the son's wife (wives) in household activities in general.

Village Economy

An important feature of Shimulia's economy today is its increasing subjection to the market economy. Occupational data show that many villagers depend on outside income derived from trade, business, or salaries. Nevertheless, the majority are farmers.

Agriculture

As mentioned earlier, agricultural patterns in Shimulia have undergone a radical change with the completion of the DND irrigation project in 1968. Before 1967, Shimulia was located in one of the low-lying areas of Dhaka district.

The soil of the village is the fertile Brahmaputra alluvium with olive-yellow, heavy clay with thin, grey, silky clay loam topsoil (Rizvi 1975:10). The villagers call cultivable land nāl (low-lying) jami (land). Most of the land in the village is now used for rice cultivation. The villagers grew āman (winter paddy), bōrō (spring paddy), āuṣā (summer paddy), jute and rabi crops. But not all the lands of Shimulia were suitable for growing these crops. In earlier times, the bōrō crop grew on the north and southern fields of the village. These lands were relatively the most low-lying, and during the month of coitra (mid-April to mid-May) they dried up. The village notes (1912) describe these features:

The soil of the mouza is very fertile and yields good aman and boro crops. On the north and on the south the lands were very low and some fields dry up in Chaitra. These fields grow Boro well. The jute fields lie near the village site which is comparatively high

than the Aman field. The people are not much in favour of Rabi crops and they are grown in small quantity. The principal crops are Aman, jute and Aus.

The D.N.D. project introduced a new pattern of agricultural techniques by allowing intensive hybrid paddy cultivation (IRRI). Before the D.N.D., villagers practiced broadcast āman and transplant bōrō rice. Another significant feature of the new pattern of agriculture in Shimulia was the elimination of jute cultivation as a cash crop. The rabi crop is grown without any basic change.

Cropping Pattern

Three rice crops are found in Shimulia: bōrō, āusā and āman. In the months of agrahan and pōwṣ (late November to early January) the farmers sow the transplanted IRRI (bōrō crop) but the actual transplantation process begins during the month of kārtik (mid-October to mid-November). In the village special tiny plots are kept for planting the seeds. The seeds are first germinated by soaking them in water for about 12 hours (by then stems are out) after which they are thrown into the plots. Here the plants will be nurtured for about a month and a half; then the plants will be about 5-6 inches tall and will be ready for transplanting. To transplant the rice the lands are ploughed to make a rich puddle and the embankments or the ails (boundary of lands) are repaired so that they can retain water. Transplanting is done in clumps of 4-5 plants in a column. Soon after transplanting, they are weeded and from time to time the land is irrigated. Also, the farmers apply fertilizer like urea and TSP (triple sugar phosphate) on the land.

This crop is harvested in the months of boisakh and joistha. While the bōrō crops are in progress, the farmers get ready with the seedlings of the āuśā which are to be planted in the month of boisakh. In the month of srāban the āuśā crop is weeded. The āuśā paddy is harvested in the months of srāban (mid-August) and bhādra (mid-July). Not all the lands in Shimulia are used for the āuśā crop. After the harvest of boisakh and joistha crop, some lands are left fallow for a period of 3-4 months. It is very difficult to ascertain the exact amount of fallow land in this period as it differs from year to year. The farmers keep these lands for āman which is transplanted in the month srāban and bhādra. This crop is harvested in the months of agrāhan and pōwṣ.

The villagers grow several types of rice. Some are coarse and others are fine, long grain varieties. The agricultural activities of the villagers varies according to the season. For example, during the sowing and harvesting periods (like the months of boisakh-joistha, srāban-bhādra and agrāhan-pōwṣ) the villagers are busy. Most of the farmers work from dawn to dusk with little break. The transplantation type of paddy which is presently used needs intensive labor and care. During the time of transplanting seedlings, the farmers have to stay in the quagmire fields most of the day. On the other hand, women in the village are also busy threshing, drying and storing agricultural products.

People in Shimulia are less interested in growing rabi crops because they do not consider it as a main crop. For rabi crops, only approximately 5 percent of cultivable lands are used. The rabi crops include onion, garlic, chili, cabbage, cauliflower, pumpkin, tomato,

potato, mustard, sesasum, kaun, peas, and different kinds of pulses such as mung, musuri, and maskoloi. Except for pulses and mustard, the rabi crops are cultivated in small plots adjoining the homesteads. However, people take very little care in growing rabi crops except for mustard. One member of the Khan patrilineage (Gos̄thī M) grew a hybrid variety of mustard. This person is a primary school teacher and he informed me that a lot of villagers would grow this mustard the following year. He hoped to earn a considerable sum by selling his products in the market as a cash crop. The future of this crop is bright as the price of mustard oil has been rising steadily.

Impact of the D.N.D. Project

Because of the D.N.D. project and the change to intensive wet rice cultivation, farmers now grow 3-4 crops a year instead of one. As a result, the productivity of the land per acre is estimated to be up by 216.65 percent a year.¹⁴ These new agricultural methods necessitated farmers to be increasingly dependent upon inputs in the form of chemical fertilizers and insecticides. Hence, farmers in Shimulia today think about investments in agriculture as a profitable concern. In addition, wet rice cultivation is also labor intensive and laborers also follow market principles, as they are not recruited in a traditional form based on kinship and patron-client relationships (for details see Chapter V).

¹⁴The average production per acre of 3-harvest per year land is estimated to be 70 maunds (82 lbs = 1 maund) per year. In Shimulia, 2/3 of the land is capable of producing 3 harvests; 1/3 of the land can produce 2 harvest amounting annually to about 47 maunds of rice per acre. Therefore, the total production per acre of land is 63.33 maunds a year ($70 \times \frac{2}{3} + 47 \times \frac{1}{3} = 46.67 + 15.67$) This is an increase in productivity of 216.65 percent from the previous rate (previous rate 20 maunds of paddy per acre - 63.33 maunds percent rate = 43.33; therefore, increased percent is $43.33/20 = 216.65\%$). Please note that the Shimulia rice yield figure is much higher than the average Bangladesh (13.16 maunds) figure.

Many laborers are recruited from the refugee camp or migrant laborers coming from the Manikganj area of Dhaka district. The emergence of a new kind of labor force based on following market principles is a major feature of the new pattern of agriculture in Shimulia.

Classification of Farmers

In Shimulia, 164 (62.82%) of the Muslim households are owner farmers. There are 74 sharecroppers, constituting 29.24 percent of the total households. 62 (24.50%) households are owner-cum-tenant farmers.

There are 5 classes of farmers in Shimulia based on their land ownership. Because land in Shimulia is the principal resource, its ownership and non-ownership determines not only one's class position but also class behavior. Table 5 will show the land range, number of families in individual class and classwise landownership. There are 16 rich, 43 middle, 33 subsistence, 72 marginal and 89 landless farmers in the village (see Table 4). Among the farmers, the rich and middle together are the "big" farmers in the village because of their surplus production. They constitute 59 (22.32%) of the total households which together hold 274.28 (77.84%) acres of land. The poor farmers who belong to the subsistence and marginal categories account for 105 (41.50%) households, owning 77.84 (22.16%) acres of land. 89 (35.31%) households are landless.

Table 4

Classes in Shimulia

Land	Classes	Number of Families (%)	Total class land ownership in acres (%)
00	Landless	89 (35.17)	00
0.1-0.99	Marginal	72 (28.45)	37.30 (10.41)
1.00-1.99	Subsistent	33 (13.04)	46.53 (13.00)
2.00-5.99	Middle	43 (17.00)	140.48 (39.22)
6.00-above	Rich	16 (6.32)	133.20 (37.19)
Total	5	253 (100)	358.11 (100)

Occupation

Land ownership data show to nobody's surprise that the bulk of the population of Shimulia is poor. Since traditional agriculture cannot provide year round employment, the people prefer outside employment; so Shimulia is increasingly dependent on the outside for survival. A look at the occupational table for Shimulia shows that many villagers are associated with non-agricultural occupations (see Table 5).

The majority of the businessmen are exporters and importers. Several villagers have permits to import yarn from Japan which they usually sell on the black market. In addition, there are two big contractors with large investments.

There are 4 shop keepers in the village. These shops supply the daily necessities of life to the villagers -- rice, molasses (gur), cigarettes, lentils, kerosine, salt, sugar, matches, etc. Villagers buy their commodities in these shops mostly with cash. Shop keepers also sell their commodities on credit. The shop keepers buy their commodities from wholesalers in Dhaka city.

Table 5

Occupations of Shimulia Muslims*

<u>Occupations</u>	<u>Number</u>
1. Agriculture	160
2. Wage Labor	78
3. Mill Worker	75
4. Carpenter	21
5. Contractor	2
6. Sub-contractor	4
7. Business**	10
8. Cloth Trading	17
9. Trading	4
10. Electrician	1
11. Mason	7
12. Printer	9
13. Mill Mechanic	4
14. Teacher	4
15. Vegetable Vendor	1
16. Vegetable Grower	1
17. Petty Service	4
18. Service	15
19. High Ranking Official	1
20. Deed Writer	4
21. Lumber Trader	3
22. Pirali***	1
23. Milkman	2
24. Homeopath Doctor	1
25. Grocer	4
26. Rikshaw Driver	4
27. Cattle Trader	1
28. Land Broker	2
29. Fertilizer Dealer	1
30. Mosque Imam	1
31. Policeman	1
32. Village Watchman	1
33. Servant	1
34. Maid Servant	1
35. Kabiraj****	1
Total	447

* Male occupations only, except for number 34.

** Business is defined by high amount of capital, where a trade is defined as small capital.

*** A religious person with followers

**** Local healer

The fertilizer dealer is an important person in the village, since intensive cultivation calls for chemical fertilizers. With it, we find the development of black market associated with fertilizer. During sowing and weeding times, many villagers buy this commodity on the black market. Land brokerage has become a source of income for some villagers, although officially only one person is involved in this occupation. As urban people are buying more land in the village, land brokerage is becoming important for the brokers who get commissions (dālālī).

Education is considered to be an important means of obtaining jobs in the city. There are 15 service holders in the village (clerk, etc.) working mostly for government organizations. These jobs are coveted as they guarantee a regular cash income. If a person has land in addition, he can be prosperous. In fact, most of the job holders in the village come from the big farmer class. The jobs also guarantee a regular salary.

Sources of Income

In short, the Shimulia economy shows that the villagers have diverse sources of income. Despite this, agriculture is still the single most dominant occupation (35.79% of working males). On the other hand, 43.62% of the working males in the village derive their livelihood either partly or fully from the non-village cash economy. There are 78 day laborers, 80% of whom were non-agricultural wage workers mostly working outside the village in Demra, Sarulia Bazar, and Dhaka for a daily wage.

The introduction of modern inputs in agriculture and the proximity of the village to the industrial belt and Dhaka city have various

impacts on the village economy. Introduction of modern inputs has increased the productivity by 216.65 percent. The industrial belt and the proximity of Dhaka city have created labor shortages for Shimulia as the local laborers are attracted to work in the nearby mills and as wage laborers outside the village. The rich farmers of Shimulia employ evicted destitute laborers coming from different districts of Bangladesh. They also employ seasonal migrant laborers to work in their fields. These laborers are cheap, and are free from kinship obligations. This outflow of labor from the village and inflow of non-local cheap labor in agriculture pinpoints the contradictory nature of the village habitat and the economy (for details see Chapter V).

Education

Modern education is recognized by the villagers as an important avenue to success and many people do indeed have successful careers because they are educated. Village literacy data show that 28.78%¹⁵ of the Muslim population of the village is literate. However, the male literacy rate is more than double the female rate (see Table 6). Moreover, some patrilineages have exceptionally high literacy rates, whereas others are significantly below the norm (see Gōṣṭhī H&I)

¹⁵In Bangladesh the overall literacy rate is 22% according to the 1974 census. Literacy is defined here as having four years or more of schooling. In the 1974 Census of Bangladesh a literate person is defined as a person who can read and write a simple letter in any language. Using this as a base, I have found in the village that a person who has read up to grade three can read and write a simple letter. Also, please note that I have included the "baby class" which makes the actual number of years of school four.

Table 6

Muslim Population and Literacy by Sex

Patrilineage (Gosthi)	Male literate (total Population)	Female literate (total population)	Male %	Female %
A	3 (8)	- (6)	37.50	0
B	22 (45)	3 (29)	48.89	10.34
C	9 (22)	- (9)	40.91	0
D	32 (64)	4 (54)	50.00	7.44
E	27 (79)	5 (77)	34.18	6.49
F	7 (36)	3 (30)	19.44	10.00
G	5 (15)	2 (13)	33.33	15.38
H	7 (43)	6 (42)	16.28	14.29
I	17 (112)	3 (101)	15.18	2.97
J	9 (19)	7 (18)	47.37	38.89
K	16 (41)	5 (38)	39.02	13.16
L	2 (10)	1 (8)	20.00	12.50
M	17 (33)	4 (18)	51.52	22.22
N	2 (9)	1 (8)	22.22	12.50
O	73 (158)	30 (119)	46.20	25.21
P	17 (40)	7 (32)	42.50	28.87
Q	5 (18)	1 (17)	28.78	5.88
R	9 (18)	5 (14)	50.00	35.71
S	17 (46)	4 (43)	36.96	9.30
T	59 (95)	31 (78)	62.11	39.74
U	17 (31)	4 (37)	54.84	10.81
V	3 (4)	- (4)	75.00	0
Total	375 (946)	126 (795)	39.64%	15.85%

There are 335 students who attend primary school¹⁶, secondary school¹⁷ and college¹⁸. Of them 136 boys and 106 girls attend the

¹⁶In Bangladesh a child enters primary school at age 5+. Primary schools have 5 grades. In addition, there is an unofficial grade prior to entering grade I. Generally, a primary pupil will spend a year in the "baby class" which is an irregular class.

¹⁷A student enters secondary or high school at grade VI. High school education continues to grade X. At grade X a student appears for the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) conducted by centralized boards. A high school graduate must pass a SSC pass.

¹⁸After passing the SSC examination, a student enters college with a more specialized focus (such as Arts, Science, Commerce) for a period of two years. At the conclusion of the two year period, the student takes the Higher Secondary Certificate Examination (HSC) conducted by centralized boards. After getting the HSC, the student goes for his Bachelors degree (B.A., B.Sc., B. Com., etc).

village primary school which was established in 1935. There are 66 boys and 16 girls attending the high school. Of the secondary students the majority go to the village high school which was established in 1973. A few boys attend the high school run by a well-established mill which is two miles to the northeast of the village. The education standard of the mill high school is considered to be higher than the village high school. The guardians who take the utmost care for education of their children generally send their sons to the mill high school. In contrast, all the girls attending secondary school attend the village high school. Recognition of the importance of women's education is only beginning. Previously, the villagers gave little attention to female education, and the only education they considered of any value was religious education -- to enable a girl to perform religious rituals such as reciting the prayers "namaj" (from Persian meaning prayer), and reading the Koran. In fact, for girls, religious education was the most important qualification for a prospective marriage. Often I was told "so and so (woman) can only read the Koran" in response to my question on the education levels of women.

So, until recently, the villagers considered a basic knowledge of Bengali (reading and writing) with a capability to read the Koran as sufficient for girls. Now this notion has begun to change and a few villagers have educated their daughters upto the high school level. There are 16 girls who are now attending the village high school. Higher education for girls now serves some practical purpose. For example, the girls with relatively high education stand a better chance of getting an educated bridegroom. And if a girl can be married to an educated husband, the status of the family is upgraded and connections in the urban area are often made stronger.

The villagers are very interested in sending their sons to college. There are three boys preparing for their Bachelor's degree and eight for the Intermediate degree at colleges in Dhaka city. These students commute daily by bus. There are four persons with bachelor's degrees all of whom hold good jobs in Dhaka city. One villager with an M.A. is a high ranking government official. Another villager has been privately enrolled as an M.A. student at one of the university colleges in Dhaka city. There are 41 high school graduates who currently hold good positions. Most of them are working as petty clerks and elementary school teachers while some are involved in trade and business. The bride of the M.A. degree holder is a graduate who is highly esteemed in the village. Six women are respected because of their education. One high school graduate who is the wife of an elementary school teacher has been nominated as a member of the Union Pariṣad. Education is now an important factor in the village.

In addition to the recognition of modern education, the villagers still esteem religious education so that their children are capable of performing prayers (nāmāj) and other crisis rituals, and are able to read the Koran. The two mosques in the village are used as maktab (schools for religious education) with the two Imams acting as teachers. The villagers still consider it especially meritorious to provide a religious education for their sons and daughters.

X Beliefs and Practices among the Muslims of Shimulia

All the Muslims of Shimulia belong to the Sunni section of Islam. Many villagers say their prayers five times a day as prescribed by the Koran. Women are more observant than men in this regard. The young and

the educated are less particular in the observance of religious rituals than the old people.

In the yearly ritual cycle, the Muslims of Shimulia follow the Islamic lunar calendar. The first significant religious occasion among the Muslims of Shimulia starts with sabe-barat (lailat-al-barra or the night of deliverance) which is held in the middle of saban (eighth month) of the Islamic calendar. Muslims believe that on that particular night Allah distributes one's fate for the coming year. In view of this, most of the old people of Shimulia observe a fast (rōja) and offer a special prayer by staying up late at night.

Fifteen days after the sabe-barat, the month of Ramjān (Ramadan) (9th month) begins. This is considered to be the most significant month among the Muslims. It is also considered to be the holiest month in the Islamic calendar. It is obligatory for all adult Muslims to fast for 30 days but, as already noted, in Shimulia only the older people are particular about fasting. Ritual activities among the Muslims increase during this month as the people believe that it is very meritorious to involve oneself in religious observances and rituals. The conclusion of Ramjan is marked by a festival called Id-ul-Fitr. A special prayer is held in the morning and it is attended by almost all the males of the village. Also, a special feast is arranged in both the rich and poor families. Families in Shimulia irrespective of their economic condition try to observe this occasion lavishly. Children are given new clothes even if money must be borrowed. Further, the well-to-do have to pay Zakāt (alms-tax) to the poor as prescribed by Islam.

The last significant religious occasion in the yearly ritual cycle among the Muslims of Shimulia is the Id-ul-Azha. Id-ul-Azha comes two

months after Id-ul-Fitr , the former being celebrated on the tenth day of jilhaj (last month) of the Islamic calendar. A special prayer in the morning marks the occasion in Shimulia. This is followed by the ritual slaughter (korbāni) of animals like cows and goats. The origin of this occasion is the re-enactment of the sacrifice of Ismail by his father, Ibrahim; i.e., the Muslim version of the Old Testament story. The sacrifice of cows carries prestige if the animal is costly. In fact, this sacrifice is evaluated in terms of social prestige rather than religious content. For example, the villagers openly discuss who bought what animal and at what price. This remains a topic of discussion in the village for quite a period of time.

Besides the yearly rituals, the villagers observe crisis rituals by performing a milād. A milād is a celebration of the birth of the prophet Muhammad. But the people of Shimulia observe milād on various occasions like birth, death, recovery from sickness, passing an examination, construction of a new house, etc.

Religious practices in Shimulia are syncretic. The local villagers entertain a blend of proper Islamic and popular local beliefs. Personal or community crises strengthen villagers concern with the unknown, and with spirits, ghosts and jins. Although the old generation still retains these beliefs, the young and educated no longer share such ritualistic persuasions.

Shimulia and Local Government

The Union Parīṣad (literally assembly, organization/society) is the institution of local government in rural Bangladesh. This is a formal political institution at the local level. Shimulia is under the Matuail Union Parīṣad. The purpose of the local government is

to maintain law and order at the local level through an elected body. In addition, it has been entrusted with the responsibility of looking after roads, bridges, health, sanitation, etc. It is also charged with the responsibility to initiate and implement development projects. Further, it is the organization through which relief materials are distributed. In this section, I will discuss directly the local government institution of Shimulia from an historical perspective. Also, I will discuss Shimulia's local government and its relationship with the informal social control mechanism such as sālīs (literally arbitrator) and samāj (supra-kinship organization). Finally, I will discuss briefly its relationship to power and politics in the village.

Little is known about the local government of Shimulia before the beginning of the twentieth century. But we know a little about the Chowkidari Panchayat Act of 1871 and its operation. The Chowkidārī Panchayat Act of 1871 was the first formal political institution at a local level established by the British administration in Bengal. This Act provided that the District Magistrate would appoint a panchayat consisting of five members. One of the basic functions of the panchayat was to maintain law and order through a chowkidār or a village watchman. Also, villagers used to pay a tax known as the chowkidārī tax for maintaining the village watchman. I could not learn how many members were selected from Shimulia at any one time to be on the panchāyat. However, I gathered that members of the panchāyat came from the wealthy Hindu mahaisya families of the village. No Shimulia Muslims were appointed to the panchāyat by the District Magistrate.

The next stage in 1919 was the replacement of the Chowkidārī Panchayat by the Union Board. This Act, by providing that two-thirds of the members of the Union Board be elected by the villagers and one-third nominated by the government, introduced democratic elements into local government. Nevertheless, there was no change in the composition of the village representation. From 1919-1935, five members were elected from Shimulia coming from Hindu mahisya families. In addition, in 1935, one mahisya was elected president of the Matuail Union Board. The formal entry of Muslims into local government occurred in 1935 when a member from the wealthy Shoud gosthi (gōst̄hī T) was nominated to the Union Board.

From 1935 to 1956 three local government elections (1942, 1946, and 1956) were held with popular participation by both Muslims and Hindus. In the 1942 elections, two Muslims were elected. In 1946, two members belonging to two Muslim factions were elected. One was a Hindu from a mahisya family. Hindu representation in the local government continued until 1965, after that, the Hindu dominance dissipated because of the riot of 1964.

In 1959, Ayub Khan who was then President of Pakistan introduced a new system known as Basic Democracy and the name of the local governing body was changed from Union Board to Union Council. The Union Councils were much more powerful than the previous Union Boards. Besides being the members of the local government, members of the Union Councils served as the electoral college for the president as well as members of the provincial and national assemblies in complete alignment with Pakistan state. In Shimulia, two members were elected to the Union Council in

1960. One was a mahisya cāṣī Hindu. The last Basic Democracy election took place in 1965. This election was significant as there was a change in the traditional power structure of the village. First, the dominance of the wealthy Hindus was eliminated. Second, there was a challenge to the leadership of the wealthy Shoud gōṣṭhī (Cōṣṭhī T). The third Basic Democracy election was scheduled in 1968, but it was delayed because of the mass movement against President Ayub Khan. As a result there was no local government election until 1973.

Soon after the birth of Bangladesh, the Union Councils were transformed into relief committees; members and chairmen were nominated by the ruling Awami League. In 1973, the local governing body was named the Union Pariṣad and accordingly, an election was held. Unlike the Basic Democracy system, the Union Parisad election was based on universal adult franchise, and the chairman, vice-chairman, and members were all elected. In the 1973 election, the constituency of Shimulia was changed; it became part of the Sarulia Bazar constituency, inhabited by non-local mill workers. Because the number of village voters was less than the labor voters of Sarulia Bazar, Shimulia's representation in local government was diminished.

The last election of the Union Pariṣad was held in early 1977. This time the village factions also nominated candidates, but none of the candidates from Shimulia were returned in the election. However, a woman from Shimulia was nominated to the Union Pariṣad by virtue of the women's quota in the local government.

Although Shimulia lost its hold in the local government for the first time, there was little or no change in the organization of the

power structure of the village.

Next in the organizational taxonomy of Shimulia we have the samāj and the sālis. Samāj in the village is a social grouping based on supra kinship ties with a strong political bond. In a samāj there are two or more leaders who make important decisions regarding social and political issues. Also, the leaders are responsible for maintaining order in their respective samāj.

The village sālis is an informal body of arbitration consisting of samāj leaders as well as members of the local government institutions. The members of the local governing bodies generally act as superordinate members of a sālis. Members of the local governing bodies intervene only when conflicts become complex.

Development Projects

Shimulia is under two active government developmental agencies -- the Integrated Rural Development Programmes (IRDP)¹⁹ and the Zero Population Growth (ZPG)²⁰ Program. Two programs (IRDP and ZPG) have attempted to promote economic and human development and are complementary in nature. ZPG will not be successful unless material and human aspects are improved, hence IRDP has plans to create institutional

¹⁹ Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) was introduced by the Pakistan Government in 1970 in cooperation with the Comilla Academy for Rural Development. This program continued to operate after the independence of Bangladesh. It aims at creating an institutional infrastructure for effective utilization of resources - both human and material. For details see Abu Abdullah, Mosharaf Hossain and Richard Nations 1976.

²⁰ ZPG aims at achieving its targets by the end of 1980. The targets are

Permanent sterilization	40%
a. ligation -	20%
b. vasectomy -	20%
Oral pills	40%
Other methods	20%
	<u>100%</u>

change. Likewise, IRDP has little relevance if it does not look at the amelioration of living conditions through family planning. IRDP has incorporated family planning into its programs. (See note 20)

The ZPG has an ambitious plan to achieve zero population growth in the area by the end of 1980. The project has launched a vigorous campaign to reduce population growth not only through regular family planning methods, but also through constant efforts to convince the populace of the importance of family planning. The family planning agency has employed two villagers - a man and a woman - to work in this capacity. The ZPG also tries to attract individuals for permanent sterilization by offering monetary benefits. It seems that the plan of ZPG is too ambitious to be successful within a short period of time. In spite of this, it will continue to transmit knowledge about population problems and their effects. Moreover, the ZPG authority has decided to set up a maternity clinic in the village. This will certainly have far reaching effects on child mortality rates. Also it is very likely that the village women will learn more about child care, health, and taking care of themselves.

The Integrated Rural Development Program has been sponsoring the women's cooperative organization in the village. IRDP aims to institutionalize change in the rural areas of Bangladesh through the introduction of cooperatives. The First Five Year Plan (1973-74 to 1977-78) of Bangladesh incorporated the IRDP's pilot project in population planning and rural women's cooperatives to combat the low acceptance of family planning in terms of motivation, acceptance, and use. To achieve this objective, the program works on the assumption that the economic independence of women will result in control over their

reproductive behavior (Feldman 1980:28) and hence improve human conditions. With this end in view, the Shimulia Women's Cooperative Society has been formed under the sponsorship of IRDP.

The Women's Cooperative Society was formed in April 1977 at the initiative of two village women - one is the wife (high school graduate) of the primary school teacher. She is also the nominated member of the Union Parishad. The other woman is a Hindu who is also a high school graduate. The former is the president and the latter is the secretary of the organization.

The cooperative aims at achieving the following:

1. to introduce cottage industries, like sewing. In this respect, the IRDP has the responsibility of teaching the women of the village this craft.
2. introduction of better breeds of poultry,
3. cultivation of improved quality vegetables,
4. practice of family planning.

When the Women's Cooperative Society was established, the women of the village were enthusiastic. They thought that it was a means to obtain licenses of different kinds to obtain raw materials which they would be able to sell in the black market. (In the past some villagers obtained some licenses by forming a weavers' association). However, the members found that the objectives of the organization were different from what they expected. The organization lost a considerable number of members, so that at present it has only 23 members, down from roughly 90. Despite this initial set back, the organization has continued.

It is hoped that it will play an important role in transmitting modern knowledge and skills.

In the next chapter I will analyze the social organization of the village with specific focus on gōṣṭhī baṅsā (lineage), status designations (khāndān), family, marriage and supra-kinship organization like samāj. Also, specific focus will be given to changing kinship relationships in the village.

Summary

This chapter provides the ecological and social background of Shimulia village. It is situated very close to Dhaka city, with the industrial belt providing work for the villagers. Also, it belongs to the Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra (DND) irrigation project which transformed agricultural patterns to intensive wet rice cultivation since its inauguration in 1968. Before its inauguration, floods were a common feature during the rainy season which limited farmers to one main crop a year. The intensive wet-rice cultivation boosted the productivity of the land by over 200%. The history of Shimulia revealed that it was formed from the silt of a river. Also, historically, the village had been the home of the traditional jāmdāni industry and the Muslim population of the village was associated with it. In the past, Shimulia had a Muslim majority, but the Hindu population controlled 60% of the village land. The communal riot of 1964 resulted in the dissipation of Hindu dominance. At the same time, a group of non-local people

who work in Dhaka city came into the village and settled in the western part of the village known as natur pāra. In the early 1960s, we see the dual development of enterprising Muslim farmers and a cash economy, aided by the inflow of urban investment in land. Literacy of the village is low (28%), but education is considered to be important and will continue to be so. The chapter also discussed beliefs and practices, the development of local government, and developmental activities.

Chapter III

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION IN SHIMULIA

Social organization in Shimulia like elsewhere in Bangladesh is based primarily on kinship ties. Gōṣṭhī or baṅśā (lineage), bārī (homestead), paribār (family) and status designations, especially khāndān and samāj, are the principal units of Shimulia social organization. In this chapter I will examine the structure of these units as well as their specific applications in Shimulia. In order to comprehend the process of change that has been generated in Shimulia agrarian structure, it is pertinent to understand the basic units of social structure -- kinship organization and its transformation.

Little work has been done on Bengali Muslim kinship systems. Hara (1967), who studied the Muslim family and kinship in a village in the district of Chittagong in Bangladesh, points out that Muslim kinship in Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) is loosely organized with no tightly united group of agnatic kin. He maintains that "The shapelessness of the kinship system, the very characteristics of Cohira kinship, also could be the typical features of Muslim society" (Hara 1967: 213). Although Hara's observation is vague, it conveys not only the unique characteristics of Bangladesh Muslim kinship, but also the lack of explicit rigid rules of organization. Similar data are presented by Bertocci (1968); Wood (1976), Arens and

Van Beurden (1977); Lindenbaum (1978) and Jahngir (1979).¹

Lineage, Homestead, Family, and Status Designations

The main units of Bengali Muslim kinship system are gōṣṭhī (baṅśa) "lineage", bārī "homestead"; paribār "family", khāndān etc.) "status designation". In order to comprehend the Bengali Muslim kinship system, we must understand those terms which vary significantly from the same terms as used by Hindus.² I will first describe the general meanings of these four terms and then supply data on the actual kin groups of Shimulia.

¹The literature on kinship among the Muslims and Hindus of Bengal shows both similarities and differences. Although there are very few studies done on Muslim kinship in South Asia, those which exist show both implicitly and explicitly that Muslim kinship is different from Hindu kinship (see Eglar 1969; Ahmad 1970; Alavi 1971, 1972). Inden (1975), Fruzetti and Ostor (1976), and Inden and Nicholas (1977) have applied the cultural model used by Schneider (1968) to study Bangali kinship. All noted the existence of explicit rigid rules or "codes for conduct" with regard to Bengali Hindu kinship. However, there are no explicit rigid rules with regard to the kinship system of Muslims of Bangladesh. Although there are some common terms of kinship shared by both Hindus and Muslims, these have different cultural meanings.

²The Hindus of Bengal mainly use the kinship categories gotra, kul and baṅśa or gōṣṭhī. Of the four terms, the Muslims of Bengal use the latter three terms. But the terms kul, baṅśa and gōṣṭhī have different connotations. For a Hindu a gotra is a clan, and gotra affiliation is important particularly with regard to marriage because of rules of clan (gotra) exogamy. Kul among Bengali Hindus refers to a lineage of considerable depth. A kul is known by the padabi (surname) of its bij-puruṣ (seed male) or apical ancestor, and includes all the male descendants of a common ancestral male, referred to as seed-male. While the seed-male of a gotra is a god-like being living in heaven, the seed-male of kula is a human being who lived in the past and is remembered. A baṅśa is a localized segment of a larger kul which recognizes the apical seed-male, but counts its descent from more immediate ancestors. For example, a new baṅśa can be established at different generational depth (for details see Klass 1966; Inden 1975; Davis 1976; Inden and Nicholas 1977). A gōṣṭhī for Hindus is a localized segment of a baṅśa. Unlike the Hindu kinship system, kul for Muslims refers to a status designation (see Note 10). Also, Muslims do not differentiate between the two concepts gōṣṭhī or baṅśa; in fact, they use these terms interchangeably.

Lineage

A gōsthī³ or bañśa in Shimulia denotes a localized patrilineage. The term gōsthī came from Sanskrit, meaning an assembly, family connections, relations and kindred. Bañśa derives from the Sanskrit word vamsa which carries implications of blood-relatedness, whereas gōsthī carries greater implications of affinal connections with less direct emphasis on the patrilineage. Although the literal meanings of these concepts are different, they carry the same meaning for patrilineages among the Muslims of Shimulia, as well as the Muslims of Bangladesh.

A gōsthī or bañśa in Shimulia is a group of people who are agnatically related to each other. In this discussion, I will use the term gōsthī as both gōsthī and bañśa to carry the same meaning. They generally share a common residential locus which is known as bārī. A gōsthī may have two or more bārī depending on the size of the gōsthī (see Table 7).

Ideally, a gōsthī in Shimulia is patrilineal, but in reality the importance of affinal and matrilineal relationships is observable (see also Bertocci 1970; Islam 1974). Therefore, I am using the patrilineal nomenclature in a modified form in the Shimulia situation. For example, some bārī have families which are not agnatically related. There are some cases of ghar jāmaī (ghar, house; jāmaī son-in-law). A ghar jāmaī is a person who takes up residence at his wife's lineage after his marriage. Here I am using the term ghar jāmaī rather than

³ Arens and Van Beurden (1977) make a distinction between a bañśa and a gōsthī. According to them gōsthī are not necessarily tied by kinship relations. They show, for example, that being good neighbors, mutual aid, professional ties, marriage ties and even a faction is identical with a gōsthī. I suspect that such a misrepresentative definition may possibly be the result of a confusion with certain categories which the villagers use in their everyday parlance. Data from Shimulia show that the people use these two terms interchangeably (for details see Arens and Van Beurden, pp. 89-93).

the concept of uxori-local as this concept does not apply in the Shimulia situation. Uxorilocality refers to matrilocal residence, but in Shimulia there are no cultural rules for matrilocal residence. Rather ghar jāmaī occurs in exceptional situations when a person does not have a male heir. In such cases a ghar jāmaī looks after the property of his wife unless he has been legally transferred property by his wife's father. (Generally, ghar jāmaī's children inherit property.) Aside from the incidence of ghar jāmaī, the affine becomes significant if the affine carries higher status. This will be elaborated under the rubric of marriage infrastructure.

Ideally, members of a gōṣṭhī by virtue of their agnatic connections have a great deal of solidarity. Villagers idealize gun gōṣṭhī relationships and often say that gōṣṭhī solidarity was stronger in the past, referring to the present weak solidarity among agnatic kin. It was mentioned already that the Muslim kinship organization is loose compared to Hindu kinship organization with respect to agnatic kin. The increased differentiation following the development of a market economy has created a fissure in kinship ties which shows an indication of weakened gōṣṭhī solidarity and development of class relationships in Shimulia

A gōṣṭhī in Shimulia is not a corporate group. Ethnographies on the Muslims of Bangladesh have also noted this (see Hara 1967; Bertocci 1970; Wood 1976; Arens and Van Beurden 1977; Jahangir 1979). As a result, a family (paribār, see below) in a gōṣṭhī is an independent economic unit and to a limited sense, a status group. Moreover, the socio-economic conditions of families belonging to

a single gōṣṭhī vary widely. In most cases, it has been observed that a single gōṣṭhī has both wealthy and poor families. This is due to the non-corporate structure of gōṣṭhī organization where individual ownership is present and therefore economic differentiation among members of the gōṣṭhī exists. Economic change has further accentuated this differentiation among the members of the gōṣṭhī. As a result, economic obligations between rich and poor families are less evident. The rich families of a gōṣṭhī do not feel obligated to help economically distressed families. Also, on social occasions like weddings, Eid, milad, etc., members of rich families do not participate actively with poor families belonging to the same gōṣṭhī. These non-corporate characteristics of Shimulia gōṣṭhī organization lead to affiliation that is not exclusively along agnatic lines. Rather affines and friends are important, too, so that some features of bilateral descent are noticeable in Shimulia gōṣṭhī organization. In Shimulia, the importance of affinal kin is recognized increasingly if the said kin are wealthy, educated and khandāni, making it a bilateral rather than true patrilineal descent. In the following I will show some examples of the patterns of agnatic ties and their recent changes following the changes in agrarian structure, particularly during the 60s.

For example, in gōṣṭhī M. Akram Khan and his brothers maintain very close ties as all of them are very wealthy, whereas they maintain little or no ties with their FaBrSo, Nannu Khan (see chapter IV gōṣṭhī M) who is poor, owning only 0.45 acres of land. Similarly, Abdul Majid of gōṣṭhī S, who is one of the wealthiest persons in the village, maintains close relations with the wealthy members of

his gōṣṭhī such as with his brother Saiful Haque and his FaBrSo Khair Ali (see Chapter IV, gōṣṭhī S). When a gōṣṭhī has few wealthy members, the wealthy members tend to develop friendships with wealthy individuals of different gōṣṭhī. For example, Abdul Majid of gōṣṭhī S is a close friend of Arifuddin Mia of gōṣṭhī B, one of the wealthiest persons of the village. These ties later developed into a business partnership and political alliance.

In contrast, if most of the families of the gōṣṭhī are economically well off, kin relationships are often very close. This is observable particularly in gōṣṭhī J, M, R, T (see Chapter IV). On the other hand, poverty leads to a loosening of ties so that in gōṣṭhī I (see Chapter IV) which is one of the poorest of the village, kindred relationships do not go beyond the second generation. Socio-economic obligations among the members of this gōṣṭhī are minimal.

In line with the non-corporate nature of Shimulia gōṣṭhī organization, there are no obligatory rules such as endogamous marriages to keep the landed property within the patrilineage as has been found among other South Asian Muslims (see Inayatullah 1956; Eglar 1960; Barth 1960; Honigman 1960; Ahmad 1970; Alavi 1971, 1973). I have found that Shimulāi villagers bought and sold land without any constraints on the part of the members of their natal gōṣṭhī.

Gōṣṭhī Identification

There are twenty-two gōṣṭhī in Shimulia. The gōṣṭhī are not readily identifiable by an outsider as gōṣṭhī do not have "caste names" as in the case of Hindus or uniform patronymic titles. Out of 22 gōṣṭhī only 10 have patronymic titles. The other 12 gōṣṭhī are

identified by various names, such as by the location of the patrilocal residence, or by the names of prominent members of the gōṣṭhī. In spite of unclear nomenclatures, villagers could readily identify the gōṣṭhī membership of village inhabitants. (For convenience, in the present discussion I have identified each gōṣṭhī by a capital letter A ... V.)

Gōṣṭhī Patronyms

There are no rigid rules for using patronymic titles for gōṣṭhī in Shimulia, and most gōṣṭhī do not have a patronymic title. However, ten do have uniform patronymic titles; these are: one Shoud, two Khan, three Bhuiyan, one Khandakar, one Munshī, and two Bepari. The title shoud comes from the Bengali word meaning merchant. Only one gōṣṭhī uses this title, and then only members aged 50 or more. Younger members, particularly those who are educated, do not use this title consistently. The genealogical data of the 22 gōṣṭhī show that members of several gōṣṭhī use the shoud title at a certain point in their life when its members were associated with jāmadāni manufacturing. The shoud title is associated with jāmdāni manufacturing as that particular gōṣṭhī owned a big jāmdāni factory in the village.

The title Khan came from Persian, and means master or ruler. In Shimulia, there are two gōṣṭhī (gōṣṭhī M and N) which consistently use this title. The title Bhuiyan from Bengali bhumi refers to land or ground. This title is historically associated with the famous "baro bhuyia" or the twelve Bhuiyan families of pre-Mughal and early Mughal times of Bengal (Wise 1974; quoted from Bertocci 1972). In Shimulia

there are three Bhuyian gōṣṭhī, and two gōṣṭhī (D and E) use this title consistently, while the members of the third Bhuyian gōṣṭhī rarely use it. One of the wealthy members of this gōṣṭhī does not use this title. He prefers the Munshi title. The title Munshi is derived from Arabic which refers to clerk. In Shimulia and in Bangladesh it is a patronym associated with religious education. In Shimulia, only one segment of gōṣṭhī O uses this patronym (Munshi Bārī). The other two segments use different titles. One segment consistently uses the title Mia (from Persian, honor) and the members of the other segment use Shoud, Mia, or no title at all.

The title Khandakār derives from the Persian Khawandgar "circumcisor of Muslim boys". Contrary to the meaning, people with this patronym played an important role in spreading Islam in Bengal (James Wise 1903: 28-29, from Bertocci 1970: 39). This patronymic implies high social status throughout Bengal. At present, this title does not imply honor in Shimulia. The members of Khandakār Gōṣṭhī (gōṣṭhī L, see Chapter IV) are in general poor and the members of the present generation do not use the title Khandakār because of their poverty. The title Bepāri from Bengali refers to petty trade. There are two gōṣṭhī in Shimulia which use this patronym, but young and educated members do not use it. Most of the time they use either Mia or go without any patronym.

We can conclude that the use of patronymic titles is not an important feature of gōṣṭhī organization in Shimulia. This is probably true all over Bangladesh. (I will discuss patronymic titles and their association with status designations in a later section.) Neither are there rigid rules regarding the use of the patronymic titles by

gōṣṭhī members of Shimulia and an individual has considerable flexibility in choosing a title.

Here is a case in which members of a gōṣṭhī belonging to five generations took four different titles.

Shabuddin Mia's FaFaFa, Kabir Mullah (a person who has religious education) (see Gōṣṭhī J) came from Mirpur, now a suburb of Dhaka city and settled down here. Kabir Mullah had one son, Atik Shoud who worked with his own jamdāni loom; Atik Shoud had one son Atar Ali Munshi. Atar Ali Munshi received some religious education for which he either took or was known by the villagers as Munshi. Members of the present generation use neither Shoud, Mullah or Munshi; they use Mia.

From the above discussion, it is seen that gōṣṭhī in Shimulia is a flexible unit and there are no rigid rules as to its structure. Inden and Nicholas (1977) have given important hints regarding the variant pattern of the Muslim kinship system, particularly with regard to the gōṣṭhī concept prevalent among the Muslims of Bengal. They point out:

There is another level, however, at which a significant difference appears between Muslims and Hindus: this is the level of the clan (kula). For Hindus, the clan is unified by sharing the bodily substance of its common seed-male (bīja-puruṣa). Muslims, by contrast, appear to draw a fundamental distinction between the living and the dead and to regard deceased ancestors as no longer part of the same order as living persons. Whereas Hindus feed and worship their ancestors, Muslims do not. When Hindus speak of kula they refer to the shared body relationship and the sharing code for conduct appropriate for janati whether they are living or dead. For Muslims, the sharing relationship of janati appears generally to be thought of as terminated by death. Thus, Muslims do not usually speak of their kula, but most commonly of their vamṣa or gōṣṭhī (1977: 99).

Inden and Nicholas have rightly pointed to some variant patterns of Bengali Muslim kinship. In contrast to the Hindu concept of Kula

(living and dead), Muslims make a distinction between the living and the dead and they never put dead ancestors in the same category as living persons, whereas Hindus feed and worship their dead ancestors. Therefore, there is a continuity in Hindu gōtra and kula (bīja-puruṣa), and the development of rigid rules with regard to kinship. The gōṣṭhī history of Shimulia reveals that continuity with the original gōṣṭhī of the migrant segments of the gōṣṭhī which settled in Shimulia is absent; gōṣṭhī members only vaguely remember their origins. Gōṣṭhī 0 illustrates these facts. This gōṣṭhī has three segments; each segment is completely independent of the others (see Chapter IV, Gōṣṭhī 0). Many members do not know that they come from the same gōṣṭhī. Also, these segments use different patronyms. These three segments of Gōṣṭhī 0 illustrate the lack of continuity of gōṣṭhī in Shimulia. Therefore, prescriptive rules with regard to the continuity of gotra, kula and baṅśa are absent in the Muslim gōṣṭhī organization.

Homestead

The original etymology of bārī probably is "water pot" representing a deity in worship.⁴ It is also a cognate of varika or vara which refers to an enclosure (Sen 1971: 645). In Shimulia as well as throughout Bangladesh, a bārī refers to a physical entity where, in most cases, members of a patrilineage live together. However, the term bārī is polysemic. For example, frequently people use gōṣṭhī or baṅśa and bārī interchangeably to mean patrilineage. It all depends on the context.

⁴Sukumar Sen's etymological dictionary of Bangali gives this definition. It seems that a residential locus centers upon a deity. This may have connections with the worship of bastu or bhita which is commonly performed by the Hindus belonging to a patrilocal residence. It seems that the Muslims of Bengal use the same term bārī as Hindus without knowing its ritual significance. Also, the Hindus consider their bārī as a ritual place.

Bārī also refers to the village. For example, when a villager goes to an unknown place, people ask about his identity by asking "Where is your bārī?" In this context bārī refers to his own village. Bārī can also refer to a family. Whenever a person asks someone to "come to my bārī" he refers to his family. This use of bārī is found throughout Bangladesh. But even though bārī carries different meanings, the primary meaning is of a residential locus of a patrilineage.

The members of a gōṣṭhī generally share a common residential locus which is known as bārī. The bārī is composed of several families. Ideally, a bārī is the residential locus of a single gōṣṭhī. However, in Shimulia there are some exceptions since some bārī have families which are agnatically unconnected to each other. For example, out of a total 22 gōṣṭhī, 14 are multiple gōṣṭhī bārī and the rest are single gōṣṭhī bārī (see Table 7).

The following factors are responsible for the development of such exceptional bārī: (1) The village of Shimulia was a river bed and the village was formed recently as a consequence of silting. This has contributed to the fact that half the present gōṣṭhī in Shimulia migrated from outside (see village history). Such migration sometimes resulted in the settlement of families belonging to different gōṣṭhī in a single bārī. (2) The recent emigration of Hindus from Shimulia en masse to India caused some bārī to become vacant. These were sold to Muslims before the migration took place. The Muslim occupancy of the abandoned Hindu bārī in most cases did not follow the agnatic rules of gōṣṭhī although some gōṣṭhī in Shimulia bought a few Hindu bārī and occupied them entirely. (3) In a few cases demographic pressure forced members

to take up new residences in abandoned Hindu bārī(s) along with members from other gōṣṭhī. (4) Last, the occurrence of Ghar jāmaī marriages which gave rise to bārī containing members of non-agnatic gōṣṭhī. Also, in a few instances, bārī are the extensions of a single gōṣṭhī. Despite such physical dislocations of gōṣṭhī members into different bārī, the members of the respective gōṣṭhī seem to have participated with their natal gōṣṭhī both during crises and on festive occasions like birth, death, marriage and religious festivals. The extent of participation by different members belonging to a scattered gōṣṭhī largely depends on their economic status, and the closeness of the participant members in relation to culturally defined kinship.

Hence, bārī in Shimulia is inhabited by several families which may or may not belong to the same gōṣṭhī. A paribār in a bārī is an independent unit. The residential quarters of the various families are situated on the edge of an uṭhān (courtyard). Any given bārī may include a variety of housing types, ranging from thatched houses to concrete buildings. Most families have a kitchen adjoining the residential quarters, preferably in the back. Also, each family has a few fruit trees and a few patches of kitchen vegetable gardens, as most families grow vegetables for domestic consumption. Almost every family raises chickens and ducks, not for domestic consumption, but as an additional source of income.

Each family in a bārī is an independent economic unit. The residential quarters, trees, and vegetable gardens are the property of the individual family. However, a bārī has some common property like a tank(s), and a guest house (which is known locally as boiṭhak khānā, literally, "sitting place"). Only in rare cases do individual families

have their own boiṭhak khānā and tank(s). A tank⁵ in a bārī is very important because it is the locale for washing and bathing, as well as fishing: it provides a substantial amount of fish for a bārī. However, wealthy persons raise fish in their own private tanks. Considerable social prestige is attached to having a personal tank; this is further enhanced if they have constructed a concrete staircase called pākā ghātā to facilitate washing and bathing.

In a bārī, the dwelling houses surround a courtyard which is called a uṭhān. Some bārī may have more than one uṭhān. The uṭhān serves many purposes, such as threshing and drying of the agricultural products. A family in a bārī may have one, two or more main dwelling houses depending on the economic condition of that family. If a family is wealthy, it will construct two or more houses facing the uṭhān. Adjoining them are the kitchen and poultry shed. A cow shed is constructed at a little distance from the main dwelling houses. Commonly, they are built near the guest house which is situated in the outer compound. Some wealthy families have their own uṭhān in which living quarters surround the uṭhān. The allocation of the dwellings may follow this rule: the parents will be allotted the main dwelling and adult sons with their wives may be allotted separate dwellings. In the case of poor families who do not have the means to build an additional dwelling for the adult offspring, they usually put up a partition made out of bamboo or jute

⁵The size of the tank in Shimulia varies. On an average, a tank ranges between 0.5-0.20 acres. Generally a tank is filled in two ways: (1) the water seeps naturally from the surrounding area, or (2) water is added to the tank through rain water during the monsoon. Fish are introduced into a tank in two ways: (1) fry of different kinds of fish are released into the tank, and (2) before dams were constructed, the floods during the monsoon brought in fish from the river.

sticks inside the main house to give the sons' families a place of their own.

Family (Paribār)

I have already mentioned that gōṣṭhī in Shimulia are not corporate groups. As a result, the families in a gōṣṭhī are each an independent economic unit. The family is also the basic unit of kinship organization and the basic productive unit of the village.

The Bangali word for family is paribār; this term is polysemic. For example, it can refer to one's wife or the aggregation of family members depending upon the context. The concept of paribār is expressed through categories like cula (oven, hearth), khānā (eating group) and ghar (literally house). The villagers determine the number of paribār by counting the culā (commensal unit) because the meal of a paribār is prepared in a single culā.⁶ Ghar (from sanskrit, Griha dwelling) is also used to refer to a paribār and is understood to refer to the people living in a given dwelling. Khānā is used to refer to paribār and means a commensal group.

The housing of families of Shimulia reflects social inequality, but there is no correlation with wealth and bārī location. In fact, both rich and poor may live within a bārī. The economic condition of a particular family can be told by looking at its housing conditions, as houses range from concrete buildings to tin sheds or mud-walled and

⁶ Islam (1974) in his work A Bangladesh Village: Conflict and Cohesion makes a distinction between ghar, bārī and paribār. For him ghar, bārī and paribār refer to nuclear family, extended family, and localized patrilineage, respectively. In my opinion, this definition is confusing. In Shimulia, both ghar and paribār are used interchangeably to refer to a family. Moreover, I question Islam's use of paribār as a localized patrilineage when the gōṣṭhī clearly refers to patrilineage. From Shimulia data bārī refers to a localized residential unit(s) of a gōṣṭhī. Ahmed's (1973) definitions of these terms basically resemble mine (see Ahmed 1973).

Table 7

Gos̄thī Composition: Households, barī, Landownership and Population

<u>Gos̄thī</u>	Number of Households	Number of <u>Barī</u>	<u>Gos̄thī</u> Total Land Ownership (acres)	Total Population per <u>Gos̄thī</u>
A	2	2	6.30	16
B	8	2	22.32	78
C	4	2	1.45	31
D	18	6	48.87	122
E	24	6	19.20	158
F	10	3	6.45	66
G	5	1	3.00	28
H	12	2	15.60	90
I	41	3	7.20	214
J	5	1	13.80	42
K	11	3	8.81	82
L	4	1	2.17	18
M	4	1	22.05	67
N	2	1	6.00	19
O	38	8	67.31	286
P	11	1	10.71	77
Q	5	1	1.12	35
R	3	3	15.80	35
S	13	4	19.45	94
T	23	5	52.15	197
U	9	1	6.45	68
V	1	1	0.90	8
Total	253	58	358.11	1831

thatched hamlets. In Shimulia, there are 11 concrete buildings, most of which were built recently. However, two concrete buildings are old, one belonged to the former Hindu gōmsta of the Bhagyakul Zamindari estate and the other is the old mosque which was built by one of the prominent members of the Shoud Gōsthī.

The majority of the houses are made of mud. The houses belonging to the rich are generally spacious with high ceilings and with neatly plastered walls. In contrast, the mud houses belonging to the poor have low ceilings with little ventilation. Some houses of this kind are so low that an adult must bend to enter. The roofs are either thatched or made of palm leaves. Some have tin roofs.

Most of the families in Shimulia have a kitchen adjoining the main house, although many of the poor families do not have a proper kitchen, instead they cook in the main house. Generally, kitchens are neither spacious nor high ceilinged. The roof is usually thatched and the walls made of jute sticks, bamboo or dhuinca.⁷ A kitchen has several culā or cooking stoves. The villagers use wood, jute, dhuinca, hay, leaves of trees and cow dung as fuel. Most of the families also use the kitchen as an eating place. Generally, men eat first sitting on the piri (literally plank, low wooden stool) and the women serve the men. Children, irrespective of sex, usually eat with the men. A few wealthy families make separate eating arrangements for laborers and servants. A kitchen among the Muslims of Shimulia is not a ritually clean place as it is among Hindus. Anybody can enter a Muslim kitchen without polluting it.

⁷Dhuinca is a leguminous plant large ly grown on newly formed alluvial land. It grows with extraordinary rapidity and serves as fuel.

The cooking activities of families are subject to seasonal variations. For example, during the dry season (November-February), cooking activities are done in the open. During this period, women build earthen culā in the open close to the kitchen. This is the practice of rich and poor alike. Women shift their cooking activities back to the kitchen soon after the end of the dry season.

A few families have furniture in their houses. Poor families have little to call their own; their only belongings are the bedding, a few clay and aluminum utensils, big earthen jars to store food, some sikā (a container made out of rope) to store belongings which are suspended from the ceiling. Rich families may have a considerable amount of furniture which often follows urban designs. Their houses are furnished with reclining chairs made out of either cane, wood, or synthetic materials, wardrobes, show cases, dressers and fashionable cots. Families belonging to the middle strata may have one or two cowki (cots), some chairs, benches and a few jalcowkis (a small cot for bathing) and piris (planks to sit on). Most of the families in Shimulia do not have cowkis, they sleep on mats spread on the floor.

Types of Families

There are 253 Muslim families in Shimulia of which 76 are joint and 177 are nuclear. All of them follow patrilineal descent rules. For example, the property of a family is transferred from father to sons, although daughters share property in theory. This is due to the influence of the Hindu Bangali and Assamese law of inheritance known as daya bhag (Derrett 1957) which states that only sons will inherit

Table 8

Types of Families in Shimulia

Number of Nuclear Families	Average Size of Nuclear Family	Number of Joint Families	Average Size of Joint Family	Average Family Size	Total Families
177 (70%)	6.59	76 (30%)	8.73	7.34	253 (100%)

because after the marriage of a daughter in Hindu kinship, she formally becomes a member of her husband's gotra. Also, a daughter normally does not take her share of property to her husband's family. Rather, she wants to keep her property with her brothers as an insurance against trouble. Similar data have been found by McCarthy (1967) and Bertocci (1970) in the district of Comilla. In Shimulia, apart from the good relations economy molds the basis of a family as wealth is important in maintaining kin relationships. In the following, I will discuss different types of families in Shimulia.

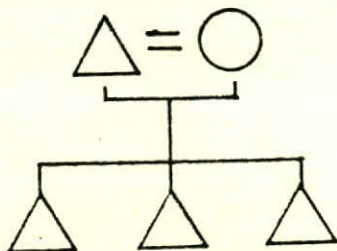
Nuclear Family

In Shimulia, the majority of the families are nuclear. A nuclear family consists of father and mother with their children. The father is the only breadwinner of the family. Sometimes this type of family includes a widowed mother. Economic considerations are the basis of the family types. If we look at the development cycle of a family, it starts with the formation of a nuclear family, and the cycle culminates with working married sons. In the following I will present a case of a nuclear family in Shimulia.

Mandop Ali's Family

Mandop Ali is the head of a small single family in Shimulia. At present, he is 35. He is married and has three sons. His wife is 25 and takes care of the household. Mandop Ali is a landless laborer who works for a daily wage. He has three sons who are 8, 6 and 4 respectively. He cannot send his sons to school because of his poverty. His eldest sons helps him with household work. Within two or three years his eldest son will start working, most probably as a servant in a rich household.

Figure 1



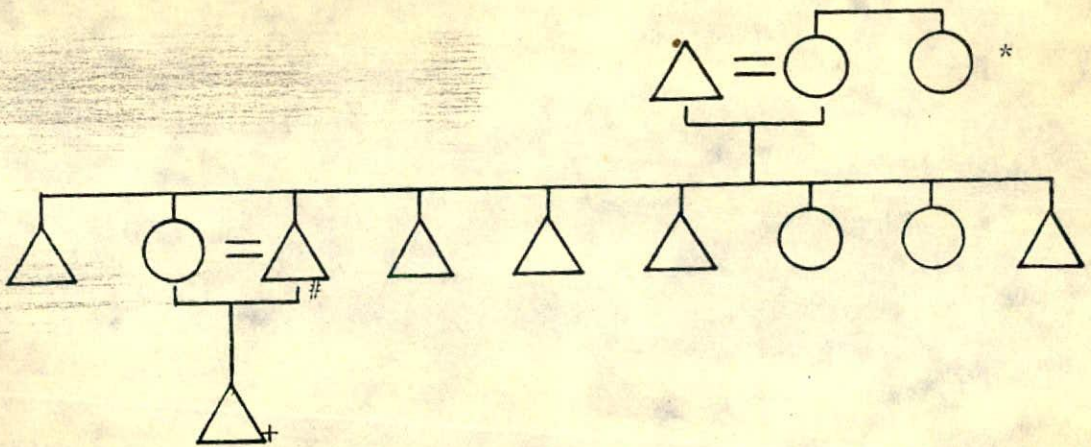
A large quasi-nuclear family: However, there are 17 families which are structured in a manner slightly different from the one mentioned before. These families consist of parents with their married and unmarried sons, daughters and a few relatives, along with a few servants and maid servants. In some cases, this includes a daughters husband (not uxori-local). In fact, these units look like joint families except that the head is the only breadwinner. I would like to call this type a large size quasi-nuclear family. Following is a case of such a large quasi-nuclear family.

Abdul Majid's Family

Abdul Majid's family is one of the richest and largest families (goshthi S) in the village. He has 12.6 acres of land making his holdings one of the largest in the village. There are 11 members in his family excluding two servants and a maid servant. He has four sons and two daughters, one of whom is married and is living here with her husband and her son. Her husband is a Master's student at Dhaka University and Abdul Majid has been bearing all his educational expenses. In addition, Abdul has one son in college and three others in school. One of his daughters also attends school. In his family, there are two relatives who do not belong to his elementary family (his daughter's husband and his wife's elder widowed sister). Abdul Majid is the only earning member of the family. The bulk of his income comes from agriculture. He runs some type of an import business as additional resource. (At the conclusion of my field work Abdul Majid died suddenly from a cancer operation, whereupon the eldest son took charge.)

Figure 2

Abdul Majid's Family



* Majid's Wo widowed sister

Majid's daughter's husband (non Ghar Jāmāi)

+ Majid's daughter's son

The above case is illustrative of the structure of a "large quasi-nuclear" family in Shimulia. Most of these are wealthy. They are centered mostly around a large amount of land through which the head of the family can provide for the members of the elementary family and other affiliated kinsfolk.

Joint Family

A joint family in Shimulia consists of a father, a mother, and their working and non-working sons and unmarried daughters in line with the general South Asian pattern. The father is the head of the family and the working members hand over their earnings to him. In the development cycles of families, the joint family does not persist for a long period of time (see Ahmed 1973). Such families tend to break up when the working members of the family get married and each member starts to think of saving for its future and hasten the creation of a new familial unit out of its family of orientation. At that point, jealousy and quarrels among sons' wives as well as quarrels between the mother-in-law and sons' wives accelerates the breakup. Quarrels among sons' wives revolve around an actual or alleged suspicion of clandestine savings. I have often heard the shrill voices of the women in the village uttering, "Why does my husband alone maintain the family as well as the idle mouths," referring to the non-working members of the family. When suspicion among the members grows, it ultimately leads to the break up.

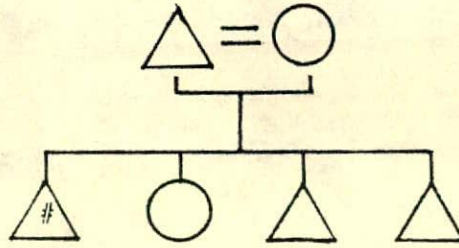
Faziluddin's Family

This family is one of the poorest in Shimulia. The head of the family is Mohammad Faziluddin who is 55 and is a day laborer. He inherited 0.45 acres of land from his father. At present, he

is landless (he lost his land 10 years ago). In his family, there are six members of which two are working besides himself. He has three sons and two daughters. The oldest son is 17 and is working as a day laborer. The second son is 14 and is also a day laborer. The youngest son is 10 and will start working within two or three years. The eldest daughter is 16 and the youngest is 12. Both the daughters are unmarried. Faziluddin maintains his family by pooling his working sons' wages together.

Figure 3

Faziluddin's Family showing Potential Nuclear Family in the near Future



Potential nuclear family

The above case illustrates a joint family in Shimulia. Below, I present a case of a joint family which broke up about six years ago when two sons got married and established separate households.

Karim Mia's Family

Karim Mia is 80 and is one of the poorest persons in Shimulia. He is a one-time vegetable grower and peddler of chutney but at present, maintains his family from the amount he got by selling some portion of his family land. He has a wife and two daughters. During the concluding phase of my research his older daughter was married. When his two sons started to work, one became a mill worker and the other one a chutney peddler. Both the sons started to hand over their earnings to the father. When Karim Mia accumulated some money from

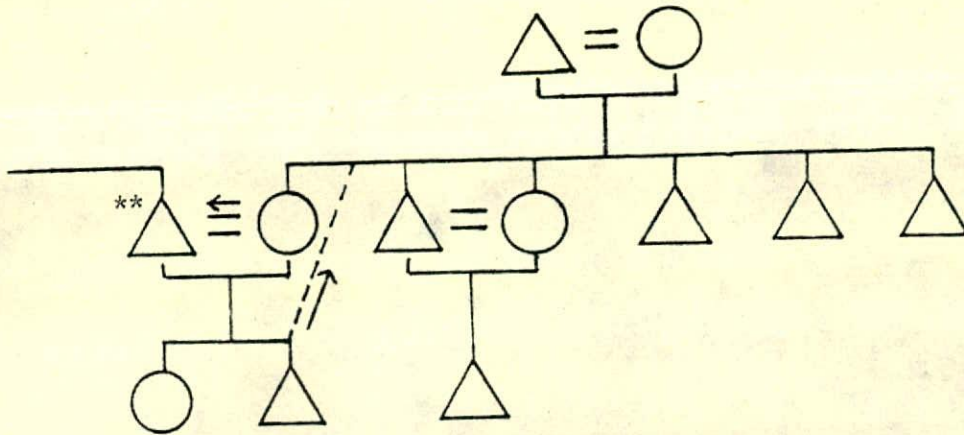
his trade, he decided to buy a bhiti bāri from the emigrated Hindus of the village. While buying land from the Hindus, he incurred debts which he could never repay. Meanwhile two of his sons got married and started to save for themselves and finally established separate households by putting up separate houses. At the time of my field work, the eldest son took up residence in Demra where he works in the mill. Only the youngest son continued to live in the same bāri but in a manner aloof from the rest of the occupants.

Large joint family: There are 18 large joint families. They consist of a father, a mother, their adult sons and daughters. This may include sons' wife(s) and children. At times, daughters' children live in the family. It may also include servants, maid servants, and a lodging master to tutor the children of the family. Members of the large joint families are involved in various types of occupations. Recent trends have prepared some members to try out various urban occupations leaving one member (son) to take care of the land. Jahangir (1979) and Lindenbaum (1978) have also come across similar trends with regard to such families in Dhaka and Comilla districts respectively. Below I present the case of such a joint family in Shimulia.

Akram Khan's Family

Akram Khan is one of the wealthiest farmers of the village (gosthi M). He is now 70 and owns 9.00 acres of land. Also, he has under his possession 4.5 acres of land which he share crops. He inherited from his father only 0.5 acres of land and he is newly rich. In Akram Khan's family there are nine members of whom seven belong to his elementary family. They are his wife, son's wife, a grandson, and four other sons. His daughter and her son live with him. Further, his household includes five servants, a maid and a lodging tutor. Of Akram Khan's four sons, two are working. One, a university graduate, is working at present with the government cooperative association. The other working son is a high school graduate with a primary school training certificate and a village primary school teacher. The younger sons are college and school students respectively. Akram Khan's working sons hand over their earnings to him. Akram Khan is the supreme authority of the family although he accepts the advice of his two sons. At the time of my field work, this family was prosperous and I do not see any danger of its break up in the near future. Even if Akram Khan dies, this family will continue to be joint under the guidance of the oldest son for some time.

Figure 4

Akram Khan's Family

** Daughter married out and lives with her husband's gōsthī; only one son and a daughter live with her father.

Status Designations

A gōsthī or bañsa in Shimulia is also a status group. For a clear understanding of status designations of the Muslims of Shimulia, let me briefly introduce the ranking system of the Muslims of Bangladesh. Hopefully, this will show the relevance of the Muslim ranking system instantiated in Shimulia.

The literature on the Muslim ranking system in the South Asian subcontinent has postulated two broad categories among the Muslims.⁸

⁸ In fact, the Āsrāph-Ājlāph dichotomy is present all over India (see particularly Imtiaz Ahmed 1973). Also, the four-fold classifications Syed, Shaikh, Mughal and Pathan are present in the Muslim literature. These treatises contain the comparison of the four-fold varna: Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya, and Sudra with the Muslim stratification in India. For example, Syed and Shaikh are put into the Brahmin category, Mughal and Pathan are categorized as Kshatriya. All the Muslim occupational groups are put into vaisya and Sudra categories (Blunt 1931; Gait 1911; Karim 1956; Anasari 1969; Dumont: 1970).

These categories are Āsrāph (noble born) and Ātrāph/Ājlāph (low born, literally 'wretches' mean people according to Gait 1902). The Āsrāph category is divided into four groups. They are Syed, Shaikh, Mughal and Pāthān. Syeds and Shaikhs claim descent from the prophet Muhammad and Arabs respectively. Pāthāns and Mughal are ethnic names implying descent from these ethnic groups. On the other hand the Ātrāph/Ājlāph refer to the lower category of Muslims which includes occupational and peasant groups, more specifically all those who cannot claim Āsrāph descent in general.

The decennial Census Reports (1872-1931) show the assumption of Āsrāph status by Ātrāph/Ājlāph groups in Bengal. In particular, the Census Reports of 1872 and 1891 express considerable doubt about the authenticity of the descent groups claimed by the Bengali Muslims. For example, the Āsrāph or noble descent groups among the Bengali Muslims cannot be accepted as the real Āsrāph groups like those found elsewhere in India. The report remarks "It is quite certain that there are not a quarter million of true Syed or a half million real Pathans. These titles are adopted by the families of the higher rank Muhammadan society, particularly by those whose ancestors came from Hindustan" (Census 1891: 269-70). The author of this report further shows that Muslim hierarchy in Bengal allowed the incorporation of Ātrāph into Āsrāph groups.⁹

⁹Wali, a sympathizer of Āsrāph class shows how the lower class Muslims incorporated themselves into the Āsrāph class by virtue of their economic prosperity. He says "In parts of Nadia, Jessore, Bakerganj, Dacca and Faridpur, lower class families on account of prosperity of one and the poverty of the other. When these unequal or ghair kafuv marriages take place, the lower class would assume such titles as Munshi, Mullah, Biswas, Jawarder and Miyan and give up handling ploughs. These men are called Atraf Bhalamanus or an atraf made a gentleman" (Wali 1894: 7,108).

... any Muhammadan who is well off, though cannot go from one caste to another, can gradually enter the ranks of the Ashraf. The proverb "last year I was a jolaha, this year I am a sheikh; next year if prices rise I will be a saifad" is well known and it represents what often occurs, though the process of promotion is not quite so rapid in reality as it is in the proverb. A well to do man of functional group, say a jolah, will discard the word jolaha, call himself sekh and assume a more respectable name, and he will be hospitable and will slowly secure for himself a circle of friends from the poorer classes of Ashraf community. He will then marry into an Ashraf family probably of doubtful status, and his son will be recognized as true Ashraf. (Census 1901: 441-42).

Gait's observation shows the presence of fictive ascriptive descent groups among the Muslims of Bengal. He also recognized the economic basis of the Muslim ranking system, i.e. that it is founded on economic factors. His observation carries the further implication that "Ashrafization" is an ideal type (see also Karim 1956: 128-142, and Vreede-de Stuars 1968: 3-27, from Bertocci 1970: 73). As the notion of "Ashrafization" lacks formal structural features, the Āsrāph group does not have any physical or a ritual distinction from others. Rather, the Āsrāph group is identifiable by comportment. There are no set rules or categories to identify the various ranking groups.

My investigation (Arefeen 1976) on both historical and ethnographical literature revealed that fictive ascriptive descent or high status designation (nobility of descent) is an ideal that people claim in order to affiliate themselves with high status groups in Bangladesh. For example, there is no uniformity in status symbols (like honorific patronymic titles) so that a particular group carrying those symbols automatically is given higher status. Rather, titles vary from locality to locality so that a particular fictive ascriptive group which belongs to a high status group in one region does not necessarily belong to a similar high status group in another region.

Let me now identify the taxonomic-lexicon categories used by the Bengali Muslims for high social status. These categories are khāndān, kulin, śarīph, āsrāph, bhālo and uncu bañśa (see Mukerjee 1948, 1957, 1971; Karim 1956, 1962; Khan 1960, F.R. Khan 1962; Aziz 1962; Papanek 1969; Arefeen 1976; Choudhury 1978).

The term khāndān came from Persian where, briefly, it means a family or a lineage. Among Bangladeshi Muslims, however, it identifies high social status. The term kulin¹⁰ came from the Sanskrit word kul which means a clan or a lineage, and among Bengali Hindus identifies those with upper caste status. Muslims of Bengal use this term more or less synonymously with khāndānī. The words śarīph and āsrāph came from the same Arabic root which means master. In Arabia syeds are known as śarīph or āsrāph; they are the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad. For the Bangali Muslims, this term also identifies khāndānī (kulin) status. The term bhālo or uncu bañśa carries a similar khāndānī reference to high status (bhālo, good uncu, upper; bañśa lineage). In other words, all of these are high status designations.

In addition, the Muslims of Bangladesh have some other commonly used honorific titles that designate high status. Most ethnographies

¹⁰ Among Hindus the word 'kul' means a lineage of considerable geneological depth. It signified "coded bodily substance" i.e., Kaulinya, and persons who held this inherited rank were referred as kulinas. As a result, a few Brahman families in Bengal were regarded as superior with respect to social prestige and their sons obtained high dowries in marriage. The result was that each of them married a large number of wives, sometimes as many as fifty or sixty or more. These wives lived in their father's house and many of them scarcely saw their husbands after their marriages. According to social usage, many girls could be married only to kulins, and therefore had to remain unmarried until their death. It was not uncommon for a number of such girls to marry between 20 and 50 years of age to marry an old man just to remove their maidenhood, which was a practice regarded as disgraceful. However, kulinism did not disappear from the Hindu society in Bengal until quite late in the 19th century.

on the Muslims of Bangladesh note the following honorific patronymic titles: Syed, Shaikh, Mughal, Pāthān, Mir, Khandakār, Majumdār, Chowdhury, Kāzī and Munshī. I have already discussed Shoud, munshi, khandakār, bhuyian, bepari and therefore they need not be repeated again. The patronymic title Mir came from the Persian word which implies "chief" or "ruler". This title is used as the patronym of the Syed. The title Majumdār is associated with revenue collection (see Sinha 1962: 39, from Bertocci 1972) and with ownership and control of land (jum, Persian; Jami Bangali; land: from Bertocci 1972: 38). In fact, this title is used equally by Hindus and Muslims of Bengal, where it is a patronym identifying high status. The title Chowdhury is also associated with land ownership and revenue collection; it is derived from Persian and identified estate managers during the Mughal rule (Webster 1910: 82ff, from Bertocci 1972: 32). This title was commonly adopted by the Zamindars of Bengal. The title Kāzī derives from the Arabic qādi, the title of a judge. This is also a honorific patronymic title.

A gōṣṭhī or bañśa are status carriers. Bañśa are divided into three categories - uncu, maydham and nincu bañśa meaning respectively upper, middle, and lower status groups.¹¹ Patronymic titles are not correlated with gōṣṭhī status. Only one title (Munshī) carries a high status designation in Shimulia. For example, among the Khan gōṣṭhī, only three families belonging to Khan Gōṣṭhī I (Gōṣṭhī M) aspire to khāndānī status. These families have amassed wealth recently and accumulated social accoutrements like establishing marital

¹¹ Classe (1966), Bertocci (1972), and Jahangir (1979) have found similar classifications, with respect to ranking, among the Bengali Muslims.

contacts with khāndānī families, education and the meticulous observance of pardah. At this point they have a self-ascribed khāndānī status and it is highly likely that these families will be conferred khāndānī status by the villagers and eventually the title khan will be recognized as an honorific title. In Shimulia, the three bhuyian gōṣṭhī are not considered khāndānī gōṣṭhī, although elsewhere in Bangladesh this title carries honor. However, a few members of this gōṣṭhī aspire to be khāndānī. These members are wealthy and hold power in the village. Interestingly, in Shimulia the khandakār lineage is not considered to be khāndānī, although villagers say "In terms of honor they are uncu no doubt but they are very poor, therefore they are no longer khāndān in the village." At present all the members of this gōṣṭhī are very poor and do not use this patronym (see Chapter IV, Gōṣṭhī L). In Shimulia, the gōṣṭhī which is considered the highest in terms of khāndānī status as determined by an opinion poll¹² does not have an honorific title. This gōṣṭhī is Shoud (see Chapter IV, Gōṣṭhī T); its patronym is shoud. Shoud has no relevance to khāndānī status elsewhere in Bangladesh. But in Shimulia, the Shoud gōṣṭhī is recognized as khāndānī as it manifests socially recognized khāndānī symbols.

¹² In determining the khāndān and non-khāndān status (rank-order) in the village I used opinion-polls among the villagers. To do so, I applied the following ways to determine the rank order of the village. During field work, I had many opportunities to observe and participate in conversation with Shimulia villagers. Frequently we spoke about the rank order issue in the village. Another time I withdrew from the conversation and simply listened and observed the flow of conversation about ranking. Specifically, I asked different villagers coming from different strata about their rank. Finally, my own observation and judgement based on opinion polls of the villagers helped me in determining rank order in the village.

These data provide insight into the mechanisms of status in Shimulia. When a family accumulates wealth, it looks for Khāndānī status. In doing so, it develops marital connections with a khāndānī family. With these marital connections it can become a self-proclaimed khāndānī family. It may or may not take an honorific patronym or it may continue to retain its former title as in the case of the Shoud Gōṣṭhī (Gōṣṭhī T). This indicates that overt designation of khāndānī status is not as important as the recognition of khāndān status by the local people.

Shimulia status designation shows four important features:

(1) The basis of status is primarily economic. When a family achieves wealth, it can attain khāndānī status if it can keep its economic resources. (2) There are few rigid rules with respect to status designations. (3) There is a wide range in the flexibility of status designation. (4) Status designations make it very difficult to identify the actual status assigned to a group. Rather, status is discernible

by behavior. In this sense, we can term khāndānī as an ideal notion, but it is manifested in social interactions.

There are also a few families which are aspirants to high status and, in fact, they have accumulated a considerable amount of wealth. It seems that these families will eventually attain khāndānī status if their members maintain their economic well-being. In this connection I have heard villagers say "nobody in this gōṣṭhī is worth mentioning excepting so and so" or "He is wealthy and nice but his gōṣṭhī status is nincu (low)." This clearly reflects the flexible social status.

Marriage

People extend their kinship ties mostly through affinal connections. Although the Muslims of Shimulia are patrilineal, the importance of matrilineal and affinal ties cannot be ignored as noted earlier (Bertocci 1970; Islam 1974; Jahangir 1979). At times the importance of affinal ties becomes very conspicuous, especially when a family uses affinal ties in gaining status. Islam (1974) found out that marriage plays an important role in extending one's kin networks in Bengali Muslim society. He remarks:

To become a prestigious man in the village it is necessary for one to have a network of affinal relatives. Careers may be built, in agriculture or in any other field, by managing and dealing with relations, either affinal or blood. Hence, the desire and effort to elevate kin relationships are continuous on the part of the villagers. The best way of expanding these relationships is through marriage of daughters and sons to wealthy and powerful, already established paribars. (1974: 78).

Unlike the rigid Hindu marriage rules of Bengal (Gangopadhyay 1964; Klass 1966; Sanyal 1971; Dumont 1970; Davis 1976; Inden and Nicholas 1977), Muslim marriage rules are flexible. The Shimulia Muslims do not have a caste system in any literal sense and there are no rules like caste endogamy and gotra exogamy. Islamic rules accept both parallel and cross-cousin marriages. The marriage data from Shimulia reveal that parallel cousin marriage is not a dominant feature of marriage nor is it a preferential type as is found among the Muslims of Pakistan and Northern India (Eglar 1960; Hcnigmann 1960; Barth 1960; Korson 1971; Ahmad 1970, 1977; Alavi 1971, 1972). Also, data show that endogamy based on biraderi, zāt and quom are not features of marriage in Shimulia.

Arranged marriage is the dominant form in Shimulia. Normally, a father takes the initiative in arranging the marriages of his sons and daughters and he is the final arbiter in this matter. In selecting a marriage partner a family puts utmost importance on the good bañśa, referring to the khāndānī status, of a family. I found that bañśa considerations are frequently overruled or outweighed by exceptional qualities in the prospective partner such as education and wealth.¹³ As I will document below, education and wealth are becoming increasingly important factors in marriage negotiations. I will comment on this later, with some cases. The only son of a father is highly desirable as a prospective bridegroom since he is the sole heir to parental property. The implication is that the bride will be happy as she will be well taken care of by her husband to be. Data on marriages in the past as well as the present show frequent deviation from the ideal notion. In the past, marriages occurred between different gōṣṭhī irrespective of gōṣṭhī status. For example, I heard people saying that there could be no possibilities of marital connection between two given gōṣṭhī because the status of the two gōṣṭhī in question was quite incompatible. But upon inquiry I found that cases of marriages between two unequal gōṣṭhī do exist. For example, marriages occurred between gōṣṭhī D and gōṣṭhī O; but if one asks about such a possibility, the villagers will rule it out. Also, if an ordinary villager is asked if there is a possibility of marriage between gōṣṭhī T and gōṣṭhī E, he will immediately deny such a chance. In actual fact, however, there appear to be few restrictions in the selection of marriage partners except for particular relatives

¹³ Hara (1967) and Jahangir (1979) observed similar situations with regard to grooms. (See Hara page 98; Jahangir 108-1090).

with whom one cannot enter into a marital connection.

Marriage in Shimulia is an economic and social transaction. Each individual in the village considers it to be a strategy -- how best an individual can play the game, particularly with regard to elevating one's status, extension of affinal ties and the flow of economic goods. There is a flow of economic goods from bride's family to grooms' or vice-versa depending on the social status of the individual parties. For example, if the bridegroom is highly regarded, that is, if he is an educated individual, the bride's family will provide him with cash, ornaments and household furniture. In some cases the bride's family bears the expense of the marriage ceremony. In return, the bride's family will elevate its social status by extending affinal kinship ties with an educated and kāndānī gōṣṭhī. In the case of grooms the former consideration overrides the latter. This seems to apply to all of Bangladesh (see cases: 1, 2, 3).

I have noticed that people are extremely conscious of the transactions involved in a particular marriage. Villagers are concerned about these transactions, making itemized guesses of how much a donor gave, and how much was received. These transactions are termed denā pāna, literally assets and liabilities. To my surprise, I learned that the villagers are aware of the statuses of the parties involved and they know precisely in which directions the economic goods flow.

Muslim marriage in Shimulia is a contract; it is not a sacrament.

¹⁴ One can never marry one's mother, daughter, sister, aunt, both paternal and maternal aunts, daughters of brothers and sisters, foster mother and foster sisters, wife's mother, step daughters, sons' wives and wife's sister (when one's wife is alive).

It has been observed that the opinion of the father of the bride and bridegroom is final, but in the case of a boy there is a certain amount of leeway. When a man enters in a marital contract with a woman, he has to pay the mahar.¹⁵ According to the prescriptions of Islam the groom must pay the mahar (bridal gift) to the bride and it is an essential part of the contract. Mahar rose as a kind of equivalent for the rights which the husband acquires over the wife. Also, the law provides that half of the mahar money be given to the bride before the marriage is consummated. But customary law does not prescribe it as an obligatory payment; rather, mahar is strictly kept on paper. In most cases the amount of mahar reflects the statuses of the contracting parties. For example, if the bridegroom gives an unusually large amount of mahar it will signify that the bride has higher status than the groom; in such cases we can assume that the flow of goods moves from the bridegroom's side to the bride.

In Shimulia there are hypogamous, hypergamous, and isogamous marriages. There is no explicit rule of village endogamy or exogamy. Most of the marriages are recorded as isogamous. In such marriages the transactions between the bride's and groom's parties are balanced with respect to the flow of goods. I have computed the expenditures of a few such recent marriages and to my great surprise have found that both parties have spent approximately an equal amount of money on the

¹⁵ From Hebrew Mohar and Syrian Mahra. They refer to the bridal gift. But the original meaning of the word is "purchase money." The Muslim Law provides that mahar is a gift which the bridegroom has to give to the bride when the contract of the marriage is made, thus becoming the wife's property. In the pre-Islamic period, the mahar was handed over to the wali i.e. the guardian of the girl. This indicated strongly that originally mahar was the purchase price for the bride. However, Islam attached prestige to mahar by declaring it as a reward, a legitimate compensation which the woman can claim in all cases and is the property of the wife (Encyclopaedia of Islam 1936).

marriage.

Statistically, both hypogamous and hypergamous marriages are insignificant in the village, but they are vitally important because these marriages show some significant trends of change as education and urban connections are becoming crucial factors in marriage negotiations in Shimulia. Let us examine a few cases.

Case 1: Talimuddin Khan's daughter's marriage: hypergamous marriage; crucial role of education and urban links.

I have already mentioned that gōṣṭhī M, particularly Akram Khan and his brothers are very wealthy and are aspirant high status group in the village (see gōṣṭhī M). However, this gōṣṭhī about one generation ago was poor and belonged to one of the nincu gōṣṭhī of the village. Although the brothers have accumulated wealth and power, the khandanī gōṣṭhī of the village (like Shoud and Munshi) do not regard it as a khandanī, pointing out that there is no comparison between them. Even other nincu gōṣṭhī have some reservation about this particular gōṣṭhī. Despite these problems, this gōṣṭhī is marching towards prosperity and hence high status. Akram Khan's second brother Talimuddin Khan is wealthy. Apart from a considerable amount of land which he has accumulated, he has a wholesales business of sand for construction purposes. Talimuddin Khan selected a bridegroom for his daughter from another village. The groom is a university graduate and comes from a considerably educated gōṣṭhī that has wide connections in the urban setting. However, the bridegroom himself comes from a poor family. Besides bearing the expenses of the marriage ceremony, Talimuddin Khan gave his daughter's husband Tk. 37,000 (\$1,850.00) in cash in addition to gold jewelry, furniture, and household goods. In this manner, Talimuddin Khan has enlarged his circle of affinal ties with urban connections. I have also found that it has increased its status, although the Shoud and Munshi gōṣṭhī still consider it a nincu baṅśa in the village.

The above is clearly an example of hypergamous marriage. Let me next illustrate a hypogamous liason, as also a case where education plays a significant role.

Case 2: Abdul Kalam Shoud's daughter's marriage: hypogamous marriage; significance of education in marriage negotiations.

Abdul Kalam Shoud is one of the wealthiest persons in the village. He is also the head of a big joint family and his sons are well educated. His oldest son is the only Master degree holder of the village and is also a high middle-level government official. His second son is a university graduate and is a contractor and supplier for the Bangladesh Water and Power Development Organization. His two other sons attend college and school. Apart from this, Kalam Shoud belongs to the top most khandani of the village (Gos̄thī T). In addition, he is a deed-writer from which he earns a good cash income. He is unanimously given high prestige. The marriages of his two daughters are interesting cases since they are contracted with nincu baṅṣā of the village (Gos̄thī E and Gos̄thī G). Kalam Shoud idealized the situation pointing out that baṅṣā status is the important factor in selecting a marriage. As an example, he told me that his son's wife (Master degree holder's wife) is good because she belongs to a good baṅṣā. In fact, I have found that she is a graduate with wide urban connections. It is interesting to note that his daughter's marriage contradicts what he said or believed. His oldest daughter married into Gos̄thī G to Sabir Ahmed, a person who is a high school graduate and who is presently working as a clerk in a ration shop in the Adamjee Jute Mill. Sabir Ahmed is the only son. His father is alive and at one time worked as a day laborer. The latter owned about 0.30 acres of land, but Sabir Ahmed, Kalam Shoud's daughter's husband is prospering and has added 0.60 acres of land. Sabir Ahmed sent a proposal to marry Kalam Shoud's daughter, for which the bridegroom would bear all the expenses. I asked Kalam Shoud why he agreed to such a match as the groom has no baṅṣā status. Kalam Shoud replied that he agreed to this marriage because the groom was prospering; he was the only son and provided all the expenses. Moreover, the bridegroom is a nice person. This marriage has provided the groom with an opportunity to develop valuable affinal kinship ties which he considers important. Kalam Shoud's second daughter is married into Gos̄thī E. This gos̄thī is also nincu baṅṣā. Kalam Shoud's second daughter is married to a carpenter who is the only son of a wealthy person. His father's father was alleged to have been caught once as a cattle thief. Kalam Shoud agreed to this marriage because the groom is the only son of his father and will eventually inherit his property. Kalam Shoud told me that he did not spend any money in the wedding: the groom's father had borne all the expenses of the wedding. With this marriage Kalam Shoud's daughter's husband has established a new important tie in his relationship with the Shoud gos̄thī which has become intimate. During my field work I observed him visiting Kalam Shoud almost every day.

Case 3: Abdul Majid's daughter's marriage: crucial role of education in marriage negotiation

Abdul Majid is one of the wealthiest persons in the village (see Gos̥thī S). Also, he is a local faction leader. Abdul Majid's ~~daughter's marriage is an interesting case.~~ It reflects the importance of education in breaking the status barrier in the village. Abdul Majid gave his eldest daughter in marriage to one Rahul Karim who at the time of my field work was a Master's student at Dhaka University. Rahul Karim comes from a poor family in the district of Comilla. He first came to the village as a live-in-tutor and used to live with Kalam Shoud's family and taught his youngest son and daughter for which he received free board and lodging. Rahul Karim graduated from the university and entered Dhaka University as a Master's student. Abdul Majid was impressed by this young man's potential and offered him his daughter in marriage, promising to bear all his future educational expenses. At the time of my field work, I found that Rahul Karim was continuing his education at Dhaka University. Abdul Majid spent much of his time in Dhaka and clearly realized the importance of education and urban connections. He anticipated that his son-in-law would obtain a good job in the city expanding his kindred and affiliation.

I have already mentioned that people in Shimulia, particularly the educated, have been changing the focus of their attention in the marriage field from the rural to the urban area. Even ordinary villagers think of extending their kinship ties to urban settings. However, they cannot do so because of their lack of economic resources. An interesting example is that of the marriages of the three university graduates of the village. All three have entered into affinal ties in Dhaka city thus widening their kinship and friendship circle which is very important for job and business connections in the city.

I have already discussed ghar jā māi while discussing gōs̥thī organization in Shimulia. In this section, I will discuss this issue briefly.

In Shimulia, and throughout Bangladesh, a residence pattern exists which does not require patrilocal residence. This residence is known as

Types of Marriage in Shimulia

	Intra-Village (inter <u>gōsthī</u>)	Inter-Village Marriages	Cross Cousin Marriages	Parallel Cousin Marriages	Char-jāmāi Marriages	Sororate	Total Marriages
No.	87	222	2	7	4	1	323
%	27.0	68.73	0.61	2.16	1.23	0.30	100

ghar jāmāi: in it, the husband takes up residence at the wife's house. I am not avoiding the concept of uxorilocality; it does not fit well in the Bangladesh situation.

In Shimulia, cases of ghar jāmāi marriages are rare. I have found only four such cases out of 323 marriages I have recorded. However, there has not been any change with respect to this marriage pattern in Shimulia so far.

Both levirate and sororate are accepted procedures in Shimulia as is probably true throughout Bangladesh. However the number of such marriages is small. For example, out of 323 marriages, I have found only a single case of a sororate marriage. There has been no case of levirate marriage in Shimulia up to this time.

Fictive Kinship

There are some fictive kin relationships like dharma bāp, dharma mā, dharma bhāi, dharma bon, and ukil jāmāi or sbsur. Etymologically speaking, terms like dharma bāp, etc. come from Sanskrit and refer to the acquisition of kin (like father, mother, etc.) through some ritual (Bandyapadhyaya 1966).

People in Shimulia enter into such fictive kin relationships through certain rituals. Generally people contract such liaisons for social, economic and political reasons. Once a person enters into such a bond he keeps it in a special way. It happens not infrequently that people feel more highly obligated by this bond than by actual relationships. As a rule such kinship ties are reciprocal and if one party fails to reciprocate, then these relationships wither.

In Shimulia the incidence of fictive kinship is declining. In the past these relationships were important politically, economically, and socially. In a society beset with scarcity and factions, people often needed political and economic support not only from their own kin but also from fictive kin. Recently, the village has been undergoing social and economic change which has generated new types of relationships. Formerly, villagers needed such extra-kin ties as their sphere of relationship rarely went beyond village boundaries. Therefore, there was no alternative support beyond the village in the form of friendships and business partnerships.

Samāj

In Shimulia, the villagers often refer to samāj in their every day parlance. The word is used specifically to identify social groupings. The villagers use the concept of samāj in varied ways. For them it implies territorial unit, particularly to distinguish from another pārā. Thus, people say, "The people of purba (east) pārā (hamlet) samāj are in general wealthy." There are other uses as well, i.e., religious designations as when people say: "Amādar samāj-namāj Alāda" (Our community and prayer (religion) are different.)

The term samāj ^{Dhaka University Institutional Repository} came from Sanskrit where it means people/organization. However, in Shimulia it simply stands for supra kin social groupings tied to political bonds. In certain contexts samāj often cross-cuts gōsthī and physical contiguity. The villagers are vague about the origin of samāj, and often say that in the past samāj was very strong and the members dared not violate its rules. Apparently, samāj originally denoted kinship ties. The Muslim villagers were migrants to the village and a new family often settled in the village by virtue of its kin networks. Twenty-seven percent of all marriages occurred within the village (see Table 9). This strongly suggests affinal ties that subsequently designated samāj.

The history of patrilineages shows that sometimes samāj came into being as a result of patron-client relationships. For example, when a new family settled in the village it sought patronage from the well-established lineages. Here, gōsthī D entered in the samāj of its patron gōsthī O as soon as it settled in the village (see Chapter IV, Gōsthī D). Hence, the origin of samāj may be diverse, but in all cases it is a supra-kin social grouping with a strong political bond.

Samāj functions at various levels. It acts as a mediation council (sālis), a nucleus of a faction, or even to mobilize a village against another unit. In one village there may be one samāj or several samāj depending on situations.

There are five samāj in Shimulia. Each of them has one or two mātbars (leader; from Arabic: faithful; well respected) who make important decisions regarding social, religious, and political issues. Also, the leaders are responsible for the social control mechanisms of their respective samāj. In the following, I will discuss each samāj. For



clarification I will identify the five samāj of the village as 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Samāj 1 is comprised of gōsthī O, N, D and A; samāj 2 consists of gōsthī B, G, M and T; samāj 3 is included in gōsthī E and part of gōsthī O; samāj 4 comprises gōsthī I and J; and samāj 5 comprises gōsthī Q, R, and part of O.

The people here often recall the dominance of samāj in their lives. It used to be a socio-religious-political entity so they averred. With regard to marriages, it was essential to have the approval of samāj. Also, it was necessary to have a feast for all the members of the samāj. Further, during religious occasions, it was essential to invite all the members of a samāj. The mātbar(s) always had to ensure that the members did not violate samāj rules. Sometimes a samāj ostracized its members for violations. These attributes of samāj have a strong semblance to the samāj existent among the Hindus. Among the Hindus, samāj finds social expression in the form of caste and subcaste councils charged with the regulation of conduct (Bertocci n.d.: 4). Despite the similarity with the Hindu samāj, the Muslim version has some unique features. Whereas Hindu samāj was based on caste membership, the latter reflects supra kinship organization.

Although a samāj may have one or two leaders, their power enforcement is not as effective as it allegedly used to be. The effectiveness of the samāj as a social and political grouping started to decline during the early 50s. One of the basic reasons for this decline was the beginning of diversification of occupations, the spread of education, and the influence of urbanization. Formerly, a samāj leader's

decision was unquestioned; now the members can, and often do, question his decisions. This particularly upsets the old folk in the village who think the present state of samāj chaotic. They say, "We used to abide by the command of the samāj leader, no matter whether it was right or wrong."

Still, samāj continues to serve important functions of social control. Generally, the samāj leaders try to resolve conflicts not only within the samāj, but between two samāj. Villagers refer cases to sālis (council of elders) comprised of five samāj leaders when conflicts involve inter-samāj affairs, especially if they are so complex that samāj leaders cannot deal with them. However, when samāj leaders fail to resolve conflicts through sālis, the case usually goes to formalized institutions such as the Union Pariṣad.

So much for the details of social organization. I have focussed on social change in the locality. Following these socio-economic changes, the inherently flexible and less structured Muslim kinship organization of Shimulia became even weaker giving way to incipient class relationships. Interests or "profitability" rather than kinship has become the focal point of relationship among the villagers. In the next chapter I will provide cases of 22 gōṣṭhī of Shimulia in order to focus on the longitudinal perspective in kinship organization.

Summary

The discussion of Muslim social organization provides an insight into the kinship structure among the Muslims of Bangladesh. Data on the Muslim kinship of Shimulia show that there are few explicit and

rigid rules. As a result, kinship ties are based on economic considerations and the new economic patterns of Shimulia have led to an increase in economic considerations at the expense of traditional status.

Shimulia social organization is primarily on kin ties. Gōṣṭhī (baṅsá) bārī, paribār, status designations, marriage and samāj are the salient terms in Shimulia social organization. Transformation in the social structure from changes enunciated brought about nouveau class relationships.

Chapter IV

GŌṢṬHĪ IN OPERATION: CASE STUDIESThe GŌṢṬHĪ of Shimulia

In the following I will present a brief survey of each of 22 gōṣṭhī so that we can illustrate the features of gōṣṭhī organization. Here, gōṣṭhī are not readily comparable to "castes" (see Marriott 1959, 1968; Tyler 1973; Freed 1973) or as having quom and zāt names (Eglar 1960; Barth 1960, Ahmad 1970, 1977; Alavi 1970, 1973; Honigmann 1960; Inayatullah 1958). In the present discussion since clear patronyms, etc. are lacking, I have identified the gōṣṭhī of Shimulia alphabetically for convenience.

Gōṣṭhī A: This gōṣṭhī settled in Shimulia in 1900 (sic). Abdul Munaf, a prominent member of this gōṣṭhī, is a farmer. He is also a grocer by which trade he earns supplementary income. At present there are two families in the gōṣṭhī, and economically they are well off. Abdul Munaf and Abdul Khalil own 2.1 and 4.2 acres respectively (see Table 10 which shows population, land and occupation of the gōṣṭhī members). This gōṣṭhī is not considered to be khāndānī, nor does it have any patronymic title. Abdul Munaf's FaFa, Samir Ali, came from the neighboring village of Matuail. I could not ascertain the reason for this move. I suspect two things prompted him to do so: (1) most of his lands were in Shimulia mouza, so that it was difficult to supervise the lands from Matuail village, and (2) he married in Shimulia (Gōṣṭhī O) and probably that attracted him to settle here. Samir Ali

Table 10

Gōsthī A

House hold No.	Family Popula- tion		Non kin Mem- bers	Total Popu- lation	Land Owned in Acres	Occupation Family Head		Occupation of non-head Working Members			
	M	F				Pri- mary	Secon- dary	1	2	3	4
1	5	2	2	9	2.10	Gro- cer	Agri- culture	-	-	-	-
2	3	4	-	7	4.20	Agri.	-	-	-	-	-
Total	2	8	6	2	16	6.30		-	-	-	-

took up his residence in a bārī which is inhabited by a segment of the gōsthī in the village (c.f. bārī settlement in Shimulia). He had two sons, Khadam Ali Shoud, Abdul Barek and two daughters. I could not learn how much land Samir Ali owned, but it seems that he owned a considerable amount. Khadam Ali Shoud possessed 7.5 acres of land which I assumed that he inherited after the division of his parent's property. Samir Ali's land was divided equally among the two brothers. Samir Ali was also the village cowkidār (watchman), and I assume that he wielded considerable power for people used to fear anyone associated with the police department. The cowkidār was the local representative of the police department and his importance and power could hardly be ignored. Apparently he increased his land holdings through his profits from agriculture and his cowkidārī job.

Samir Ali's other son, Abdul Barek, inherited about 5 acres of land. He had two sons Abdul Munaf and Abdur Rahim, Abdul Munaf is a hardworking person. When he accumulated some money, he bought a new

bārī (residential locus) from the Hindus after the 1964 riot and moved into the present bārī from his old housing site which was situated in a bārī inhabited by a segment of the gōsthī O. The other brother, Abdur Rahim, is a landless mill worker who does not now live in Shimulia. He married four times (with three divorces) and eventually sold all his land.

Although economically this gōsthī owns a considerable amount of land, the members could not make their mark in education, business, etc. It seems that it has little chance of becoming a khāndānī or a high status gōsthī in the near future.

Gōsthī B: This gōsthī is one of the oldest in the village. Nobody could tell me how long it had been here. It has 8 households with 78 members who occupy 2 bārī. The members of this gōsthī own a total of 22.32 acres of land (see Table 11). This gōsthī is considered to be madyam (middle) with respect to status. It is not considered either khāndānī or bhālo baṅśa. Three families of this gōsthī are poor: one is landless and the other two own 0.45 acres each. Five family heads consider agriculture as their secondary occupations. The same holds for two other family members. One of the family heads has mill work as his primary, and agriculture as a secondary, occupation. One of the members of the family works in the Bangladesh Army; his father has agriculture as a primary, and wage labor as a secondary occupation. Finally, we have Arifuddin Mia, one of the wealthiest persons of the village, with agriculture as his primary, and business as a secondary occupation.

Table 11

Gōṣṭhī B

House hold No.	Family Population		Non kin Mem- bers	Total Popu- lation	Land Owned in Acres	Occupation of Family Head		Occupation of non-head Working Members			
	M	F				Pri- mary	Sec- ondary	1	2	3	4
1	9	3	4	16	10.50	Agr.	Bus.	-	-	-	-
2	5	3	-	8	0.	Wage Lab.	Agr.	Wage Lab.	-	-	-
3	4	4	-	8	1.50	Agr.	Wage Lab.	-	-	-	-
4	8	5	-	13	3.96	Agr.	Mill work	Agr.	Mill work	-	-
5	3	2	1	6	3.96	Agr.	Student	-	-	-	-
6	6	7	-	13	1.50	Agr.	Wage Lab.	Serv. Army	-	-	-
7	4	2	-	6	.45	Mill Work	Agr.	-	-	-	-
8	6	2	-	8	.45	Wage Lab.	Agr.	-	-	-	-
Total	8	45	29	5	78	22.32					

Arifuddin Mia wields considerable power. He inherited 0.9 acres of land which he augmented to 10.5 acres by 1978. Most of his land was purchased after the 1964 riots. He and his family are on the threshold of khāndānī status. Two of his sons go to college, and two of his daughters are married to rather wealthy husbands who are petty businessmen. Other indications of his high status include a personal tank, with a pākā ghāṭlā and a tubewell adjoining it. Also, he has his boiṭhak khānā (literally sitting room, guest house). His boiṭhak khānā contains urban style furniture including a dresser, a wardrobe, chairs, etc. In addition to farming, Arifuddin Mia is actively involved in the import and export of yarn. Formerly, he was a business partner of Abdul Majid of

gōṣṭhī S (see gōṣṭhī S). ^{-Dhaka University Institutional Repository} During the last part of my stay in Shimulia I found that he was busy laying the foundation for a pākā (concrete) building in his bārī, which is a highly prestigious matter in the village. It seems that his relationship ties with his natal gōṣṭhī are at the point of being severed and his future relationship with it will be nominal.

Arifuddin Mia has had a checkered career before attaining his present status. He left primary school and ran away to Ghorashal in Dhaka district where he worked with a goldsmith for two and a half years beginning at age 15. Then he returned home, and started to work as a jāmdānī worker, working in this capacity for 4 to 5 years. Next he entered the profession of boiler mechanic with his father who was a boiler mechanic himself. He practiced this skill in different parts of Bengal. His last job was as supervisor in Dhaka Iron Workshop. Apparently some elder members of gōṣṭhī B had learned that trade which drew him to the gōṣṭhī.

Gōṣṭhī history reveals this unit was not a prominent gōṣṭhī in the village. Arifuddin Mia's FaFa was Changali Mullah, about whom he could tell nothing worth noting. Probably Changali Mullah was involved in jāmdānī manufacturing. Changali Mullah had two sons and a daughter. His eldest son was Maqsood Mia and the younger son was Salek Mia. Maqsood Mia was married but died without leaving any children; however, before his death he brought his SiSo, Kadam Ali Khandakar, to his bārī and gave all his property to him (see gōṣṭhī L). Later Maqsood Mia had some conflict with his SiSo, Kadam Ali, over property, and antagonism has continued between these two gōṣṭhī until the present. Arifuddin Mia talked disparagingly of khandakar gōṣṭhī (gōṣṭhī L). Salek Mia had four

sons and three daughters. His four sons were mechanics, too.

Arifuddin Mia's technical skills helped him to earn sufficient money to increase his land holdings. Also, he started a business of importing yarn with the money he obtained from his job and the sale of surplus crops. As a result, he accumulated a considerable amount of wealth. The communal riot of 1964 gave him a unique opportunity to buy a huge amount of land at a cheap price. A sudden increase in land holdings along with irrigation facilities provided by the DND project helped him produce a huge surplus. As a result, his investment in business went up with the sale of agricultural products. Also, his land accumulation accelerated. This process has been furthered with the birth of Bangladesh during which time rice was selling at 300-400 percent above the normal rate. It is pertinent to mention here that Arifuddin Mia entered into a relationship with the urban landowners who bought land in Shimulia following the communal riot of 1964. Like other rich farmers here, Arifuddin Mia acted as a middleman in land transactions with local Hindus for the urban land owners. In fact, he arranged land purchase at far below the market price (see Chapter V). As a result, a mutual relationship arose between Arifuddin Mia and the absentee landowners of Dhaka city. For example, Arifuddin Mia derived benefits from the urban landowners in the form of obtaining permits for the purchase of yarn, subsidized inputs for agriculture, and above all, familiarity with sources of finance in Dhaka city. In addition, he has tried to diversify his investments. For example, he has engaged his eldest son in some sort of speculative businesses. All these things have contributed to his present status.

Gōsthī C: This is one of the poorest gōsthī of the village. There are four households, two of which are landless. Of the remaining two, one owns 0.90 acres and the other one owns 0.45 acres of land (see Table 12). Members of this gōsthī live in two bārī. It is one of the nincu (low) baṅśa of the village. This gōsthī does not have any patronymic title. It was not a prominent gōsthī in the past. Hafez Shoud FaFa of the present senior male, Abu Hanif Mia, was involved in jāmdānī manufacturing and had 4.8 acres of land. Abu Hanif Mia's father, Mohammad Bepari, was a jute trader. He was not successful and so he sold all his inherited property. Mohammad Bepari left three sons - Abu Hanif Mia, Abdur Rouf and Kalimuddin Mia. The eldest, Abu Hanif Mia, is suffering from leprosy. He used to be a day laborer and did not inherit any land from his father except the bhīṭi bārī. Now he cannot work, but his sons are hardworking. Three of his sons pool their income for the maintenance of the family. One son is a mill worker and the other two work as day laborers. The family seems to be doing well as the sons are share-cropping a total of 2.4 acres. Mohammad Bepari's second son Abdur Rouf owns 0.90 acres of land. He is a farmer and cattle trader. In fact, he bought his land through cattle trading. He has been doing well for he built his own house in one of the former Hindu bārī of Daksin pāṛā which he bought some years ago. The third brother, Kalimuddin Mia, has two sons, Gaffar Mia and Mandop Ali. Both are landless laborers. The economic condition of this gōsthī is bad, and it is not likely that they will improve their overall economic situation in the near future.

Table 12

Gōsthī C

House hold No.	Family Popula- tion		Non kin Mem- bers	Total Popu- lation	Land Owned in Acres	Occupation of Family Head		Occupation of non-head Working Members			
	M	F				Pri- mary	Sec- ondary	1	2	3	4
1	1	2	-	3	0.0	Wage Lab.	Agr.	-	-	-	-
2	8	2	-	10	0.90	Agr.	Cattle trader	-	-	-	-
3	9	4	-	13	0.45	Agr.	Wage Lab.	Wage Lab.	Wage Lab.	-	-
4	4	1	-	5	0.0	Wage Lab.	-	-	-	-	-
Total	4	22	9	-	31	1.45					

Gōsthī D: This gōsthī has eighteen households with 48.87 acres of land (see Table 13). It has a patronymic title of Bhuiyan. The households of this gōsthī are scattered over the western part of the village in six different bārī. In this discussion I will refer to it as Bhuiyan 1 because there are two other Bhuiyan gōsthī in the village. This gōsthī is new to Shimulia. Momtaz Bhuiyan came from Masinabad across the Lakhya River to Shimulia in 1907 (circa). Momtaz Bhuiyan came to Shimulia with a yatra party (folk drama), because in those days the wealthy Hindus of the village used to hire yatra parties on different ritual occasions. Some older people told me that Momtaz Bhuiyan grew his hair long and used to hang around the Hindu pārā on the occasion of kirtan (religious litany). However, Ikram Bhuiyan told me that his FaFa Karimullah used to be a resident of Masimabad and was a talukdar (landlord) there. When I asked him the reason for his father's moving to

Table 13

Gosthi D

House hold No.	Family Popu- lation		Non Kin Mem bers	Total Popu- lation	Land Owned in Acres	Family Head's Occupation		Occupation Non-head Worki Members			
	M	F				Pri- mary	Secon- dary	1	2	3	4
1	3	4	-	7	3.00	Cloth Trader	Agr.	-	-	-	-
2	5	1	-	6	3.00	-do-	-do-	-	-	-	-
3	7	3	1	11	2.70	Agr.	-	Carpen ter	Grocer	Fert. Dealer	-
4	7	6	-	13	9.60	-do-	-	Bus.	-	-	-
5	2	1	-	3	7.50	-do-	-	Jute trader	-	-	-
6	3	3	-	6	0.60	Laborer	Agr.	-	-	-	-
7	2	2	-	4	0.0	Carpen- ter	-	-	-	-	-
8	1	1	-	2	1.20	Mill Work	Agr.	-	-	-	-
9	2	5	-	7	2.10	Cloth Trader	-do-	-	-	-	-
10	7	2	-	9	0.75	-do-	-do-	Mill Work	-	-	-
11	2	4	-	6	0.60	-do-	-do-	-	-	-	-
12	1	3	-	4	0.45	-do-	-do-	-	-	-	-
13	2	2	-	4	0.45	-do-	-do-	-	-	-	-
14	11	6	2	19	12.00	Agr.	-	-	-	-	-
15	2	5	-	7	1.32	Cloth trader	-do-	-	-	-	-
16	1	1	-	2	1.20	-do-	-do-	-	-	-	-
17	3	4	-	7	1.20	-do-	-do-	-	-	-	-
18	3	1	1	5	1.20	-do-	-do-	-	-	-	-
Total											
18	64	54	4	122	48.87						

Shimulia, he gave two reasons: (1) in those days land in Shimulia was cheaper, and (2) they were attracted by the reputation of Munshi bārī (gōṣṭhī 0; Munshi segment, see Figure 5) which was a khāndānī gōṣṭhī in the locality. It should be noted, however, that both the sons of Karimullah Bhuiyan settled here. The eldest, Murad Bhuiyan, died without leaving any children while Momtaz Bhuiyan left six sons of whom three subsequently became wealthy. Their sons now have dominant positions in the village. Each of the sons of Momtaz Bhuiyan inherited 0.9 acres of land. Nasir Bhuiyan added to his land holdings and left 9.9 acres of land. His other brother, Hajee Ishaq Bhuiyan, also increased his land holdings and left 24.00 acres. Ikram Bhuiyan has also augmented his land and at present he owns 7.5 acres. The other three brothers (who each inherited 0.9 acres) could not enlarge their holdings. Their children are poor. Most of them are cloth traders, day laborers, and mill workers. Two sons of the late Hajee Ishaq Bhuiyan are Sakin Ali Bhuiyan (who owns 9.60 acres) and Karam Ali Bhuiyan (who owns 12.00 acres). Both are very wealthy and powerful. These brothers are the important leaders of a faction. The overall economic condition of this gōṣṭhī is good, but it is not considered to be a khāndānī, although a few members are aspirant khāndān.

Gōṣṭhī E: Like Gōṣṭhī C, this gōṣṭhī is also very poor, for most of the members are landless (see Table 14). Of 24 households, 16 are landless. Total land holdings of this gōṣṭhī amount only to 19.20 acres. This gōṣṭhī has the patronymic title Bhuiyan. Earlier, I have identified it as Bhuiyan II. I could not determine why and how members of this gōṣṭhī use this particular title. Members of this gōṣṭhī claim

Table 14

Gōsthī E

House hold No.	Family Population		Non kin Mem bers	Total Popu- lation	Land Owned in Acres	Family Head's Occupation		Occupation of Non-Head Working Members			
	M	F				Pri- mary	Secon- dary	1	2	3	4
1	1	5	-	6	0.0	Wage Lab.	Agr.	Wage Lab.	-	-	-
2	4	3	-	7	0.30	-do-	-	-	-	-	-
3	2	2	-	4	0.0	Mill work	-	-	-	-	-
4	4	2	-	6	0.0	Wage Lab.	-	-	-	-	-
5	2	2	-	4	0.60	Land broker	-do-	Wage Labor	-	-	-
6	2	3	-	5	0.0	Wage Labor	-	-	-	-	-
7	3	3	-	6	0.15	Mill Work	-do-	-	-	-	-
8	8	7	-	15	0.60	Agr.	-	Service	-	-	-
9	5	4	-	9	0.0	Vill. Watchman	-	Mill Work	Wage Lab.	-	-
10	2	2	-	4	0.0	Mill work	-	-	-	-	-
11	4	4	2	10	4.20	Agr.	-	Carpen ter	-	-	-
12	8	6	-	14	9.00	-do-	-	Bus.	-	-	-
13	1	2	-	3	0.0	Service	-	-	-	-	-
14	7	2	-	9	0.0	Carpen ter	-	-	-	-	-
15	3	2	-	5	0.0	Mill work	-	-	-	-	-
16	4	2	-	6	4.20	Agr.	-	-	-	-	-
17	2	3	-	5	0.15	Carpen ter	-	Wage Lab.	-	-	-
18	2	2	-	4	0.0	-do-	Agr.	-	-	-	-
19	2	5	-	7	0.0	Mill work	-	-	-	-	-
20	1	4	-	5	0.0	Carpen ter	-	-	-	-	-
21	2	4	-	6	0.0	-do-	-	-	-	-	-
22	1	1	-	2	0.0	Milk man	-	-	-	-	-
23	5	4	-	9	0.0	Mill work	-	Wage Lab.	Dom. Serv.	-	-
24	4	3	-	7							
<u>Total:</u>	24	79	77	2	158	19.20					

that they are the original residents of the village. The households of this gōsthī are scattered over 6 bārī in eastern and western parts of the locality.

This gōsthī is regarded as nincu (low) baṅśā. Some villagers have remarked that some members of this gōsthī in the recent past were involved in cattle theft which is extremely degrading. One of the notable members (who later amassed about 24.00 acres of land) was once caught redhanded while stealing a goat in another village. In his old age he became religious as a token of which he established a mosque. Alal Bhuiyan's FaFaFa and FaFaBr were very poor, landless, day laborers. Later they accumulated some property through jāmdānī manufacturing. Since then, the fate of the gōsthī has not changed much. At present most of the members of this gōsthī are either day laborers or mill workers. The exceptions are Nazmat Bhuiyan's three sons -- Alal, Jafar, and Qumrul Bhuiyan, who own 4.2, 4.2, and 9 acres of land respectively. Alal Bhuiyan even improved his social position by arranging a matrimonial alliance with Abul Kalam Shoud (gōsthī T) to bring the latter's daughter as a bride for his only son. However, in doing so, he spent a considerable amount of money. This gōsthī is not a high status group and there is no likelihood of its status improvement in the near future.

Gōsthī F: This gōsthī is also very poor. Of 10 households, 7 are landless (see Table 15). The total amount of land owned is 6.45 acres, with one family alone owning 4.2 acres. The gōsthī head is a powerful person because he is one of the māṭbars. Gōsthī F has the patronymic title Bhuiyan, and the households cover three different bārī. I will refer to it as Bhuiyan III.

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This gōṣṭhī is newly settled. Saiduddin Munshi, who is wealthy, lives in a new bārī which he bought from a Hindu family right after the partition. Saiduddin Munshi knew some of his family history. His FaFaFaFa lived in Rupsi on the other side of the river Lakhya. His FaFaFaFa, Asad Bhuiyan, had one son called Semu Bhuiyan who had a primary education and was a rice trader. He inherited about 2.4 acres of land. Semu Bhuiyan had four sons and two daughters. Nothing is known about the daughters. The eldest brother, Deku Bhuiyan, was extravagant. His father eventually fell into debt because of his son's extravagance. Unable to recover from his misfortune, Semu Bhuiyan moved to the village Khadum (about five miles south) and settled there. One brother settled in Pangaon (about three miles east, and three in Shimulia. Upon settling in Shimulia, the latter engaged in jāmdānī manufacturing. Of all the descendants of the three brothers, only Saiduddin Munshi is doing well. He presently owns 4.2 acres of land. He has received a primary education and is an active member of the village sālis. He was once engaged in jāmdānī manufacturing and later became a supplier for a jute mill, thus acquiring some property. Also, he bought a bārī from a Hindu emigrant, earning him special respect. Four of Saiduddin's sons are high school graduates (which is prestigious in the eyes of the villagers). Also, one of his sons is working as a stenographer in Dhaka city and commutes every day. His three other high school graduate sons are involved in business. One of his daughters attends the village high school and hopes to complete her school-final soon. Clearly Saiduddin Munshi and his family are separating from their natal gōṣṭhī and kinship ties with other members have become secondary.

Table 15

Gōsthī F

House hold No.	Family Popula- tion		Non kin Mem- bers	Total Popu- lation	Land Owned in Acres	Occupation of Family Head		Occupation of Non-head Working Members				
	M	F				Pri- mary	Secun- dary	1	2	3	4	
1	5	3	-	8	4.20	Agr.	-	Mill work	-	-	-	-
2	4	2	-	6	0.0	Mill Work	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	3	1	-	4	0.0	Service	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	4	6	-	10	0.0	Laborer	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	4	5	-	9	0.0	Mill Work	-	Wage Lab.	Wage Lab.	-	-	-
6	3	1	-	4	1.80	Agr.	-	-do-	-	-	-	-
7	1	-	-	1	0.0	Wage Lab.	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	3	4	-	7	0.45	Printer	Agr.	-	-	-	-	-
9	7	3	-	10	0.0	Wage Lab.	Lab.	-do-	-	-	-	-
10	2	5	-	7	0.0	Mill Work	-	-do-	-	-	-	-
Total 10	36	30	-	66	6.45							

Gōsthī G: This gōsthī is very poor. Ancestors of this gōsthī were among the original settlers of the village. This is also a nincu or low status gōsthī. The total land owned by this gōsthī is only 3.00 acres. Most of the members of this gōsthī are day laborers or mill workers; one member is a rickshaw driver (see Table 16). However, Sabir Ahmed is an exception; he is a high school graduate presently working as a clerk in a ration shop in the industrial area. Members of this gōsthī did not remember much about their ancestors. Gani Ahmed's FaFa was a prominent person and he told me that Karim Mia who was a

Table 16

Gōsthī C

House hold No.	Family Population		Non-kin Members	Total Population	Land Owned in Acres	Occupation of Family Head		Occupation of Working Members			Non-head	
	M	F				Pri-ary	Sec-ondary	1	2	3		4
1	3	6	-	9	0.60	Mill Work	Agr.	Rickshaw driver	-	-	-	-
2	4	2	-	6	0.60	-do-	-do-	-	-	-	-	-
3	5	3	-	8	0.90	Service	-do-	-	-	-	-	-
4	1	1	-	2	0.90	Wage Lab.	-do-	-	-	-	-	-
5	2	1	-	3	0.0	Rickshaw driver	-do-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	5	15	13	-	28	3.00						

farmer and owned 1.5 acres of land. He was survived by four sons - Abdur Rob, Gani Ahmed, Abdus Sattar Mia and Abdul Rahim. The first two were jāmdānī workers. The latter two are day laborers. The youngest son moved from Shimulia and lives in the nearby village of Bamail. Of all the gōsthī members, only Gani Ahmed's son has done well. Already he has increased his land holdings from 0.5 acres to 0.9. Also, his son, Sabir Ahmed, married a daughter of Abul Kalam Shoud's daughter (Gōsthī T) bearing all the expenses of the marriage by himself. Abul Kalam Shoud gave his daughter in marriage because Sabir Ahmed was a desirable groom since he had a school certificate and had been working as a clerk; otherwise there would be no question of such a matrimonial alliance as this gōsthī is regarded as a nincu baṅśa in the village. It seems that Sabir Ahmed is developing a close tie with his in-law's family, and his oldest son (who is about 8) is staying at Kalam Shoud's family and attends school from there. It is apparent to me that a new segment is about to separate from its natal gōsthī kin.

Gōsthī J

House hold No.	Family Population		Non Kin Mem- bers	Total Popu- lation	Land Owned in Acres	Family Head's Occupation		Occupation of Non-head Working Members			
	M	F				Pri- mary	Sec- ondary	1	2	3	4
1	4	4	2	10	3.30	Agr.	Cloth trader	-	-	-	-
2	2	4	-	6	3.30	-do-	Sales man	Mill Work	-	-	-
3	5	2	1	8	2.40	-do-	-	-	-	-	-
4	5	3	1	9	2.40	-do-	Printer	-	-	-	-
5	3	5	1	9	2.40	-do-	-do-	-	-	-	-
Total	5	19	18	5	42	13.80					

Gōsthī K: This is another poor, original gōsthī. It does not have any patronymic title. Geneological data confirm that it was never a wealthy gōsthī. It consists of 11 families with a total number of 82 people, who own 8.81 acres of land. Members of this gōsthī are spread over four different barī. Karam Ali, age 60, is a landless laborer. His FaFaFa was Nazem Shoud. Nazem Shoud had two sons - Hakim Shoud and Hatem Shoud. They did not own much land (Hakim Shoud owned 2.4 acres of land) and were jāmdānī workers. Later, Hakim Shoud and Hatem Shoud and most of their descendants lost their land and today three families of this gōsthī are landless and four families have very little land. Most of the families work either as day laborers or as mill workers (see Table 20). Yet three members of this gōsthī are well off.

One is Abdul Baten who owns 3.3 acres in addition to 0.60 acres which he share-crops. Besides farming, Abdul Baten has a lumber business

with a lumber shop at Demra Bazar. He is a self-made man. He started his career as a carpenter without any help from his father. His father is alive, but he spends most of his time wandering with a group of singers who sing marafati (a kind of Muslim mystical song). The father is not liked by the villagers for his obscene language¹ and "indecent" behavior. In contrast, Abdul Baten is a "decent person" in the conformist sense, and the villagers contrast father and son. When Abdul Baten accumulated wealth, he sought social status by marrying a daughter from gōsthī T (Shoud gōsthī), bearing all the expenses of the marriage. I asked some members of Shoud gōsthī why they considered this matrimonial alliance appropriate. They replied that they gave their daughter in marriage to Abdul Baten as he is basically a decent man. Moreover, he is nice and wealthy; their daughter will be well taken care of. It seems that Abdul Baten is prospering. At the time of my field work he had completed construction of a pākā building for his residential quarters. In this village, this is really a prestigious achievement. It seems that Abdul Baten is attaining higher status because of his wealth and his affinal connections with the gōsthī T (Shoud Gōsthī).

Another member of this gōsthī who also lives above the subsistence level is Abdus Sagir, known in the village as goālā (milkman). He has accumulated considerable wealth by supplying milk in Dhaka city. He owns 2.38 acres of land and has moved into the former bārī of the gomsta of the zamindari estate of Bhagyakul. He has taken

¹Prof. Agehananda Bharati who claims himself a mystic offers me an interesting explanation with regard to usage of obscene languages by the marfati order, belonging to the sufi Muslim dispensation. He observes that most of the mystical group¹ have a code language which is usually very obscene. This explains why Abdul Baten's father uses obscene language in conversation.

an interest in his son's education, and his eldest son is a college student in Dhaka city.

Finally, there is Qamrul Haque who owns 1.5 acres of land. He is a carpenter and he accumulated property as he derives a steady income from carpentry.

Abdul Baten is entering a higher status group and will be khandānī in due course. Other members of this gōṣṭhī may well continue to be poor.

Table 20

Gōṣṭhī K

House hold No.	Family Population		Non Kin Mem- bers	Total Popu- lation	Land Owned in Acres	Family Head's Occupation		Occupation of Non-head Working Members			
	M	F				Pri- mary	Secon- dary	1	2	3	4
1	5	6	2	13	3.30	Lumber bus.	Agr.	-	-	-	-
2	2	5	-	7	0.22	Carpenter	-do-	-	-	-	-
3	4	2	-	6	0.0	Serv.	-	Service			
4	3	6	-	9	0.30	Wage lab.	Agr.	Wage lab.	Wage lab.	-	-
5	5	4	1	10	2.38	Agr.	Milk man	-	-	-	-
6	4	3	-	7	0.60	Wage lab.	Agr.	-	-	-	-
7	4	2	-	6	1.50	Carpenter	-do-	-	-	-	-
8	3	4	-	7	0.21	Mill work	-do-	Mill work	-	-	-
9	7	3	-	10	0.30	-do-	-do-	Printer	Wage Lab.	-	-
10	1	2	-	3	0.0	Wage lab	-	-	-	-	-
11	3	1	-	4	0.0	Boiler Mech.	Agr	Wage lab	-	-	-
Total	11	41	38	3	82	8.81					

Gōsthī L: This is another poor gōsthī (see Table 21). Although it is not original to the village, it originally was one of the khandānī gōsthī. Its four families own a total of 2.17 acres of land. All the residents of this gōsthī live in one bārī. It has the honorific title khandakār (see Chapter III: status designation), but none of the members are using it. Abdul Qaddus, a family head who is a mill worker told me that his father's father, Minat Ali Khandakar, lived in the village Majmapur across the Lakhya River. According to him, they were one of the khandānī baīsa there. This gōsthī had affinal connections with gōsthī B.

Table 21

Gōsthī L

House hold No.	Family Population		Non Kin Members	Total Population	Land Owned in Acres	Family Head's Occupation		Occupation of Non-Head Working Members			
	M	F				Pri- mary	Sec- ondary	1	2	3	4
1	4	3	-	7	0.0	Wage lab.	-	Wage lab.	-	-	-
2	1	1	-	2	1.80	Agr.	-	-	-	-	-
3	3	3	-	6	0.0	Mill Work	-	-	-	-	-
4	2	1	-	3	0.37	-do-	Agr.	-	-	-	-
Total	4	10	8	-	18	2.17					

Maqsood Mia of gōsthī B (Arifuddin Mia's FaFaBr) brought his SiSo, Kadam Ali Khandakar, to Shimulia (see gōsthī B). Abdul Qaddus is the son of Kadam Ali Khandakar. Kadam Ali was involved in various professions like jute and cattle trading as well as being a share-cropper. He accumulated 6.00 acres of land. This man had three wives all at one time.

Abdul Quddus was 10 months old when his father died. After his father's death, he and his mother lived with his elder step brother, Alimullah. But his step brother sold all their property, so Abdul Quddus did not inherit a single piece of land. Now he is a mill worker and a hardworking person. At the time of my field work he had accumulated 0.37 acres of land. His dream is to become a good farmer, owning a fair stretch of land. This gōṣṭhī is considered to be low status, its honorific title notwithstanding. When asked to comment on the present status of khandakār gōṣṭhī, the villager's replied, "Well, there is no doubt about the khāndānī status of khandakār baṅsā, but because of economic distress, it cannot live up to its status."

Gōṣṭhī M: This gōṣṭhī is newly settled in the village (1915). There are four households with 67 members. The gōṣṭhī owns a total of 22.05 acres of land. Akram Khan's FaFa, Enayat Khan, came to this village. This gōṣṭhī has the patronymic title Khan (I will refer to it as Khan gōṣṭhī I). When its ancestor, Enayat Khan, came it was poor. Now the overall economic condition of this gōṣṭhī is very good, and it is on the threshold of a high status. Three of its four households are very wealthy and educated. However, Akram Khan told me that it was not a wealthy gōṣṭhī at all, because his father's father, Enayat Khan, his father, Hayat Khan, and himself (Akram Khan) worked on the jāmdānī looms of Shoud gōṣṭhī (gōṣṭhī T). Data on village land holdings and my interview with Akram Khan and his son Karimuddin Khan revealed that the wealth of this gōṣṭhī is very recent, following the communal riot of 1964.

Gōsthī M

House hold No.	Family Population		Non Kin Mem- bers	Total Popu- lation	Land Owned in Acres	Family Heads Occupation		Occupation of Non-Head Working Members			
	M	F				Pri- mary	Secon- dary	1	2	3	4
1	11	6	8	25	9.00	Agr.	Bus.	Serv.	Teacher	-	-
2	9	5	5	19	6.60	-do-	-do-	Bus.	-	-	-
3	7	3	3	13	6.00	-do-	-	-	-	-	-
4	6	4	-	10	0.45	Subcon- tractor	Agr.	Car- penter	Mechanic		
Total	4	33	18	16	67	22.05					

Enayat Khan, Akram Khan's FaFa, came to Shimulia after his natal barī in the village Paiti (three miles away) became overcrowded. At first he settled in the western section of Shimulia, and later moved to the present barī. He was a good jāmdānī worker who worked at the looms of the Shoud gōsthī (gōsthī T). Enayat Khan had three sons, Hayat Khan, Aram Khan, and Aziz Khan. At present, the descendants of Aram Khan and Hayat Khan are living in Shimulia. The sons of Hayat Khan are wealthy and hold considerable economic and political power in the village. Hayat Khan's three sons, Akram Khan, Talimuddin Khan, and Tahir Khan own 9.00, 6.6 and 6.00 acres of land respectively (see Table 22). On the other hand Aram Khan's son Nannu Khan only owns 0.45 acres of land. Nannu Khan belongs to one of the poorest families of the village and he subsists by pooling two of his sons' incomes (one is a carpenter and the other, a mechanic). The three brothers maintain very close ties; all of them are trying hard to attain recognition as a high status group.

Hayat Khan was a poor man who, like his brother, inherited 0.5 acres of land. Akram Khan worked in various capacities before becoming wealthy. He was a jāmdānī worker and worked in the looms of the Shoud gōsthī (gōsthī T). Also, he peddled clothes. He worked hard and I was astonished to see the amount of work he did every day at the age of 73. His luck improved after the 1964 communal riot. During the 1965 Basic Democracy election (local government), the village faction nominated him as a candidate and he was elected.

The story of his election is related to the departure of the Hindus for India. Meanwhile, some urban professionals (lawyers, businessmen and doctors) became interested in buying land in the village for two reasons: (1) Hindu land was selling at a low rate, and (2) prospects for land in Shimulīa after completion of the D.N.D. project were favorable. To buy land here, they made contact with the B.D. (Basic Democrat) member of the village. So Akram Khan and his brothers began acting as middlemen in land transactions. Akram Khan and his brothers are now the biggest share-croppers (total amount 7.50 acres) of the village as some lands belonging to the urban professionals were given to them to share-crop. Furthermore, they are enjoying land left by some people who collaborated with the Pakistan Government during the civil war, and had to leave the country. One of these refugees is a barrister who became a Minister during the War of Independence. This person is now in Saudi Arabia working for the Saudi Government and there is no likelihood of his returning home soon. It is interesting to mention here that a reciprocal relationship emerged between Akram Khan and his brothers on the one hand and the absentee landowners of

Dhaka city on the other. ^{Dhaka University Institutional Repository} this in Chapter V.

Akram Khan accumulated even more wealth during the 1973-75 famine at which time the price of rice went up by 300 - 400 percent. Now he is a wealthy farmer. His other brothers also acquired property through illicit practices. For example, Akram Khan's youngest brother was a high school graduate and he became the secretary (a salaried position) of the Matuail Union Council during the time Akram Khan was a member of the Basic Democracy. During that time, the Hindus wanted to sell their property, and the Pakistan government put restrictions on the sale of such lands. However, it could be sold if one could produce a nationality certificate, which is usually issued by the chairman of the Union Council. Tahir Khan utilized his position as secretary of that council to issue false certificates to facilitate these land transactions. Later on, Tahir Khan became the manager of the Tejgaon Cooperative Association where, villagers alleged he misappropriated its funds.

By 1977-78, these three brothers were in good economic shape. They also have improved their social position in the village. Akram Khan's two sons are holding good positions. His eldest son is a university graduate, presently working with the government sponsored cooperative organization. The second son is a high school graduate and is the primary school teacher in the village; he is also an innovative farmer who constantly experiments with improved methods of farming.

Akram Khan's eldest son married a girl from Dhaka city for which he spent considerable sums of money. Akram Khan's second brother, Talimuddin Khan, is a dealer in sand (used in construction) and earns good money. He, too, is an innovative farmer. His daughter was married

to a university graduate in a ceremony costing Tk. 50,000 (\$2,500.) which is a mark of social prestige in the village. Akram Khan's youngest brother Tahir Khan constructed a pākā building in his barī as a mark of social and economic status. Akram Khan's brothers are consciously looking for status and it seems highly likely that in the near future, they will be considered as khāndān. Nevertheless, members of the Shoud gōsthī do not recognize the status of this family and still consider them to be nincu baṅsā. The economic condition of Nannu Khan, Akram Khan's FaBrSo, is not good and there seems no chance of improvement in the near future. It is highly likely that Nannu Khan's segment will still be considered as a low status segment when Akram and his brothers attain khāndānī status.

Gōsthī N: This gōsthī is regarded as nincu baṅsā although two of its families are solvent. One of them owns 4.2 and the other 1.8 acres of land (see Table 23). It does not have khāndānī status nor is there any likelihood of upgrading its status in the near future. It has a patronymic title Khan, and I refer to it as Khan II. Salat Khan, the oldest Gōsthī member, told me that it is not an original gōsthī. Salat Khan told me that his FaFaFa, Lalu Khan, came to Shimulia but he could not tell me exactly why. His FaFa, Aga Khan, was a village chowkidār (watchman). Aga Khan had two sons - Pakkan Khan and Torab Khan. Because Pakkan Khan died before his father, Pakkan Khan's son did not inherit any property, and later Matin Khan left Shimulia and settled in Tarabo, an adjacent village. Aga Khan gave all his property to his other son, Torab Khan, who was also the village chowkidār. Salat Khan and his brother Taslim Khan are the sons of Torab Khan.

Table 23

Gōṣṭhī N

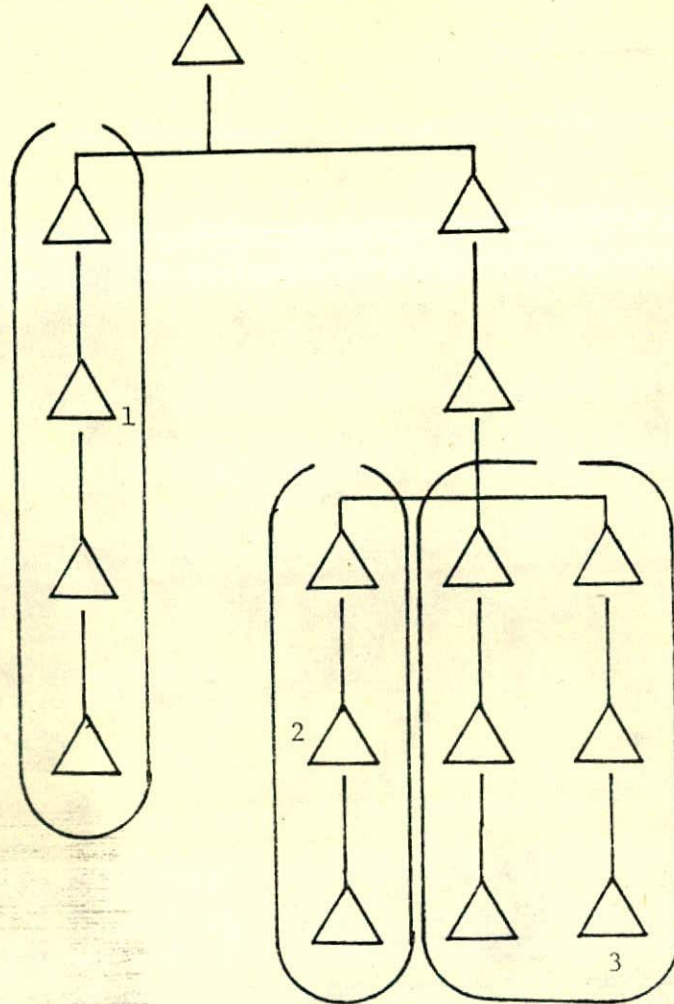
House hold No.	Family Population		Non Kin Members	Total Population	Land Owned in Acres	Family Head's Occupation		Occupation of Non-Head Working Members			
	M	F				Pri- mary	Sec- ondary	1	2 Member	3	4
1	3	5	1	9	4.20	Agr.	-	Mill work	-	-	-
2	6	3	1	10	1.80	-do-	-	Agr.	-	-	-
Total	2	9	8	2	19	6.00					

Both Aga and Torab Khan also engaged in jāmdānī manufacturing. It seems that Torab Khan inherited 4.2 acres of land, but probably he lost his property during his lifetime as Salat Khan and Taslim Khan inherited 0.30 acres of land each. Both the brothers have increased their property. Both worked as jāmdānī workers, but later became mill workers. At present, they do not work in the factory but supervise their own land themselves. The status of this gōṣṭhī is nincu despite the fact Salat Khan is a mātbar of the village.

Gōṣṭhī 0: This is one of the largest and oldest gōṣṭhī. It has 38 households with 67.3 acres of land between them. The total number of members in this gōṣṭhī is 286 (see Table 24). One segment has the patronymic title Munshi, while the other two segments do not use any uniform patronymic title. These three segments look like three different gōṣṭhī. However, upon collecting data I found that they actually belong to the same gōṣṭhī. Hence, although the three segments are literally one gōṣṭhī, they are treated as three individual gōṣṭhī today (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Three Segments of Gōṣṭhī 0



1. Residents of Sikdar Parā
2. Dr. Sahadat's barī
3. Munshi gōṣṭhī

Gosthi 0

House hold No.	Family Population		Non Kin Mem- bers	Total Popu- lation	Land Owned in Acres	Family Head's Occupation		Occupation non-head Working Members			
	M	F				Pri- mary	Secon- dary	1	2	3	4
1	5	4	-	9	2.90	Agr.	-	-	-	-	-
2	4	3	-	7	0.0	Ret'd.	-	Mill Work	Mill Work	-	-
3	3	4	-	7	0.0	Labor	-	-	-	-	-
4	3	3	-	6	0.60	Agr.	-	-	-	-	-
5	1	2	-	3	0.0	Mill Work	-	-	-	-	-
6	8	4	-	12	0.22	Sub-con tractor	-	-	-	-	-
7	6	3	-	9	1.80	Agr.	<u>Pirali</u>	Serv.	-	-	-
8	6	5	-	11	3.60	-do-	Cloth trader	Peon	-	-	-
9	4	4	-	8	5.10	Bus.	Agr.	-	-	-	-
10	6	6	1	13	6.30	Agr.	-	-	-	-	-
11	4	2	-	6	0.45	Veg. vendor	-do-	Black smith	-	-	-
12	4	3	-	7	0.75	Elec- tric	-do-	-	-	-	-
13	4	5	-	9	0.0	Mill work	-	-	-	-	-
14	2	2	-	4	0.30	Agr.	-	-	-	-	-
15	3	2	-	5	0.0	Mill work	-	-	-	-	-
16	2	3	-	5	0.30	-do-	agr.	-	-	-	-
17	3	4	-	7	5.70	Agr.	Trader	-	-	-	-
18	3	4	-	7	0.0	Carpen ter	-	-	-	-	-
19	3	3	=	6	0.60	Cloth trader	Agr.	-	-	-	-
20	5	3	-	8	0.45	Mill work	-do-	-	-	-	-

[Continued ...]

Gōsthī H: This gōsthī can be considered of middle status. One segment of this gōsthī is wealthy and in my estimation, it will continue to be prosperous. It does not have any patronymic title, although some members use the title bepāri (petty trader). There are 12 families owning a total of 15.6 acres of land (see Table 17). Its members claim it to be the original gōsthī of the village. Ismail Mia, age 75, knew his FaFaFaFa, Fakir Mia. He had four sons, of whom one, Bokai Mia, stayed in Shimulia while the other three brothers moved to different places.

The gōsthī history reveals that most of the members engaged in jāmdānī manufacturing. One segment is prosperous with most of its members well above the subsistence category (see Table 17). They are the descendants of Bokai Mia's son by his first marriage. The descendants of Bokai Mia's other sons are not prosperous. Of the 12 families of this gōsthī, 4 are landless. But Jadu Mia's descendants Korban Bepari, Forkan Bepari and Tasar Ali Bepari are wealthy as they own 3.6, 2.4, and 3.6 acres of land, respectively. Korban Bepari inherited 2.4 acres of land and added 1.2 acres. His son, Tobarak Hossain, is a college drop-out who was one time a supplier of jute and accumulated a good amount of money with which he built a new house for the family. His house is a semi-pākā with a sanitary latrine (i.e., septic tank). In mid 1978 Tobarak Hossain established a drug store in Sarulia Bazar. It seems that Abu Mia's descendants are separating from the rest of the gōsthī. Moreover, Tobarak Hossain married a girl who had completed her high school education. This is prestigious.

Table 17

Gōṣṭhī H

House hold No.	Family Population		Non kin Mem- bers	Total Popu- lation	Land Owned in Acres	Occupation of Family Head		Occupation of Non-head Working Members			
	M	F				Pri- mary	Secon- dary	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	-	5	0.90	Elec- trician	Agr.	-	-	-	-
2	6	2	-	8	0.0	Veg. Supplier	-	-	-	-	-
3	2	4	-	6	1.35	Agr.	-	-	-	-	-
4	8	1	-	9	1.50	Mill Work	-	-	-	-	-
5	4	5	-	9	0.0	Trader	-	-	-	-	-
6	4	3	1	8	1.05	Agr.	Trader	Car- penter	-	-	-
7	3	4	-	7	0.0	Mason	-	-	-	-	-
8	1	1	-	2	0.0	Desti- tute	-	-	-	-	-
9	3	3	-	6	1.20	Agr.	-	-	-	-	-
10	2	5	2	9	3.60	-do-	-	-	-	-	-
11	5	6	-	11	3.60	Jute trader	Agr.	Busi- ness	-	-	-
12	3	5	2	10	2.40	Agr.	-	Service-	-	-	-
Total	12	43	42	5	90	15.60					

Gōṣṭhī I: This is the largest and the poorest (see Table 18).

It has no patronymic title, still members claim to belong to the Fakir (Mendicant) baṅsá. Faiz Ali Matbar is the wealthiest gōṣṭhī member. He claims that his FaFaFaFa, Samur Fakir, was a fakir (mystic) who lived during the time of Nawab Sirajdullah (circa 1750), the last Nawab of Bengal. He told me a story about his extra human powers. It is said that when he died he was seen by a villager heading rapidly towards

the east uttering, "This place (Shimulia) is not worth living in, there are no pure people here." Upon reaching Shimulia, he was non-plussed to see Samur Fakir's dead body. He disclosed the vision to his kinsmen and died instantly. Faiz Ali Matbar told me that Samur Fakir owned 24.00 acres of land. After Samur Fakir's death, his only son, Siku Fakir, inherited all his father's property. It is said that he too was a māstān (mystic). Siku Fakir had five sons and two daughters. The names of his sons were Shatjan, Rajajan, Arifjan, Kalujan, and Alekjan. Faiz Ali Matbar is the descendant of Alekjan, the only brother who retained his property. Geneological data reveal that each of Siku Fakir's sons inherited 4.00 acres, but in subsequent years all the brothers except Alekjan lost their land. In the past, members of this gōṣṭhī engaged in jāmdānī manufacturing while some people worked as latiāl (professional hit-men) which is degrading. Some old people recalled that most folks of this gōṣṭhī were tall and well built, and were ferocious looking. It seems that initially it was a wealthy gōṣṭhī, but I could not obtain any material to show how Siku Fakir's sons lost their property. At the moment, members of this gōṣṭhī are really very poor and some are in desperate straits. Out of 41 families, 31 are landless and are either day laborers or mill workers. This gōṣṭhī owns only 7.20 acres of land (see Table 18).

My first visit to this particular gōṣṭhī was quite an experience. When I went there and was introduced, the residents of this bārī, particularly women, thought that I was a government official making some assessment for relief operations for them. This was probably due to their past experience in connection with government official's visits

to assess the poverty level. I heard voices coming from all four sides, "Shaheb, come to my residence and see for yourself how torn down my house is." I tried to convince them that I was not an official nor was I making an assessment for relief. At that point, nobody was convinced. Only later did they realize my actual purpose in staying in the village. I have found that they had some vague feeling that I might be of some help in their misery. For example, when I wanted to take pictures, I used to hear voices from all four corners, "Shaheb, take a picture of my house, how poor it is." Most of the houses do not even have the bare necessities. Families have only the barest minimum of personal belongings, such as some earthen and aluminum cooking vessels, a few mats, a few sanki (potter's plate) and a few dirty and sticky kantha (quilt). Most of the families do not have a separate kitchen, people cook and sleep in the same place. Still, two members of the gōsthī are relatively well off. One is Faiz Ali Matbar who owns 3.00 acres and is a member of the village sālīs. He is also the māṭbar of this gōsthī. The other well off member is Dawood Ali, a policeman who owns 1.5 acres. He moved out of his natal bārī and is presently living in a bārī next to Phakir pāṛā which he bought from a Hindu migrant. He shares this bārī with members of gōsthī-D. My observation is that this gōsthī has been poor and will continue to be poor in the future.

Table 18

Gosthi I

House hold No.	Family Popu- lation		Non kin Mem bers	Total Popu- lation	Land Owned in Acres	Family Head's Occupation		Occupation Non-Head Working Members			
	M	F				Pri- mary	Secun- dary	1	Member 2	3	4
1	5	2	-	7	0.30	Print- er	Agr.	Mill work	-	-	-
2	8	3	1	13	1.50	Police man	-do-	-do-	mill work	-	-
3	2	2	-	4	0.30	Mill work	-do-	-	-	-	-
4	2	2	-	2	0.0	-do-	-	-	-	-	-
5	2	2	-	4	0.0	-do-	-	-	-	-	-
6	1	2	-	3	0.0	Wage lab.	-	-	-	-	-
7	4	3	-	7	0.0	-do-	-	Wage lab.	Wage lab.	-	-
8	2	3	-	5	0.0	-do-	-	-	-	-	-
9	4	3	-	7	0.0	Mill work	-	-	-	-	-
10	1	3	-	4	0.60	-do-	-	-	-	-	-
11	5	4	-	9	0.0	Wage lab.	-	Mill work	-	-	-
12	4	1	-	5	0.45	Mason	Agr.	-	-	-	-
13	1	2	-	3	0.0	Mill work	-do-	-	-	-	-
14	1	2	-	3	0.0	Wage lab.	-	-	-	-	-
15	1	3	-	4	0.0	-do-	-	-	-	-	-
16	2	3	-	5	0.0	-do-	-	Wage lab.	-	-	-
17	1	1	-	2	0.0	Carpen- ter	-	-	-	-	-
18	2	2	-	4	0.0	Wage Lab.	-	-	-	-	-
19	5	3	-	8	3.0	Agr.	-	Printer	-	-	-
20	5	3	-	8	0.0	Wage lab.	-	Wage Lab.	Wage Lab.	-	-
21	2	1	-	3	0.0	Mill work	-	-	-	-	-

[continued ...]

Table 18 (continued)

House hold No.	Family Popu- lation		Non Kin Mem- bers	Total Popu- lation	Land Owned in Acres	Family Head's Occupation		Occupation Non-Head Working Members			
	M	F				Pri-	Seco-	Member			
								1	2	3	4
22	4	2	-	6	0.0	-do-	-	-	-	-	-
23	3	2	-	5	0.0	Mill Work	-	-	-	-	-
24	3	1	-	4	0.0	Carpen- ter	-	-	-	-	-
25	3	3	-	6	0.0	Mill work	-	-	-	-	-
26	2	3	-	5	0.0	Wage lab.	-	-	-	-	-
27	2	2	-	4	0.0	-do-	-	-	-	-	-
28	3	3	-	6	0.0	Mill work	-	Mill work	-	-	-
29	4	3	-	7	0.35	Wage lab.	-	-do-	-	-	-
30	2	2	-	4	0.0	Mill work	-	-	-	-	-
31	4	1	-	5	0.0	-do-	-	-	-	-	-
32	2	4	-	6	0.0	Carpen- ter	-	-	-	-	-
33	2	3	-	5	0.40	Wage Lab.	Agr.	Printer	-	-	-
34	5	4	-	9	0.0	-do-	Kabi- raj	Wage Lab.	-	-	-
35	2	2	-	4	0.0	Mill Work	-	-	-	-	-
36	2	2	-	4	0.30	-do-	Agr.	-	-	-	-
37	2	2	-	4	0.0	-do-	-	-	-	-	-
38	2	4	-	6	0.0	-do-	-	-	-	-	-
39	2	1	-	3	0.0	Pedler	-	-	-	-	-
40	2	4	-	6	0.0	Mill Mechanic	-	-	-	-	-
41	1	3	-	4	0.0	Veg. Grower	-	-	-	-	-
Total											
41	112	101	1	214	7.20						

Gōsthī J: Gōsthī J is considered to be madyam baṅśa (middle). It is one of the original gōsthī and consists of five families with a total membership of 42. It owns 13.8 acres of land. Members of this gōsthī live in a single bārī and do not have a uniform patronymic title. However, it seems that most of the gōsthī members are well off as most of them live above the subsistence level (see Table 19). Each of them owns more than 2.00 acres. Sahabuddin Mia's FaFaFa was Kabir Mullah. Kabir Mullah's father came from Mirpur (now a suburb of Dhaka city). Sahabuddin Mia told me that his ancestor came in search of cultivable land, and in those days land was easily available here. Kabir Mullah had one son, Atik Shoud, who did jāmdānī manufacturing. He had 1.5 acres of land and was both a cultivator and a jāmdānī manufacturer. Atik Shoud had two daughters and a son, Atar Ali Munshi. Atar Ali Munshi was educated; he knew some Bengali literature and some Arabic. He inherited 1.5 acres from his father and increased his landholdings to 9.6 acres through jāmdānī manufacturing and agriculture. Atar Ali Munshi had three sons and a daughter. His first two sons are dead, but their sons, Karim Mohammad and Nabi Mohammad (from Akram Munshi and Ahsan Munshi respectively) are alive. Atar Ali Munshi's youngest son is Sahabuddin. This gōsthī is economically sound, but I do not see any chance in the near future for its transformation into a high status group in the village, since members of this gōsthī could not make any significant mark in agriculture, business or education.

Table 24 (continued)

House hold No.	Family Population		Non Kin Mem- bers	Total Popu- lation	Land Owned in Acres	Family Head Occupation		Occupation of Non-head Working Members				
	M	F				Pri- mary	Secon- dary	1	2	3	4	
20	5	3	-	8	0.45	Mill work	-	-	-	-	-	-
21	4	4	-	8	2.90	Agr.	-	-	-	-	-	-
22	4	1	-	5	1.80	-do-	Carpen- ter	Milk man	-	-	-	-
23	5	10	1	16	0.24	-do-	-	Mill work	Lumber trading	-	-	-
24	6	3	-	9	2.40	Agr	Mill work	Agr.	Agr.	-	-	-
25	6	3	1	10	6.00	-do-	-	Clerk	-do-	-	-	-
26	6	4	-	10	1.80	-do-	-	Serv.	Car- penter	Teacher	Clerk	-
27	4	2	-	6	0.0	Mill work	-	-	-	-	-	-
28	8	3	2	13	6.00	Subcon tractor	Agr.	-	-	-	-	-
29	11	3	2	16	4.50	Agr.	Cloth Trader	Deed writer	Deed writer	-	-	-
30	5	3	-	8	0.90	Subcon tractor	Agr.	Mill work	-	-	-	-
31	5	3	-	8	0.75	Printer	-do-	-	-	-	-	-
32	2	2	-	4	0.15	-do-	-do-	-	-	-	-	-
33	4	2	-	6	3.60	Agr	Cloth trader	-	-	-	-	-
34	1	-	-	1	1.20	-do-	-	-	-	-	-	-
35	3	5	2	10	2.70	Teacher	Agr.	Homeo path Dr.	-	-	-	-
36	2	1	-	3	0.90	Agr.	Trader	-	-	-	-	-
37	2	1	-	3	1.20	-do-	-	-	-	-	-	-
38	2	1	-	3	1.20	Car- penter	Agr.	-	-	-	-	-
Total				38	158	119	9	286				

By Munshi gōṣṭhī villagers imply the barī of Sadeq Munshi, a person well-known in the village and in the locality. Only the members of this segment use the patronymic title Munshi. This segment is considered to be khāndānī, and its khāndānī status goes back a few generations. It is said that gōṣṭhī T (Shoud gōṣṭhī) obtained its khāndānī status from it. This segment had a few tālūks and a good amount of land. When Shoud gōṣṭhī (gōṣṭhī T) started accumulating property during the time of Sadar, Ainuddin and Akkas Shoud (early twentieth century), it desired affinal connections with Munshi gōṣṭhī, particularly with Zulfikar Munshi's daughter in marriage to Sadar Shoud. Initially Zulfikar Munshi refused but later consented to that marriage. It is believed that Zulfikar Munshi consented to the marriage because he started to lose land at that time. Also, it seems that Zulfikar Munshi began to sell land to Shoud gōṣṭhī, and most of the lands now belonging to Shoud gōṣṭhī belonged originally to Munshi gōṣṭhī.

The ancestors of this gōṣṭhī are Ataul Shoud and Mukarram Shoud. At present the descendants of Mukarram Shoud live in the Sikdar para; this segment is not known as Munshi gōṣṭhī. Ataul Shoud's descendants live in the western part of the village and the residents of Munshi barī are known as Munshi gōṣṭhī. Data reveal that originally this gōṣṭhī did not have the patronymic title Munshi. Both Ataul and Mukarram Shoud have the Shoud title. The patronymic title came into use from Zulfikar Munshi, son of Kabari Shoud, primarily because Zulfikar Munshi had some knowledge of Arabic and Islam (he used to perform some religious services). This title continued because of the prominence of Sadeq Munshi, son of Zulfikar Munshi. He became a member of the jury in a

magistrate court because he successfully eliminated thieves in Shanar par, a notorious neighboring village. He was an important figure in the local government, as he was a member of the Union Board for six years.

The other segment of Ataul Shoud's descendants comprise Baharuddin's sons, Dr. Sahadat Hossain Mia and Sultan Hossain. Dr. Sahadat Hossain Mia is a high school graduate and a primary school teacher. He is also a part-time homeopathic doctor and is considered to be maydam (middle) bañsa. His wife is a high school graduate and is at present a nominated member of the Union Parisad. Sultan Hossain is a farmer and lives much above the subsistence level. Descendants of Mukarram Shoud live in Shikdar parā near the eastern part of the village. A few members of this segment are wealthy, while the rest are poor with 6 landless families out of the 19 families (see Table 24).

It appears that Munshi segment is khāndānī. However, the chances for the other two segments to enter into a high status group are remote, in spite of Dr. Sahadat Hossain Mia's special prestige.

Gōsthī P: This is a poor gōsthī in the village. It has 11 families who own 10.77 acres of land. There are 77 people in this gōsthī all of whom live in a single bārī (see Table 25). This is not a khāndānī gōsthī. It has the patronymic title Bepari (petty trader) although the younger members do not use the patronymic title. This gōsthī is also an original gōsthī of the village. Sarifuddin Bepari, age 80, remembers that his FaFa, Naqui Bepari, was a farmer and a rice trader. He accumulated 9.0 acres of land before his death. Naqi Bepari had two sons and two daughters. His two sons were Samad and Jalal Bepari. Samad Bepari

had five sons and four daughters. His sons were Hossain Ali, Hakim Ali, Zakir Ali, Nayan Ali (died in infancy) and Sarifuddin Bepari.

Of all the brothers, only the descendants of Zakir Ali and Sarifuddin are well off. Zakir Ali's SoSo Nazimuddin, is a mill worker and owns 1.5 acres of land including some property which he inherited from his MoBr. Sarifuddin Bepari is a retired farmer and stays with his youngest son Nooruddin. Sarifuddin Bepari seems a hardworking man and also a good jāmdānī worker. He told me that his wife was also a fine jāmdānī worker. He inherited two acres land and accumulated an additional 6.6 acres which he divided equally between his two sons. His eldest son, Kabiruddin, is a mill carpenter, while his youngest son, Nooruddin, a smart young man is a deed-writer who has accumulated a considerable amount of money from his profession. He has two wives, whom he has been able to maintain well. At the time of my research, I found that Nooruddin was building a pākā house for himself. Yet he has not been successful in raising his status. Villagers know that he went to jail twice for false deed writing. Samad Bepari's other brothers lost their land quickly. In Bangladesh, it is highly likely that a farmer will succumb to debt if any of his crops fail. And it is highly likely that once a farmer is in debt, he will remain so for the rest of his life.

Rahim Bepari's descendants, particularly his son's son, Ali Ahmed Mia, are doing well. At the time of my field work, he had started a grocery store. Of this gōṣṭhī, only Nooruddin appears able to eventually attain khāndānī status.

Table 25

Gosthi P

House hold No.	Family Popu- lation		Non Kin Mem- bers	Total Popu- lation	Land Owned in Acres	Family Head's Occupation		Occupation of Non-head Working Members			
	M	F				Pri- mary	Secon- dary	Members			4
								1	2	3	
1	4	1	-	5	0.90	Wage Lab.	Agr.	-	-	-	-
2	2	5	-	7	0.45	Mason	-do-	-	-	-	-
3	5	2	-	7	0.0	-do-	-do-	-	-	-	-
4	6	2	2	10	2.40	Agr.	Deed writer	Agr.	-	-	-
5	2	5	2	9	2.40	-do-	Car- penter	-	-	-	-
6	3	3	-	6	1.50	Mill work	Agr.	Deed writer	-	-	-
7	4	4	-	8	1.50	Agr.	Grocer	Mason	-	-	-
8	6	4	1	11	0.75	-do-	Mason	-	-	-	-
9	3	1	-	4	0.75	Mason	Agr.	-	-	-	-
10	4	3	-	7	0.0	Wage lab.	Wage lab.	Wage lab.	-	-	-
11	1	2	-	3	0.06	-do-	-	-	-	-	-
Total											
11	40	32	5	77	10.71						

Gosthi Q: This is one of the poorest gosthi. There are five families owning only 1.2 acres of land; two families are landless (see Table 26). I had difficulty gathering information on this gosthi, particularly on its history. Apparently it is one of the original gosthi. Madhu Shoud, an ancestor, was a poor jamdani worker. He had one son, Bakkar Munshi. Bakkar Munshi had some religious education and owned about 3.00 acres of land. Bakkar Munshi is the father of Abdul Khalaque Mia, who is a landless mill worker. All the members of this gosthi are poor and there is no chance that any of them will become wealthy in the foreseeable future.

Table 26

Gos̄thi Q

House hold No.	Family Population		Non Kin Mem- bers	Total Popu- lation	Land Owned in Acres	Family Head's Occupation		Occupation of Non-Head Working Members				
	M	F				Pri- mary	Seco- ndary	1	Member 2	3	4	
1	3	3	-	6	0.0	Wage lab.	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	6	1	-	7	0.0	Mill work	-	Mill work	-	-	-	-
3	4	6	-	10	0.22	Car- penter	Agr.	Wage lab.	Wage lab.	-	-	-
4	4	4	-	8	0.60	Mill work	-do-	-	-	-	-	-
5	1	3	-	4	0.30	Maid servant	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	5	18	17	-	35	1.12						

Gos̄thi R: Here we have a wealthy gos̄thi. It has three households (35 members) in two bari and owns 16.80 acres of land (see Table 27). Originally, this gos̄thi came from Changail, a village belonging to Byddir Bazar Thana across the river Lakya in the district of Dhaka. Khalil Sarder is 80 years old and is one of the wealthiest farmers of the village. He told me that his FaFaFa, Dangu Shoud, was a resident of the village of Changail. Nevertheless, his FaFa, Manik Shoud, for some unknown reason moved to Shimulia. Khalid Shoud could not tell me how much land Manik Shoud had owned. However, he had one son, Kanu Shoud, who owned 9.6 acres. Although he was a farmer, he worked as a sardar (literally leader) of laborers in road construction in Dhaka city. From this work he got the title sardar. Kanu Sardar had three sons and a daughter. His sons were Firoz Sardar, Khalil Sardar, and Salimuddin. However,

Feroz Sardar had no male heir, so he adopted a son. After his death his adopted son went back to his original village taking all of Feroz Sardar's movable property. Khalil Sardar married thrice: he did not have any children from his first marriage. From his second marriage he had three daughters and a son. At the time of my field work the son, Tyub Ali, had died and the family was being looked after by his SoSo Kazimuddin. Khalil Sardar maintained few connections with his eldest son, and after the latter's death he had very little to do with Kazimuddin. Khalil Sardar has four sons and three daughters by his third marriage. His eldest son, Tajul Islam, is a university graduate who is working as an accountant for the Water and Power Development Organization of the Bangladesh government. Previously, he was a school teacher and at the time of my field work, he was preparing for his Master's in Political Science. His wife comes from Dhaka city. Khalil Sardar's second son is a B.A. student and the third son an apprentice in a mill, and the fourth is a college student. Khalil Sardar's son Tajul Islam enjoys a special prestige because he is a university graduate and works in the city. His marriage into an urban family also contributed to this status. This gōṣṭhī segment is prosperous and on the threshold of khāndānī status.

Kanu Shoud's third son, Salimuddin, had one son and a daughter. The son, Khabir, is wealthy, owning 7.8 acres of land; he inherited about 4.5 acres from his father and increased his holding with money obtained in jute trading. Kabir is doing well and should be able to increase his land holdings further. He is a māṭbar of the village sālīs, a position obtained primarily because of his economic power.

Table 27

Gos̥thi R

House hold No.	Family Popu- lation		Non Kin Mem- bers	Total Popu- lation	Land Owned in Acres	Family Head's Occupation		Occupation of Non-Head Working Members					
	M	F				Pri- mary	Secun- dary	1	2	3	4		
1	8	4	3	15	9.00	Ret'd	-	Serv.	Mill Work	-	-	-	-
2	3	5	-	9	0.0	Yarn Supplier	Agr.	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	7	5	-	12	7.80	Agr.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	3	18	14	3	35	16.80							

Gos̥thi S: Overall, this gos̥thi is considered poor. It has 13 families with 19.45 acres. Members reside in four bari. It is not a khandani gos̥thi, but the situation of one of its families is somewhat exceptional. Its head, Abdul Majid, is one of the wealthiest persons in the village, as well as a faction leader.

Abdul Majid's FaFaFa was Kalimuddin Shoud. Kalimuddin Shoud was a farmer and a rice trader. He had one son, Baksh Ali Shoud, who inherited all of his father's land. It is said that Baksh Ali Shoud was a disciple of a holy man (murid of a pir). He used to sing marfati song, played the dotara (two stringed musical instrument), and smoked marijuana. He was also feared for his valor as he was an expert in club fighting. Baksh Ali Shoud had five sons who each inherited 2.4 acres. All five brothers lost their lands and their sons inherited nothing. One of the sons was Suruj Mia, the father of Abdul Majid. Yet

Abdul Majid has accumulated a very large tract of land. Land records show that he acquired most of this land after the communal riot of 1964. Like other rich farmers here, Rostum Ali acted as a middleman in land transactions with Muslim speculators of Dhaka city. They engaged in land speculation on the basis of land cheaply acquired from the departed Hindus. As a result, Abdul Majid developed a special, continuing, relationship with the urban landowners. This will be elaborated in Chapter V. Abdul Majid is a self-made man. He first worked as a jāmdānī worker with his father. While doing so, he got the job of a peon in the custom and excise department in the district of Rangpur. He was there for a few year, later returning home and starting to go to school. However, he could not continue, and got a job as peon with the teacher's training college in Dhaka. While working as a peon, he became interested in education and started taking private classes so that he could appear for the Matriculation Examination. While he was working as a peon, he used to sell dictionaries which were imported from England. From this, he became interested in the import and export business (in which he became involved when he left his job). He succeeded in passing the Matriculation Examination and became a clerk with the education department. During his tenure there, he entered into business with a fellow villager, Arifuddin Mia (gōsthī B) utilizing the opportunities associated with the 1964 communal riot. Most of the land that he owns belonged to the Hindus. The birth of Bangladesh gave him further opportunity to increase his wealth. For example, he got a permit to import yarn from Japan through his alignment with the absentee landowners of Dhaka city. During the post-independence period he started to obtain khāndānī status

by becoming a factional leader. He also donated Taka 18000 (\$900.) in cash plus 0.30 acres of land to the village high school. As a result, the school was named for him. The naming of the school created many conflicts and the khāndānī gōṣṭhī of the village could not stand for it. During my stay in the village I witnessed a number of meetings among different groups of villagers to discuss whether or not it was appropriate to keep the name of the school. The khāndānī gōṣṭhī in the village considered him to be an upstart. He also donated 0.50 acres of land for a proposed maternity hospital for the village sponsored by the Bangladesh Family Planning Department. This donation was made during my stay. This had further incurred the displeasure and jealousy of the khāndānī gōṣṭhī.

He further aimed at high status by giving his daughter in marriage to a person who is a Master's student at Dhaka University. Abdul Majid spent a considerable period in the urban area and he understands the importance of urban connections and education, having sent his sons to college. By doing this, he has achieved khāndānī status, although villagers do not forget to remark, "It is Abdul Majid who alone can be counted in the gōṣṭhī." As Abdul Majid is a smart man, he started using 'saheb' after his name, a term which is used by urban educated bhadrolok. It would have been very interesting to follow his future career. Unfortunately, Abdul Majid died suddenly during a cancer operation in 1978.

The other two wealthy members of this gōṣṭhī are Abdul Majid's late brother Saiful Haque and his FaBrSo, Khair Ali Mia. Saiful Haque was a policeman and acquired 2.4 acres of land through his job. He is now dead and his widow is looking after his family. Khair Ali is a land

broker in the village and has accumulated 2.4 acres of land through this business. The other members of Abdul Majid's gōsthi are either day laborers or mill workers (four landless). They are very poor (see Table 28). Abdul Majid did not have a close relationship with his poor gōsthi members. On the other hand, he maintained a very close relationship with his brother Saiful Haque and his FaBrSo, Khair Ali (who was an ardent follower of Abdul Majid's faction).

Table 28

Gōsthi S

House hold No.	Family Population		Non Kin Mem- bers	Total Popu- lation	Land Owned In Acres	Family Head's Occupation		Occupation of Non-Head Working Members			
	M	F				Pri- mary	Secon- dary	Member			
								1	2	3	4
1	1	6	-	7	0.0	Mill work	Petty trade	-	-	-	-
2	5	3	-	8	0.75	-do-	Agr.	-	-	-	-
3	2	4	-	6	0.30	-do-	-do-	-	-	-	-
4	4	5	-	9	0.30	-do-	-do-	Car- penter	-	-	-
5	2	3	-	5	0.0	Agr.	Grocer	-	-	-	-
6	3	2	-	5	0.45	Grocer	-	-	-	-	-
7	1	2	-	3	0.0	Serv.	-	-	-	-	-
8	3	3	-	6	0.0	Mill work	-	-	-	-	-
9	3	2	-	5	2.40	Agr.	-	-	-	-	-
10	6	3	2	11	2.40	-do-	Land broker	-	-	-	-
11	3	2	-	5	0.0	-do-	-	-	-	-	-
12	9	5	3	17	12.60	Bus.	Agr.	-	-	-	-
13	4	3	-	7	0.25	Labor	-	Wage labor	-	-	-
Total	13	46	43	5	94	19.45					

Gōsthī T: This gōsthī is considered to be the top most khāndān of the village. Economically, it belongs to the upper category. It has 23 families and owns 52.15 acres of land (see Table 29). It was not a khāndānī gōsthī during its initial period of settlement. The history of this gōsthī reveals a crucial pattern of status formation among the Muslims of Bangladesh. The founder of this gōsthī, Sakka Mullah came from the eastern part of Dhaka district and settled in Shimulia about 1830. I learned little regarding his occupation, the amount of land he owned, and why he had the patronymic title Mullah. Sakku Mullah had one son, Danu Mullah, and in turn Danu Mullah had two sons - Abdur Rahman and Abdul Jabber. It appears that the family was not wealthy and probably had little land. This has been corroborated by a piece of information which I gathered when I was conducting an interview with the octogenarian, Khalil Sardar of the gōsthī R, who said that Ainuddin Shoud (later a prominent member of this gōsthī) borrowed Taka 10.00 (approximately \$2.00 in that time) for his marriage from Khalil Sardar's Father, Kanu Sardar.

Abdul Jabbar had three sons -- Sadar, Ainuddin and Akkas Shoud. His younger brother Abdur Rahman had one son who later became mentally deranged and died without marrying. The gōsthī became prominent during the lifetime of Abdul Jabbar's three sons who entered the paikār (wholesale) business for the jāmdānī and kasīdā industries. They also had a big jāmdānī factory and many villagers aged 60 and above reportedly worked in this factory. This business brought them much wealth. They were also actively involved in money lending and both Hindus and Muslims borrowed money from them at an exorbitant rate.

After becoming wealthy, this gōṣṭhī sought social status by upgrading its affinal connections. Abdur Rahman's son, Sadar Shoud, married the daughter of Zulfikar Munshi of the gōṣṭhī 0 (Munshi segment) but only with great difficulty. At that time, the Munshi gōṣṭhī was considered to be the highest khāndān of the village and the Munshi's felt that the Shouds were nincu baṅśā. The Shoud gōṣṭhī also bought three sikimi tāluka and thus entered zamindary status which confirmed their khāndānī status. Further, one of the prominent members of this gōṣṭhī (Ainuddin Shoud) went to Mecca on Haj. Upon returning, he stopped lending money, thereby removing the stigma from his religious image, and hence his social status. Furthermore, he constructed a pākā mosque. Finally, he donated 2.24 acres of land to the mosque as wakf property. Now the quest for status has ended as the gōṣṭhī has been recognized as a khāndānī, not only in the village but also in the area. The achievement of economic and social status allowed it to enter into politics. Ainuddin Shoud headed the village panchayet. But he did not enter into local government politics (Union Board) which was then completely dominated by Hindus. However, one gōṣṭhī member was elected to the Union Board in the early 1930s. From that time on this gōṣṭhī was directly represented in local government until 1965. After 1965, gōṣṭhī members have been indirectly involved in politics. Further, since 1965, their dominance over the village has been challenged by a few other wealthy families.

The gōṣṭhī remained joint (in property as well as cooking arrangements) until the late 40s. During the early 50s, this gōṣṭhī started to decline. However, it has succeeded in maintaining its social status, although I noticed some discontinuity in some segments

which became poor. In particular, two families have drifted into landlessness and their names are hardly mentioned when gōṣṭhī status is discussed. Ainuddin's SoSo represents the dominant segment of the gōṣṭhī, both in wealth and in education. Even today, many wealthy persons of the village belong to this gōṣṭhī.

Two members are rich. One, Khalishuddin Shoud is one of the richest persons. Besides farming, he is a contractor and supplier for the Water and Power Development Authority of the Bangladesh Government. Like other rich persons, he came into contact with urban land speculators who bought land following the communal riot of 1964. Khalishuddin Shoud became a middleman in transactions for urban land owners. Needless to say, Khalishuddin Shoud acquired considerable amounts of land following the communal riot of 1964. In addition, he has extended his investments in Dhaka, where he bought a house and site for his construction business. Two of his daughters are married to urban service holders who have been working as overseer of an engineering firm and a bank clerk respectively. In this way, Khalishuddin Shoud has consolidated his link to Dhaka.

The other rich farmer is Abdur Rob Shoud who is presently working as a brick factory manager. Also, he has been working as a supplier of construction materials with different government organizations. He has been using his connections with the absentee landowners of Dhaka who are well connected with the administrative set up. Two of his sons are in business. The absentee landowners of Dhaka have been helping his sons in different ways in their business. On the other hand Akkas and Sadar Shoud's SoSos are in economic distress; it seems that in the near

future they will slip out of the high status group. However, the other segment which is wealthy and educated, will continue to hold the status of khandani group.

Gōsthi U: Another extremely poor, original village gōsthi is gōsthi U. It does not have any patronymic title. Data show that this gōsthi has always been poor. One of the earliest members was Ismail Mandal, who was poor and landless. His son, Kalam Ali, was also poor, and became a professional cook. Today, most of the members of this gōsthi are farmers, day laborers and mill workers (see Table 30).

Table 30

Gōsthi U

House hold No.	Family Population		Non Kin Mem- bers	Total Popu- lation	Land Owned in Acres	Family Head's Occupation		Occupation of Non-Head Working Members				
	M	F				Pri- mary	Sec- ondary	1	2	3	4	
1	2	2	-	4	0.60	Agr.	Labor	Labor	-	-	-	-
2	2	3	-	5	0.30	-do-	-do-	-	-	-	-	-
3	4	5	-	9	0.90	-do-	-do-	-	-	-	-	-
4	4	5	-	9	0.90	-do-	-do-	Agr.	Mill work	-	-	-
5	3	6	-	9	0.45	Printer	Agr.	-	-	-	-	-
6	4	6	-	10	0.45	Labor	-do-	Agr.	Labor	Mill Work	-	Labor
7	2	3	-	5	0.45	-do-	-do-	-do-	-	-	-	-
8	4	5	-	9	0.90	Agr.	Labor	Labor	Mill work	-	-	-
9	6	2	-	8	1.50	-do-	-do-	-	-	-	-	-
Total												
9	31	37	-	68	6.45							

Gōsthī V: This gōsthī settled in the village in the recent past. The head of the family, Habibuddin, came from a village across the river Lakya. Before coming here, he married into gōsthī E. When Alal Bhuiyan's daughter died, he remarried. He owns 0.90 acres of land (see Table 31). He is also a mill worker. His two sons are rickshaw pullers. There is little chance of economic improvement in the near future.

Table 31

Gōsthī V

House hold No.	Family Population		Non Kin Mem- bers	Total Popu- lation	Land Owned in Acres	Family Head's Occupation		Occupation of Non-Head Working Members					
	M	F				Pri- mary	Secun- dary	1	2	3	4		
1	4	4	-	8	0.90	Mill work	Agr.	Rick- shaw driver	Rick- shaw driver				
Total	1	4	4	-	8	0.90							

This concludes the discussion of the 22 gōsthī of Shimulia. In the next chapter, I will discuss the process of change in the land tenure since 1945.

Summary

This chapter dealt with all the gōsthī of Shimulia, which total 22. It evaluated these 22 Muslim gōsthī to outline the history of social organization of this locality.

Chapter V

CHANGING LAND TENURE PATTERNS IN SHIMULIA

This chapter takes up land tenure in Shimulia.

Brief History of Land Tenure

In order to understand Shimulia's land tenure system, it is necessary to introduce here a brief history of land tenure in Bengal. The land tenure system of Bengal is different from the rest of India. Moreover, the ancient history of Bengal is very obscure and so is its history of land revenue. Even under Paṭhān and Mughal rule, there were no uniform regulations in the revenue system since the province of Bengal was located in the far corner of the empire. Also, an unstable government contributed to the lack of development of a uniform revenue system. Even before the advent of the British, Bengal was in a chaotic condition politically. As a result confusion reigned supreme in the entire revenue situations particularly with regard to question of proper recipients of their revenue from the peasants. (Baden-Powell 1892). Despite these chaotic conditions, peasants were recognized as the proprietors of their own lands without any intermediaries from the state. But the British government created a proprietary class of zamindārs through the Permanent Settlement Act of 1793. However, this act had little affect since the farmers who were in possession of lands remained de facto owners, although the zamindārs now were de jure proprietors. (Baden-Powell 1892; Raychaudhury 1969). As a result lands held by farmers were heritable and transferable

(with certain limitations - see below). However, it is important to mention here that a zamindār could evict his tenants (farmers) if he wished by virtue of his de jure ownership. In the following pages I will show how the Permanent Settlement Act operated in Shimulia.

Two Hindu families belong to the mahisya cāsī category worked as gomstā¹ (employee) of the two zamindāri estates. These two estates covered three fourths of Shimulia mouza. The village notes of 1910-1917 show that this mouza belonged to parganā (revenue district) Rajanagar of Dhaka district. Three-fourths of the mouza belonged to the Pal family of Bhagakul and the Benerjee family of Roil. The remaining one-quarter of the mouza included some khārija² taluks belonging to the Nawabs of Dhaka and the Raja of Bhawal and three sikimi³ taluks belonging to the Shoud Gōṣṭhī (Gōṣṭhī T). The families which served as gomsta of the Pals of Bhagakul and the Banerjees of Roil zamindari estates were dominant in the village wealth and politics. They were represented in the British-created local government known as the Union Board until the partition of India in 1947. I should mention here that these two families were so wealthy and dominant that they looked like two small zamindārs.

Legally, under the Permanent Settlement Act of 1933, the zamindārs

1. From Persian, meaning an employee of the zamindar who collects rent.
2. A type of revenue estate.
3. An estate within a zamindari and paying revenue through zamindar.

were the de-jure owners of all lands belonging to the estate.⁴ Not only did the lands of his estate belong to the zamindar, but so did the trees and fruits. But in actuality, a tenant could plant trees and enjoy the fruits of them. Also, a tenant had to obtain his zamindar's permission to construct a house or to dig a tank. This was followed by sālāmi (Arabic word from salam) not to be confused with Hungarian sausages. But such permission is obtained from the zamindar's resident gomsta. Two gomsta families who were the "agents" of the zamindars gave these permissions and appropriated all the sālāmis obtained from the tenants. I have gathered that Muinuddi Shoud (gōṣṭhī T) had to obtain permission from the gomsta to build the pākā mosque which was erected in 1919. Here is an excerpt from the village notes of 1912-1917 about the right of the tenants.

As a rule, rayots have no rights to transfer their holdings except with the consent of the landlord. But practically, transfers are made and the consent is obtained by the purchased after or payment of salami. The rate varies from $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of the sale price. Besides, they can not erect pucca houses, dig earth and cut down trees but they can plant and enjoy fruits of them (village notes).

4. A question naturally arises as to how many layers of tax farmers existed between the tenants and landlords. In Shimulia, the zamindāri and khārija tāluks had no intermediary between tax-farmers from the tenants to landlord (zamindār). Only their gomsta (officials) collected rents from the tenants. But the sikimi taluk was itself an intermediary tax-farming layer between the zamindār and tenants. As I have already mentioned sikimi taluk is a dependent estate of a zamindār. For example, tax-farmers of sikimi taluk collect rents from the tenants and paid them to the zamindār only. Even though we see the sikimi taluk is an intermediary tax-farming layer in land revenue system it had little or no affect on the tenants. Sikimidār collected rent at Rs.1-8 Ana per acre which was decreed by the British Government. In Shimulia, tax-farmers did not create any share-cropping tenancy; share-cropping tenancy was created by individual ryots who were mostly wealthy. The ryots let out their land for share-cropping independent of tax-farmers. Such ryots did not need to pay shares to the tax-farmers at the apex of the tenure system. Share-cropping tenancy arose between ryot and ryot based on their agreement.

The Permanent Settlement continued till the enactment of the East Bengal Acquisition and Tenancy Act in 1951 which sought to abolish the 150 year old permanent settlement. It introduced proprietary rights for the individual farmers by eliminating the intermediary rent receiving individuals like zamindārs, talukdārs, sikimidārs. This act enabled the farmers to pay their revenue directly to the government (Kabir 1969). The abolition of zamindāri dealt a profound blow to the gomsta, who were wealthy Hindu farmers of the village. This was followed by an overall decrease in the political and economic influence of the Hindus in the region. As a result the local Muslims in the village filled the vacuum as we pointed out further on in this chapter.

Types of lands and Tenure categories in Shimulia

In studying the land tenure of a village it is necessary to know how its people of the village categorize types of lands and tenures. In the following page, I describe the native categories of land and tenure in the village.

✓ Villagers identify eight types of land. They are bhiṭi, nāl, pukur, āndi, bil, gopāt, hālat and āil. The word bhiṭi came from Bengali and refers to elevated land which constitutes (in general) the bārī site. But with specific reference it means the ground of homesteads so that in a bārī, there may be several bhiṭi depending on the number of resident families. The word nāl came from Pali and refers to low lands. In Shimulia most of the cultivable lands are known as nāl lands. The word pukur came from Pali and means a tank. Like everywhere in Bengal pukur is considerably

important as it is the main locale for washing and fishing. The word āndi means a tank which is usually much bigger than a pukur. I could not find the origin of the word āndi. Hālat refers to the village road. The word gopāt came from two Sanskrit words' "go" and "Panta" which mean cattle and path respectively. ("Cow" "Path"; Indo European cognates). In Shimulia, there are several gopāt criss-crossing the village (see village map). The term bil came from Sanskrit which means marshy lands. In Shimulia, there are a good number of bils. The term ail refers to the strip of land separating one plot from another. The villagers consider ail to be no man's land.

Villagers assigned lands to the following categories sbatab-bhogi or mālikānā, ejmāli, sariki or bhāgi. Khās, wakf, bargā, bandak or rehan. The term sbatab comes from Sanskrit and means existence; however, in general parlance it refers to ownership. The word bhog means possession or enjoyment. Therefore, sbatba bhogi refers to some kind of ownership of property. The word mālikānā from Arabic, mālik; owner, ruler, master or landlord. The term mālikānā is widely used to refer to ownership of property in Bangladesh. The villagers used both terms to designate land ownership. In the present discussion I will use absolute ownership to mean sbatba bhogi or mālikānā land.

The term ejmāli comes from Arabic "common inheritance." Two other synonymous terms used for ejmāli are bhāgi and sariki. The word bhāgi comes from the Sanskrit bhāg meaning division, hence bhāg refers to a co-parcener. Sariki comes from the Arabic "sirk" meaning a partner. It

refers to a partner of common property. However, in Shimulia they all refer to coparceners. In the present discussion I will use coparcenary land to mean ejmāli, sariki and bhāgi lands. The term khās comes from Arabic meaning special, extra ordinary, but when it expresses land tenure it means a land belonging immediately to the zamindārs. At this time the khās lands stand for the government owned land and in Shimulia are included such land categories as hālat, gōpāt and some bil.

The term wakf from Arabic refers to property for religious and charitable purposes. The term bargā refers to the share-cropping system. The word bargā probably came from the Bengali word 'bargo' which means division, class, etc. This characterizes an arrangement through which a person(s) cultivates a piece of land without any ownership rights. He makes an arrangement with the land owners so that he can cultivate it with his own labor and capital. In return, the cultivator pays half of what he produced on the lands to the owner. In Shimulia, the dobhāga (half-share) bargā system is found.⁵

For the mortgage system villagers use the terms bandok and rehān. The term bandak comes from Sanskrit and means a security over a loan. The term rehān comes from Arabic and also means security on a loan. Bandak and rehān are associated with collateral which can be sthbar (immoveable) or asthabar (moveable) property. Here I use both terms to mean mortgage. First, let me proceed to the distribution of tenure

⁵ Another type of bargā system such as tebhāga does not prevail in Shimulia. Such a bargā system is prevalent in different parts of Bangladesh, particularly in the northern parts of the country. Under this system, share-croppers hand over two-thirds of the produce to the owners.

types in the Shimulia Muslim community.

Distribution of land in Shimulia

In the land holdings of a village it is important to take a look at the different types and distribution of tenures found there. This is particularly important for my study of changing agrarian structure. The village settlement record shows that 91% of the land is nāl and is used for cultivation (see Table 32). The major portion of land is held under the absolute ownership category. Hālat, gopāt and bil are khās lands. They comprise 2.63% of the lands. (see Table 33). The bhiṭi land (homestead land) and some pukur belong to the absolute ownership category. But most pukur fall into the coparcenary category. Generally, a pukur(s) is owned jointly by all the families of a bārī. But the coparcenary share of a pukur varies from family to family. Also, these latter shares of a pukur are transferable. Moreover, common paths within the bārī belong to the coparcenary category. Sometimes, fruit trees are included.

Wakf lands comprised of 7.69 acres of land. Two mosques, the graveyards, and 3 acres of cultivatable lands are wakf lands. (see Table 33). The 3 acres are provided for the maintenance of the village mosques and graveyards.

It is, however, not very difficult to identify nāl (cultivated) and non-cultivated lands here. Non-cultivated lands are bhiṭi, pukur, lands occupied by the village schools, graveyards, halat, gōpāt, and some khās lands like bil. In fact very little land is not cultivated. Below I will present a table which shows the breakdown of land by functional categories.

Table 32

Amount of cultivable and non-cultivable lands in Shimalia mouza

1978

Cultivated land		Non-cultivated land	
Land category/units	Acres	Land category/units/acres	
Muslim (<u>nāl</u>)	358.11	<u>Natun pāṛā</u>	3.74
Hindu (<u>nāl</u>)	69.77	<u>Bārī</u> (<u>bhiṭi</u>)	30.29
Absentee owners in Dkaka City (<u>nāl</u>)	90.90	Tanks (<u>pukur āndi</u>)	13.68
Neighboring villagers' land (land traced) (<u>nāl</u>)	18.27	School	3.26
Neighboring villagers' land (land untraced) (<u>nāl</u>)	170.13	<u>Wakf</u>	
		graveyard	1.05
		mosque	3.64
<u>Wakf</u> (<u>nāl</u>)	3.00	khās land	
		<u>bil</u>	3.40
		<u>Hālat</u> & <u>gopāt</u>	10.92
		<u>Ail</u> *	
Total land	780.16		
	710.18		69.98
	(91.03%)		(8.96%)

*Ail land is designated strips of land generated as a divisional marker between two pieces of separated land.

Absolute ownership lands are still held by Hindus, absentee owners from Dhaka city, and by neighboring villagers. I have excluded the 188.40 acres of land belonging to residents of neighboring villages. (see table 33). This amount is considerable in comparison to the total amount of land of Shimulia mouza. I have excluded this land because these owners are not involved in social interaction in Shimulia. Also out of 188.40 acres which belong to neighboring villagers, 170.13 acres were not traceable. These lands are located on the periphery of Shimulia mouza of the 18.27 acres of land that were traced. The owners do not belong to the social and economic organizations. Table 33 shows the overall pattern of land distribution.

It is imperative to know the types of different tenures throughout the Muslim population. For example, how many Muslim villagers have absolute ownership, share-cropping, and mortgagage tenures and by what rights do these villagers possess these tenures. Of these tenures, absolute ownership is the most important as the villagers categorize the farmers by considering the amount of such land that an individual holds. Villagers rarely mention other types of tenures (like bargā and bandak) when they talk about holdings unless specifically asked.

Land can be obtained by (1) inheritance (2) purchase (3) squatting; usurpation (bhōg) (4) bargā (share-cropping) (5) bandok or mortgage.

The basic way of obtaining land is through inheritance. Generally, the transfer of land takes place after the death of the father. The Muslims of Shimulia (and Bangladesh) follow the Bengali-Assamese law of inheritance known as daya bhāg (Derrett 1957). Among the Hindus,

sons are the recipients of immovable property including homestead lands (bhiti). There is no provision for daughter(s) to inherit since she will marry out and will reside at her husband's house.

The Muslims of Shimulia ideally follow the Islamic law of inheritance. This law states that two daughters are equal to one son in respect to inheriting property. But although the villagers recognize the Islamic law of inheritance, they nevertheless overlook the girls' rights to property.

Only rarely in Shimulia is parental property transmitted to daughters. Even then, daughters are not given their full share as prescribed by the law. In this connection, I should note that sons of a deceased mother are sometimes potential heirs to their mother's brother's property. In Shimulia, I came across a few cases of such a nature. In one such case, village factional politics incited some of the heirs of a deceased woman to acquire land from their mother's brother. As a result, the sons of the deceased woman registered a case against their mother's brothers and succeeded in inheriting property from them. But such cases are very rare.

Purchase is another principal way of obtaining land. Since land is not corporately held, there is a great amount of flexibility with respect to buying and selling. Land transactions in the village cover a substantial part of its land tenure history, particularly with regard to the Hindu lands.

Bhog tenure is achieved through the de facto possession of abandoned lands. In Shimulia, this occurred after the mass migration of the Hindu

population from the village after the communal riot of 1964. This migration allowed some Muslim individuals (who later became rich) to take physical possession of the vacated Hindu lands. These became the de facto owners of those lands, if not de jure owners.

Bargā or share-cropping is important in Shimulia because 19.21% of the total cultivated land of the village is associated with share-cropping. Generally, the owner will let out his lands to a farmer who cultivates it in return for 50% of its produce. In this form of share-cropping the land owner does not provide the share-cropper with capital, ploughs or draft animals. There is no formal agreement between the owner and share-cropper; only a verbal agreement is made. Normally the land owners know the share-cropper very well. In some cases, land is let out to kin. But in the majority of cases, lands are let out to non-kin farmers.

Mortgage is another kind of tenure right in which a particular piece of land is given as collateral for a loan. As a result, the mortgagee can use that piece of land by virtue of his bandak tenure for a stipulated period of time. During this period the mortgagee gets all the produce of the land. However, the mortgagor gets his land back if the mortgager can return the principal amount of bandak on the expiry of the contract.

Table - 33

Distribution of Lands 1978

<u>Categories/types</u>	<u>Amount of Land</u>		<u>Percentage</u>
Muslims (cultivable land)	358.11		60.51
Hindus (cultivable land)	69.77		11.79
Absentee (cultivable land)	90.90		15.36
Natun para	3.74		0.63
<u>Bārī</u>	30.29		5.11
Tanks	13.68		2.31
Schools	3.26		0.55
<u>Wakf</u>			
lands (<u>nāl</u>)	3.00		
mosques	3.00	7.69	1.11
grave yard	1.69		
<u>Khas land</u>			
<u>bil</u> etc.	3.40	14.32	2.63
<u>Hālat & gōpāt</u>	10.92		
Shimulia Village	Total	591.76	100.0%
Lands belonging to Neighboring Villages:			
Traced		18.27	
Untraced		170.13	
	Total	780.19	

PATTERNS OF LAND OWNERSHIP IN SHIMULIA

Distribution of absolute ownership land

The total amount of land in Shimulia is 780.16 acres. 754.89 acres belong to the absolute ownership category, (mālikāna). According to the heading of the section, I should discuss the distribution of 754.89 acres of land. But I will not take the above amount as my unit of discussion, since some of that acreage is owned by outside villagers who are not integrated into the economic or social life of Shimulia. For this reason, I have dropped the 188.27 acres (see Table 33) which belongs to these outsiders. Also the 30.29 acres comprising the total bārī of Shimulia will be excluded from this discussion, although in principle the bhīṭī land of a family falls under the absolute ownership category. Similarly, I have dropped 3.74 acres from my unit of discussion since this land constitutes the bhīṭī for nāṭun pāṛā people. (New settlement which is not yet part of corporate organization of Shimulia) and comprised of bārī and nāṭun pāṛā do not enter into the productive relations of the village, even though they are held by absolute ownership category. Therefore, I have treated 518.78 acres as one unit of analysis.

A word is needed here for further identification. Although my primary concern was to describe the land tenure distribution among the lands held by the Muslims of Shimulia, I cannot ignore other units of land belonging to the Hindus and absentee owners of Dhaka.

Before 1945, the village was stable in the sense of having existed

Table - 34

Land Distribution in Shimulia in 1945

Units	Acres
Muslim Cultivated Land	182.48 (29.91)
Hindu	353.04 (57.87)
Bārī	24.15 (3.96)
Khas lands	
Roads and halat	10.92 (1.79)
bils (uncultivable)	21.21 (3.47)
Tanks and ditches	13.68 (2.24)
Wakf	4.55 (0.76)
<hr/>	
TOTAL	610.03 (100%)
Lands in neighboring village	170.13
<hr/>	
TOTAL	780.16

in a relatively stable period of political condition. The partition of India in 1947 changed these patterns. Prior to 1947, the Hindus were dominant economically and politically, but these began to change after the partition. Meanwhile, the Muslims of Shimulia were growing in power and wealth. The land among the Hindus was differentially distributed, with only 15 families belonging to mahisya cāsī caste owning 252.60 acres.

The remaining 100.44 acres were shared by about 90 Hindu families. My historical data does not give me the exact number of families. Because of the mass migration of the Hindu population to India, an exact familial history of Shimulia Hindus was impossible to obtain. Hence, I have estimated the number of Hindu families. In the following I have presented a table showing changes in the number of Hindu and Muslim families from 1945 to the present (see table 36).

Table 35

Number of Hindu & Muslim families from 1945-1978

Year	Nos. of families (Muslims) %	Nos. of Hindu families %	Nos. of total families
1945	160 (60.38)	105 (39.62)	265
1950	170 (61.15)	108 (38.85)	278
1961	190 (62.30)	115 (37.70)	305*
1978	253 (74.19)	88 (25.81)	341

* Census of 1961

Table 35 shows that there is a further decline in the number of Hindu families after 1961. This is accentuated by the mass migration of the Hindus soon after the communal riot of 1964. Also, note that in 1945, the Hindu and Muslim populations comprised 39.62% and 60.38% respectively. A comparison of Hindu and Muslim population of the village shows that at

~~present the Hindus and Muslims population constitute 25.81% and 74.19% res-~~
pectively. This demographic transition had a major impact on the village
land holdings.

Before the partition of India in 1947, land ownership as well as the
population of the village remained stable. But the germ of instability
was laid with the partition of India in 1947. This was aggravated by the
Pakistan government's anti-Hindu policy which was worsened by the wide-
scale riots in India and Pakistan. As a result the Hindus of the village
were worried but they did not as yet start to migrate en masse to India
and their political and economic dominance continued with only minor con-
straints. In fact in 1947, only one Hindu family departed to India;
this was the Bhowmik family who had amassed huge wealth through their
money lending business.

Soon after the riot of 1964, some 80% of Hindus of this village left
for India. Soon thereafter the rich Muslim villagers acquired land
left by the Hindus. Also, there were a few 'enterprising' Muslim people
with external jobs and connections who acquired land.

It is interesting to note here that there was not a single villager
involved in the rioting according to the interviews originating with both
Hindus and Muslims. The riot originated in the Adamjee jute mill, incited by
Pakistan Government. The rioters came to the village swinging clubs and
other weapons. The villagers did not participate in the rioting; on the
contrary they sheltered and saved some Hindus from the ravages of the attack.
In spite of their efforts, a few Hindus were killed and a good number

injured. Soon after the riot, the Hindus of the village were taken to rescue camp⁶ at Matuail, the village next to Shimulia. Meanwhile the rich and the enterprising Muslims took advantage of the situation by taking possession of land.

Hindus to Muslims land transactions took various forms. First, a large number of Hindu emigrants entered into an agreement sealed with Taka 1.50 judicial stamp that they would sell their land after being settled in India. Also they took cash advances from the prospective Muslim buyers with whom they entered into such agreements. About 60% of the Hindu migrants sold their lands. The price they got was normal.

Secondly, some Hindus made rich Muslim neighbors custodians of their lands but never returned to the village after the riot. These custodians became the de facto owners in the course of time. I could not collect exact information about the amount of land thus transferred under the guise of custodianship.

Table 36 presents the amount of land transferred from the Hindus to Muslims since 1965.

In 1945, the Hindus owned 353.04 (57.87%) of cultivable land while the Muslim population owned 182.48 (29.91%) (see Table 37). Thirty three years later, we find that 358.11 (60.51%) and 69.67 (11.79%) acres belong to Muslims and Hindus respectively.

Note here that the transfer of land did not occur evenly across the 22 gōṣṭhī of the village, rather only 68 (26.87%) families out of 253 families have increased their land. These families have added 175.63 acres (96.24%) of land over 33 years (see Table 37).

6. A government organized temporary holding site to accomodate people immediately endangered by riots.

Table - 36

Land sold from the Shimulia Hindu population

1960 - 1978

Year	Sold to Muslims (in acres)
1960-65	11.62
1965-70	93.34
1970-75	72.62
1975-78	21.32
TOTAL	198.90 acres

Table - 37

Increase and decrease of land ownership amonggōsthi between 1945 - 1978

Costhi	Ownership 1945	Ownership 1977-78	absolute increase/decrease	Families increase holding	Increase decrease %
A	7.50	6.30	1.00		-16.00
B	11.25	22.32	11.07	2	98.40
C	00	1.45	1.45	1	-
D	6.00	48.87	42.87	5	714.50
E	19.20	19.20	19.20	4	00
F	1.80	6.45	4.65	2	258.33
G	0.60	3.00	2.40	1	40.00
H	4.80	15.60	10.80	5	225.00
I	8.40	7.20	1.20	5	-14.29
J	9.60	13.80	4.20	-	43.75
K	3.00	8.81	5.81	3	193.67
L	2.00	2.17	.17	2	8.50
M	3.00	22.05	19.05	3	635.00
N	4.20	6.00	1.80	2	42.86
O	31.15	67.31	36.16	11	116.08
P	9.60	10.71	1.11	2	11.56
Q	3.00	1.12	1.88	-	-62.67
R	6.00	16.80	10.80	2	180.00
S	11.98	19.45	7.47	6	62.35
T	38.40	52.15	13.75	10	35.81
U	00	6.45	6.45	1	--
V	00	0.90	0.90	1	--
Nos of 22 <u>gōsthi</u>	182.48	358.11	175.63	68	92.62%

In the meantime, soon after the riot there was a shift in village politics that centered on the "Basic Democracy" election to establish local representatives in the Union Council. This election signalled a challenge to the traditional leadership of Shoud (Gōsthī T) and Munshi Gōsthī (Gōsthī O). In that election, Akram Khan, an emerging wealthy person was nominated by Khalishuddin Shoud of Gōsthī T against the candidates of Abdul Majid of Gōsthī S and Arifuddin Mia of Gōsthī B. Abdul Majid and Arifuddin Mia had been supporters of the wealthy and khāndānī Khalishuddin Shoud since 1942.

At the same time, the D.N.D. project was in the final stage of completion. This attracted a good number of urban land speculators aiming to buy Hindu lands in the village at a cheap rate. They wanted to invest their money in land which they considered safe and profitable. They could foresee that the price of irrigated land would increase dramatically in the future. Land speculators were mostly professionals such as lawyers, medical doctors, businessmen, government officials, and business executives. These people were highly calculating entering into deals with the villagers in connection with buying Hindu lands. They made contact with the Union Council member Akram Khan, and other rich persons. The reason why they selected the rich villagers and the Union Council member was that these villagers were in a better position to act as middlemen. Actually, the rich villagers' position as custodians of Hindu lands helped in the transactions with the Dhaka's speculators. During these transactions, the rich farmers became land brokers. They were instrumental

in buying the Hindu lands at a nominal price. They sold Hindu lands at Taka 400-600 per one pāki (0.30 acres) (see Table 38), when the market price of land at that time was Taka 3000-4000 per pāki. In those deals rich farmers received brokerage fees (dālāli) from the urban land speculators. In this way affluent farmers accumulated some cash which they used in buying additional plots of lands belonging to Hindus.

Table - 38

Price of land in Shimulia since 1945-1978

Year	Price of one <u>Paki</u> land (0.30 acres)	Per cent increase over previous period noted
1945	300.00	
1950	400.00	33.3
1960	700.00	75.00
1964	1200.00	71.4
1968	4,000.00	233.33
1972	5,000.00	25%
1978	20,000.00	300%

This process also helped the wealthy establish links with urban people. I have already mentioned that the land speculators are mostly professional people of Dhaka. Out of 30 absentee land owners who own land in Shimulia, only a few are businessmen. Most of the landowners are high government officials and lawyers. But among them, one is a physician having an established practice in Dhaka. Moreover, only two of these urban land owners have actually managed the farms themselves. The rest have let out their

lands for share-cropping to rich farmers of Shimulia. The rich farmers, in turn, keep for themselves superior lands for share-cropping, and they distribute the remainder of these lands to middle, poor and landless farmers. In this way, the rich farmers have created patronage for factional politics. Urban land owners want to keep close contact with the rich farmers in their own interests such as for the supervision of their lands. Both the parties derive benefits through this mutual relationship. The rich villagers also benefit from their urban contacts. Urban land owners have helped, for example, in obtaining licences for importing yarn, construction and supplying contracts, subsidizing modern inputs in agriculture, credits, jobs for their dependents, etc. Arifuddin Mia of Gosthi B, Abdul Majid of Gosthi S, Khalishuddin Shoud of Gosthi T, are some of the rich farmers who obtained permits for importing yarn through the help of Dr. Karimuddin, (an absentee landowner) Dhaka. The other "urban" farmer Abul Basher Peshkar, also helps the rich farmers of Shimulia in numerous ways but he is less powerful than Dr. Karimuddin. He is a clerk in Dhaka court (Peshkar, from Persian clerk). Though his position is low, he has connections in the administration and can provide help. Dr. Karimuddin, who has an established medical practice in Dhaka city has more effective links than Abul Basher Peshkar. To give one example Dr. Karimuddin obtained a grant of Taka 5,000/- for the Shimulia high school from the Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka district.

Moreover Dr. Karimuddin has been acting as a murubbi (guardian) for the rich farmers. Akram Khan and his brothers interact with the (Gosthi M).

He has kept close touch with these families. Akram Khan and his brothers' family have helped the physician in numerous ways with regard to his farm. He at the same time, made it a point to pursue in his consistent interaction with Akram Khan and his brother's family because they are rich and politically influential. Dr. Karimuddin understands very clearly that his farm's future depends on good relationships with the villagers, particularly with the rich farmers. Akram Khan and his sons often furnish him with advice to his farm manager Manu Mia regarding farming problems in recruiting agricultural laborers for the supervision. In return for such services, Akram Khan and his brothers' family procure fertilizers, seeds and, above all, access to urban financial sources. Akram Khan's enterprising second son used to visit Dr. Karimuddin at his residence at Dhaka almost every day. Finally, the Doctor has further consolidated his link to the village by getting himself selected president of Shimulia High School.

Another absentee land owner is Abdul Matin (who owns 3.42 acres). He is Director of the Water and Power Development authority of Bangladesh government, and has close contact with the rich farmers here. Thus, Arifuddin Mia of gōṣṭhī of B, Abdul Majid of Gōṣṭhī S, Khalishuddin Shoud and Abdur Rab Shoud of gōṣṭhī T, Khalil Sarder of Gōṣṭhī R, and others derived special benefits from Abdul Matin. These farmers and their dependents work as contractors and suppliers on a regular basis. They use the influence of Abdul Matin in obtaining contracts. In addition, through him they got to other officials of the Water and Power Development Authority.

Kalishuddin Shoud of gōṣṭhī T is an established contractor with the Power Development Authority.

The rich farmers of Shimulia have extended their link with Dhaka through other absentee land owners. These absentee land owners include high officials like Muztaba Ali (owns 3.52 acres), Rafiqul Islam (3.76 acres), lawyers like Abdul Mulkim (.70), Kamaluddin (2.10), and businessmen like Haji Karam Ali (3.16), Aftabuddin (4.72 acres), Yusuf Ahmed (3.47 acres).

Emergence of Free Wage-Labor

Currently, 90% of Shimulia village's agricultural laborers are non-local. These are seasonal migrant and destitute laborers. As a result, the villagers, particularly rich farmers are dependant on outside laborers.

Free-wage labor in a real sense did not emerge until the 1960s, although some features were present during the 1950s when mills and factories began to be established in and around the village industrial belt. Also, during time, the decline of the jāmdanī industry displaced some Muslim laborers, but they were absorbed in the mills and factories nearby. The remainder of the Muslim laborers who were not absorbed in the mills and factories preferred to work outside the village as porters, ditch workers, etc. who were paid higher wages than agricultural laborers .

Table 39 shows the differential in wage rates for different kinds of labors in Shimulia and its surrounding villages. The wage rates for different kinds of work are affected by supply and demand. As a result, seasonal migrant laborers from the Manikganj area of Dhaka district - an area of high unemployment - came to Shimulia to work in the fields.

Table - 39

Wages for different kinds of laborers
in Shimulia locality since 1945

Year	Agricultural wage (daily)(Taka)	Non-agricultural wage (Taka)	Industrial wage laborers(Taka)
1945	.50/.60	N.A.	N.A.
1950	.75-.100	1.50	2.50
1955	1.50	2.50	3.00
1960	1.87	2.66	4.50
1965	2.00	2.70	4.60
1970	2.40	3.00	4.60
1975	5/6.00	9/10	10-12
1978	6/7.00	9/10	10-12

Moreover, wages there are lower than at Shimulia.

Yet until 1964, the local landowners of this village used Hindu nama sudra wage laborers from the village itself in their fields. These workers were employed in a patron-client relationship as well as through kinship and supra kinship ties. Strictly speaking, market relations with respect to labor started in the real sense following the communal riot of 1964, after which the involvement of the nama sudra workers in local agricultural dissipated following mass Hindu migration. This resulted in labor shortages in the village, and consequently created opportunities for large numbers of non-local wage laborers.

Currently, the place has three types of personnel: (1) local (2) seasonal migrant and (3) destitute individuals from the refugee camp at Demra Bazar.

Of the three, the latter two predominate in jobs. Local laborers do not contribute much to agriculture - only about 10% of wage laborers.

Seasonal migrant laborers are comprised of poor and landless people who move in a body from their natal places often quite a distance for a short period of time. Upon completion of their work they return to their natal places. The third type consists of destitute individual hailing from different regions of Bangladesh. They are mostly the victims of recent economic crises.

Migrant laborers are commonly found all over Bangladesh (see Wood 1976; Abdullah et al 1976; Arens and Van Beurden 1977; Lindenbaum 1978; Chowdhury 1978). They are poor and landless farmers. They migrate to different regions of Bangladesh in a body. The temporary laborers are forced to move since there is abundant labor supply in that region. In addition, they prefer to work outside of their area since the wage rates are slightly higher in Shimulia than in their own place. Also, migrant laborers found it very convenient to come here for hire recruited by a leader who himself is a wage laborer and a member of the team. He is known as sardār (from Persian, principal, leader). Generally, a sarder maintains a link with the land rich farmer(s) here through correspondence. During the agricultural seasons (such as sowing, weeding, harvesting etc.), the rich farmers of Shimulia inform the sarder through a letter that they would need a certain laborers for a specified task. These laborers at times work for 2-3 rich farmers before they return to their own place. They work both on contract and on a daily wage basis. It is commonly found that their wage is set

before they arrive. It is pertinent to mention here that they are hired at a low rate. They lack any bargaining power for improved wages due to labor availability.

Destitute laborers play the most important part in the local agricultural set up. The nucleus of the refugee camp at Demra was laid during the late 1960s. This was caused by the growing landlessness all over the country⁷. These people were evicted from their land. Also, a good number of them were forced to leave by soil erosion caused by changes in courses of rivers. In the late 1960s, these landless people came to Dhaka in the hope of getting work. They settled down in the shanties in and around city's industrial belt. They found this place to be suitable for job hunting since it offered various kinds of job opportunities. These laborers moved around Demra and Sharulia Bazar in search of employment. In the late 1960s, particularly after inauguration of the D.N.D project, Shimulia farmers looked outside for agricultural workers since the local agricultural labor force did not suffice for the agricultural tasks at hand. From that time on outside laborers became a source of work. In the 1960s their number was small, but increased steadily. The birth of Bangladesh, followed by the famine of 1973-74 and the economic depression, resulted in a further increase of destitute labor. These people were driven off their land during the famine and its subsequent economic depression. As a result, the shanties were transformed into a "huge refugee camp." Today, this camp supplies a substantial amount of agricultural labor to Shimulia. I do not have the exact figures for percentage of labor hired from that camp. The wages are

⁷ From 1951-1961, the number of agricultural laborers increased by 63% nationwide.

low like those of migrant laborers. They, too, lack any bargaining power.

These features go to show the development of free wage labor. Data shows that wage laborers are hired at rates which commonly take account of supply and demand situation. (see Table 39). Their wages are paid in cash and are paid out soon after task completion. The rich farmers have disengaged themselves from any kind of obligation. This was contrary to what used to be found under the traditional patron-client relationship maintained by the rich Hindu and Muslim farmers and the nama sudra wage laborers before the beginning of the 60s. Today's rich farmers try to maximize their profit from the wage laborers by paying wage laborers as little as possible. Not only do they pay lowest possible wages, but they also offer them low quality food. I have witnessed that the food commonly served these people consists of plain rice with onion. Villagers remark that this could never be given to local people. In short, the relationship between land owners and wage laborers resembles the worst type of industrial employee-employer relationship thinkable. For example, when wage laborers complete their work their relationship ends there. In our case the rich farmers could not maximize their profit by rendering such services. Moreover, they will not terminate the relationship even when the work has been completed since they are bound by kinship and samāj ties.

Land Concentration in Shimulia

In this section, an attempt at quantitative analysis of land concentration, vis-a-vis social inequality in Shimulia is made. In this connection I want to examine land concentration in the total population

Table .. 40

Distribution of mālikānā or shtaba bhōgī lands in Shimulia showing ownership across ec̄c̄thī, 1978
Gosthi and number of famlies and distribution of ownership

Land Owner-ship (Acres)	* ec̄c̄thī																						Total Families	Percent Families
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V		
0 - 0																							89	35.17
.01-.49		**1	2	1	16	7	1	4	32	6	4	1	1	7	2	2	2	1	5	3	3	4	40	15.81
.50-.99		2	1	2	3	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	3	1	1	1	4	3	4	1	32	12.64
1.00-1.49			1	3	2	2	4	1	1	3	3	1	1	3	2	2	3	1	1	3	4	1	16	6.32
1.50-1.99		2	2	5		1		3	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	2	2	2	2	5	5	1	17	6.71
2.00-2.49														31	1	1	1	1	2	3	1		12	4.74
2.50-2.99		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2		6	2.37
3.00-3.49					2									2									6	2.37
3.50-3.99														2									6	2.37
4.00-4.99		1	2											2									10	3.95
4.50-4.99						2	1							2									5	1.97
5.00-5.49														1									5	1.97
5.50-5.99														1									2	0.79
6.00-6.49														1									1	1.97
6.50-6.99														1									1	0.39
7.00-7.49														1									1	1.97
7.50-7.99														1									1	0.39
8.00-8.49					1													1					0	
8.50-8.99																							2	0.79
9.00-9.49																							0	
9.50-9.99							1																0	
10.00-10.49																							3	1.18
10.50-10.99																							2	0.79
11.00-11.49		1																					0	
11.50-11.99																							1	1.18
12.00-12.49																							0	
12.50-12.99				1																			0	
13.00-13.49																			1				1	0.39
																							1	0.39
	2	8	4	18	24	10	5	12	41	5	11	4	2	38	11	5	3	13	23	9	1	253	100.00%	

* Gōsthi
** Family

FIGURE 6

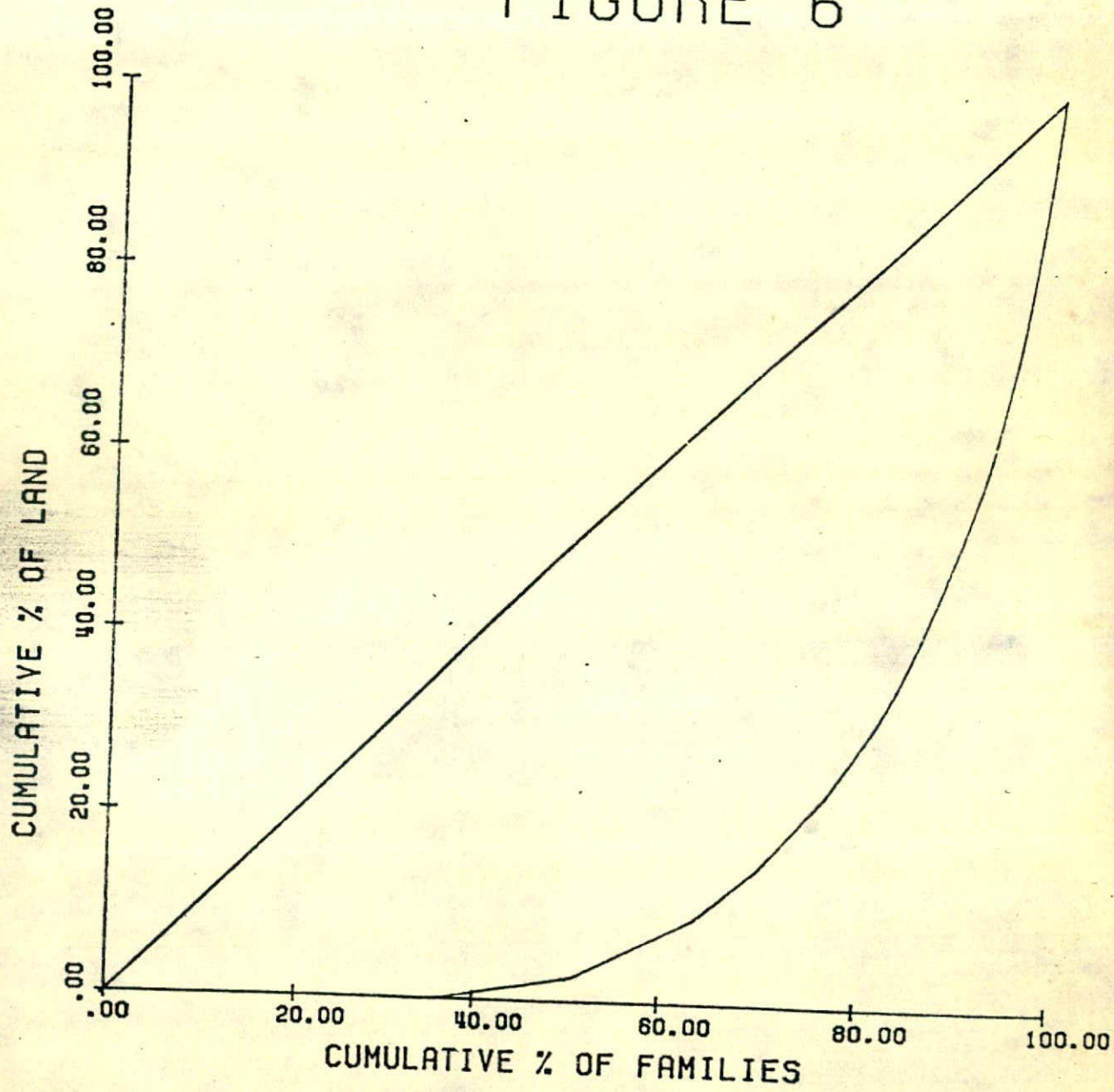
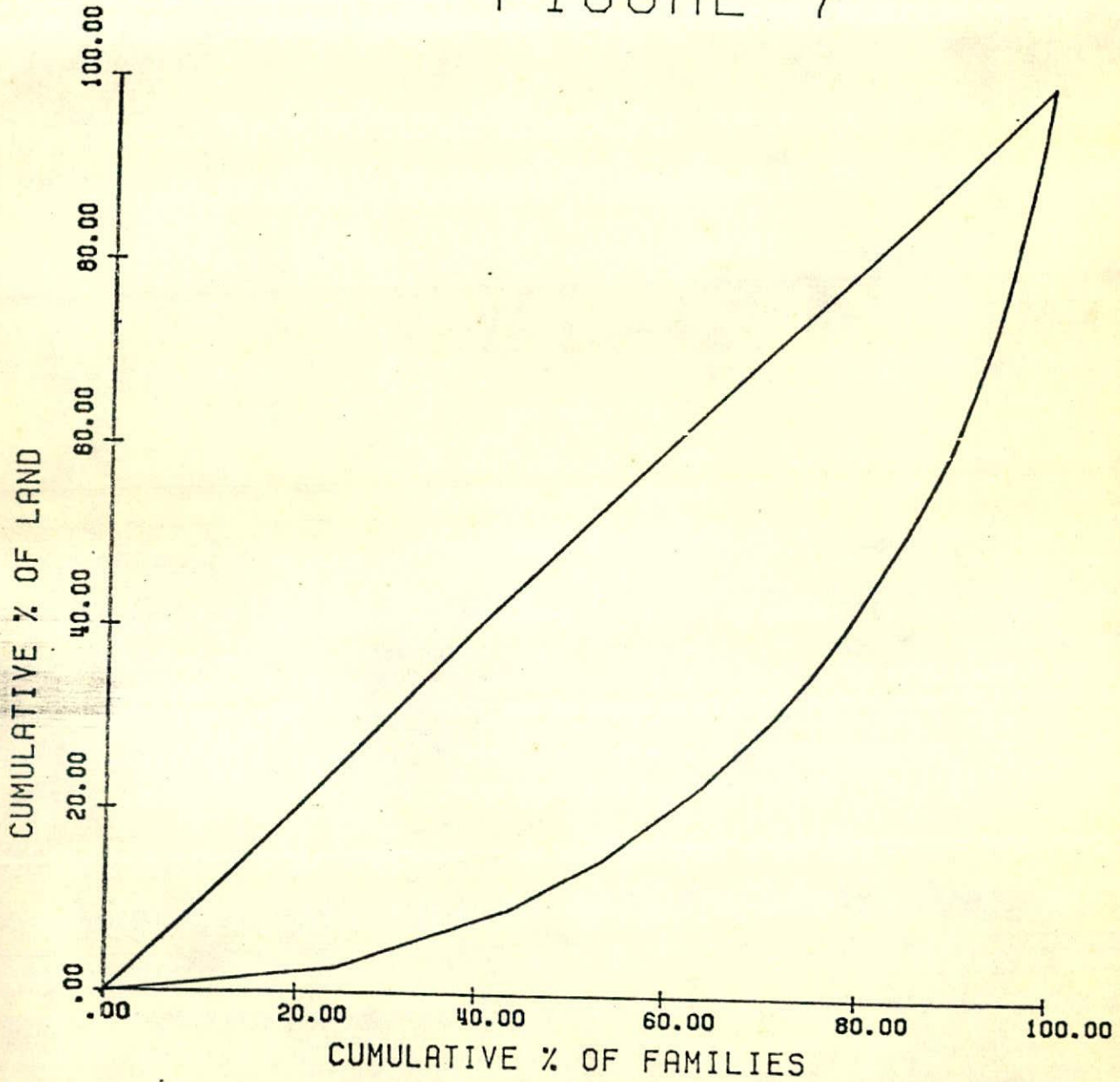


FIGURE 7



and among land owners. To measure the land concentration Gini Index is used. Figure 6 shows the distribution of land among the total population, and Figure 7 represents the distribution of land among landowners only. The diagonal line in each figure represents the line of equality. Gini Index is the ratio of the area between the curved line and the straight diagonal divided by the total area under the diagonal. It varies from zero to one. Despite this theoretical range, no society could be close to zero or one. The smaller the index, the less the inequality (Kriesberg 1979:33-34). The Gini Indexes corresponding to Figures 6 and 7 are .69 and .54 respectively. Though both of them indicate high land concentration, the Gini Index corresponding to Figure 7 is slightly smaller than the index corresponding to Figure 6. This implies inequality in the distribution is relatively less among the total villagers since one-third (35.17%) of the population is landless. Even in the latter case there is a highly unequal land distribution. These Gini Indexes, however, indicate the process of landlessness on one hand and the increasing land concentration on the other.

Recent Trends in Share-cropping

Turning now to share-cropping in Shimulia, these are some of the recent changes observed during field work. People used to let out their lands for share-cropping, particularly those who had surplus land. Before the partition, the Hindus owned about 60% with the acreage concentrated in 15 families who tenanted their surplus lands. Otherwise, they used to farm their lands through servants and day laborers who were available in the

village. Those farmers who owned land rarely participated in its actual cultivation, because it was considered degrading. However, most of the share-croppers in those days were nama sudra Hindu. They were known to be good farm managers. They were either marginal farmers or landless. Even today the old people remember the efficient management by the nama sudra share-croppers.

By talking to the villagers, I estimate the less than one third of the rich farmer's lands were held in share-cropping tenure by the poor villagers. One of the dominant features of share-cropping was the splitting of land parcels. For instance, the rich farmers would parcell their lands for barga tenure, giving a few pieces to one share-cropper. Therefore, a rich farmer had several share-croppers depending upon the size of his holdings. Also, most of the share-croppers were part-time who had subsidiary occupations like wage labor, boatman or semi-skilled occupations like carpentry or black smithing. Moreover, they were constrained by a shortage of capital and the availability of labor in accepting share-cropping. Although in those days farming was not as intensive as it is today, still the average poor farmer could not afford to share-crop more land. First, he did not have sufficient seed for more land even though seed in those days was cheap and was readily available. Chemical fertilizer was not used, instead, farmers used indigenous fertilizers such as manure made of decomposed cow dung and ashes from cooking and burning of hay, in the field and other composed material. Moreover, these lands were inferior or situated in disadvantaged places. Finally, the objective of share-cropping

then was to subsist and to supplement one's income. Unlike today, the share-croppers prior to 1964 were not market oriented. Furthermore the productivity of land was not high.

In Shimulia, the do bhaga system was used, not the tebhaga. In the do bhaga system, the land owner let out his land to share-cropper with a verbal agreement that each would get half of the produce. The land owner did not supply anything - not seed nor fertilizer nor cost involved in the cultivation. After the harvests, the share-cropper would hand over half the yield to the land owners. Generally, the owners and the share-cropper entered into a verbal agreement that the former would let his lands for share-cropping for one year. After the conclusion of one year (particularly after the harvest the agreement expired), it was up to the land owner to decide if he would retain the present cropper or take a new one. Normally, the land owner renewed his agreement provided the cropper was found to be a good farm manager. There were some changes in the share-cropping prior to the 1964 communal riot. For example, in the 50s, there started a decline set in following the beginning of the transfer of land from the Hindus to Muslims. The Muslim landowners preferred to cultivate their lands themselves rather than use share-croppers.

Following the 1964 anti-Hindus riots, share-cropping patterns in Shimulia underwent changes, I have already discussed the transfer of large amount of land from the Hindus to Muslims and to land speculators of Dhaka. Before partition in 1947 the Muslims of the village were rarely associated with share-cropping, either as land owners or as tenants; rather they

supplemented their income through jāmdānī manufacturing. The Muslim population in general did not have enough land to let out land for share-cropping. Basically, in those days share-cropping was privy to the Hindu population.

The post 1964 period marked the following changes.

First, the communal riot accelerated not only the transfer of land from Hindus to Muslims but also to urban speculators. The Muslims of Shimulia increased their land by 96% since 1945. As a result, share-cropping land became available from the Muslim land owners. Thirteen wealthy farmers (rich and middle) had surplus lands which they tenanted out (see Table 41). This Table shows that 19.20 acres had been let out by middle and rich farmers jointly. Given that surplus land to either inferior or managerially problematic: it is this land which wealthy farmers generally tenanted out. In Shimulia, there are many cases in which rich farmers let out big chunks for share-cropping. For example, thus Table 41 shows that there are 10 wealthy families (rich and middle) who have let out individually between .9 and 4.20 acres. It is interesting to note that subsistent, middle and rich farmers have let out their lands for share-cropping. Both middle and rich farmers together let out 19.20 (70%) of lands primarily for generating surplus.

In addition, rich farmers share-crop for urban land owners as stated earlier. Excepting for two managed farms (Dr. Karimuddin and Abul Basher Peshkar) the remainder of urban held land is let out for share-cropping to the villagers. Table 41 shows that there are 75.95 acres let out for share-cropping. Data show that rich, middle, subsistence, marginal and landless

Table 41

Distribution of Share-Cropping lands which are let out
among land-owners in Shimulia

		Land ownership (acres)				Total Land	Total Family	% Family
**	1	0-0				0	0	0
	2	01-.49	0.45	0.40		1.05	2	0.79
		.50-.99	0.90	0.45	0.15 0.45	1.95	4	1.58
	3	1.00-1.49	1.20			1.20	1	0.39
		1.50-1.99	0.60	0.30		0.90	2	0.79
	4	2.00-2.49	0.90	0.90		1.80	2	0.79
		2.50-2.99				0	0	0
		3.00-3.49	1.80	2.40		4.20	2	0.79
		3.50-3.99	0.45	0.90		1.35	2	0.79
		4.00-4.49	0.60	0.30		0.90	2	0.79
		4.50-4.99	2.70			2.70	1	0.39
		5.00-5.49	0.75			0.75	1	0.39
	5	5.50-5.99						
		6.00-6.49						
		6.50-6.99						
		7.00-7.49						
		7.49-7.99						
		8.00-8.49						
		8.50-8.99						
		9.00-9.49	1.50	1.80		3.30	2	0.79
		9.50-9.99						
		10.00-10.49						
	10.50-10.99							
	11.00-11.49							
	11.50-11.99							
	12.00-12.49							
	12.50-12.99	4.20			4.20	1	0.39	
						24.30	23	(out of 253 Muslim families)

*family & amount of
barga

** 1. Landless 2. Marginal 3. Subsistent 4. Middle 5. Rich

classes (see Table 41) are equally partaking in share-cropping.

Urban land owners asked the rich farmers to make share-cropping arrangements for their lands. As a result, the rich farmers have taken for themselves considerable amount of good lands for cropping. When they selected their land they distributed the remaining acreage among villagers whom they considered enterprising farm managers, and above all their supporters in power politics.

Yet another recent feature is the development of a market relationship. Rich and middle farmers share-crop lands mainly for generating surplus by employing modern inputs for agriculture and as well as employing wage laborers. Table 42 also shows the distribution of households by class. All five classes have taken in good amount of share-cropping land, landless, marginal, subsistence, middle and rich farmers have taken in 9.64 (12.69%), 25.24 (33.25%), 8.97(11.81%) 16.05 (21.13%) and 16.05(21.13%) respectively (see Table 42). Note that the rich and middle farmers have proportionately taken in a higher amount of land than other poorer classes of Shimulians.

There is another important change. Owners prefer to let out their land to non-kin tenants. They do so to maximize the product, rather than to retain kin obligations. Land owners today look for effective farm managers as their tenants. Despite this change, still some tenanted out their land on kinship lines. I have estimated 10% of share-cropping households obtain tenancy relationship by virtue of their kin ties. However, even among the kin-tenants, the current tendency is to select persons who are good farm managers. In the following I will provide two cases to show

Table - 42
Distribution of Share-Cropping Among Tenants
(Number of families: Among of land held)

Tenants Land Ownership (acres)	Acreage Tenanted by Share-cropper										Total Land	Total Family	% of Families in Land-owning			
	0-0	0.60+	1.50	0.19	0.45	0.60	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.90				0.90	1.80	1.20
1 0-0	0.60+	1.50	0.19	0.45	0.60	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.90	0.90	1.80	1.20	0.60	9.64	13	5.13
1 0.01-4.9	2.40	0.60	0.60	1.20	2.70	1.80	0.60	0.18	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	10.68	9	3.55
2 .50-.99	1.50	2.40	0.30	0.60	0.90	0.60	2.90	0.60	1.80	0.15	0.30	0.90	0.41	14.56	15	5.92
3 1.00-1.49	0.60	0.60	1.82	1.20	0.40	0.45								4.77	6	2.37
3 1.50-1.99	0.60	1.20	1.20	0.60	0.60	0.30								4.20	6	2.37
3 2.00-2.49	2.40	0.60	3.00	1.20										7.20	4	1.58
3 2.50-2.99	0.30	0.60	0.30											1.20	3	1.18
3 3.00-3.49	0.90	0.60	1.50	1.80										4.80	4	1.58
3 3.50-3.99	1.20	0.75	0.30											2.25	3	1.18
4 4.00-4.49	0.30													0.30	1	0.39
4 4.50-4.99	0.30													0.30	1	0.39
5 5.00-5.49														0.30	0	
5 5.49-5.99														0.30	0	
6 6.00-6.49	0.45	3.00	1.80	0.60										5.85	4	1.58
6 6.49-6.99	3.00													3.00	1	0.39
7 7.00-7.49														0.30	0	
7 7.50-7.99	1.50													1.50	1	0.39
8 8.00-8.49														0.30	0	
8 8.50-8.99														0.30	0	
8 9.00-9.49														0.30	0	
5 9.50-9.99	4.50	0.90												5.40	2	0.79
10 10.00-10.49														0.30	1	0.39
10 10.50-10.99	0.30													0.30	0	
11 11.00-11.49														0.30	0	
11 11.50-11.99														0.30	0	
12 12.00-12.49														0.30	1	0.39
12 12.50-12.99														0.30	1	0.39
														75.95	77	29.18

+Family & amount of barga
 //Out of 253 Muslim Families
 1. Landless 2. Marginal 3. Substantant 4. Middle 5. Rich

how profit-making features preceded kinship considerations.

Case 1: Share-cropping: emergence of non-kin factors

Akram Khan, a rich farmer of gōsthi M, has tenanted out. 2.7 acres to Sultan Munshi of gōsthi O, a marginal farmer. Akram Khan had selected Sultan Munshi for share cropping his land because of his reputation of being a good farm manager. Akram Khan did this, bypassing his kinsmen Nannu Khan, the latter was his Fa Ba So who owned only 0.45 acres. Although he knew that lands given to Nannu Khan for share-cropping would improve his economic condition, Akram Khan decided that kinship considerations must take second place in front of efficiency. On the other hand Sultan Munshi was not kin and a businesslike relationship could be maintained with him. Besides being a good farm manager he is innovative, resourceful and constantly experimented with agricultural techniques. Needless to mention that Sultan Munshi was production oriented which also meant a high share for Akram Khan. Sultan Munshi cultivated land by himself with his own cattle and implements. He had a boy servant to assist him. In addition, he employed laborers during the peak times of cultivation like sowing, weeding and harvesting. Two of his working brothers help him occasionally. Further, Sultan Munshi was not only an enterprising person but is widely known for his honesty, diligence and religiosity. He had been instrumental in organizing public opinion with regard to digging a new canal in the western part of the village. In short, Akram Khan has successfully distributed patronage to the enterprising farmer Sultan Munshi for his support in the factional politics of the village in which Akram Khan himself played a significant part.

Case 2: Sharecropping: role of profit-making along kinship lines

This case was based on kinship considerations. Abdul Majid of gōsthi S is one of the richest farmers of the village. He has let out 1.8 acres of land to Kabirul Islam, his Fa Ba So. No doubt, economic consideration was one of the motivating factors to this decision. Needless to mention that there are other poor members in his gōsthi. Many poor farmers (see gōsthi S) who could be provided with share-cropping lands. Kabirul Islam is an enterprising farmer. Besides farming, he runs a small grocery shop. This shows his entrepreneurship. He works very hard in the field; his wife besides taking care of the children runs the grocery shop which is situated inside his living quarters. Kabirul Islam has farm implements like a plough, a rake and a yoke, but he does not have any draft animals. He borrows cattle from Abdul Majid. Abdul Majid helps him in obtaining modern agricultural inputs at subsidized rates by virtue of his connection

with urban land owners. In turn Abdul Majid helps him in procuring inputs as it means that more production in the field means more share of the product. Kabirul Islam works most of the time in his barga land himself. However, during the time of sowing, weeding and harvesting, he employs a few local laborers.

The above discussion highlights the changing features of share-cropping in Shimulia since 1945. Data on share-cropping give a strong indication of the development of market relations. I now proceed to changing styles in mortgage tenure in the area.

Recent Trends in Bandak or Mortgage

Bandak or mortgage is another category of land tenure. Data, however, show that it is not a significant feature of tenure today. Only 13 households are involved in mortgage covering a total of 6.28 acres. In the past, particularly before 1945, the mortgage system here was pervasive but in a different form. In this section, an attempt will be made to observe the processes of change in mortgage since 1945.

Generally, bandak (mortgage) refers to a loan with a collateral type security. The collateral is either movable or immovable property. There is a formal agreement made by signing a taka 1.50 judicial stamp. Presently people here understand mortgage as a loan with land as collateral. Generally, a person takes a loan by giving his particular piece of land by signing his land as security. However, he can retain his land by repaying the principal upon the expiration of the contract. If the mortgagor can not pay back his debt, then the mortgagee continues to hold the land. Only rarely does a mortgagor recover his land or the land goes to the mortgagee ultimately.

over a period of time. For example, when land was held for a stipulated period against the loan. No money interest is paid back. The mortgagee, however, has use of the land for a stipulated period. The terms of this tenure vary with respect to the amount and the length of time. For example, land can be mortgaged for one year in which case the amount of the loan will be smaller. However, after the expiration of one year, land goes back to the original owner with no interest paid. Interest is composed of the produce of the land. But if the land is mortgaged out for longer period, the amount of the loan will be higher, and the land will be returned to the original owner after the expiration of the contract with no interest paid. If the mortgagor wants to take back his land before the termination of the contract he can do so by paying the amount which is deducted by calculating the deductible amount each year written in the contract. This type of mortgage is no longer in existence in Shimulia.

Besides, sudi and bhog rehan, there exists bandak or mortgages. The above were the specialized kinds of mortgages. This kind of mortgage is still in existence. Under this mortgage unlike the case of bhog rehan, the land is not returned until the mortgagor pays back the whole sum. Another form of mortgage is known as sāph (clear) kābalā (deed) which implies that if the mortgagor fails to repay his debt within the stipulated period ownership will be transferred to the mortgagee automatically. When a mortgagor takes a loan which is very close to the actual price of the collateral land, the deal is known as sāph

Before 1947, there were three types of bandak or rehan. They were sudi, rehān, bhog rehan and rehān or bandak. Sudi rehān came from the word sud meaning interest. Sudi rehān refers to a mortgage system by which one takes out a loan on a compound interest rate against a collateral of both sbtabar (immovable) and astbar (movable) property. Bhog rehān refers to a loan which is advanced by a person by holding on to an astbar property such as land as collateral. Under this mortgage, the loan is deducted through the appropriation of agricultural products.

The common form of collateral associated with sudi rehān was movable property such as jewelry, cattle and whatever belongings one could possibly possess. Among the immovable property the collateral for sudi rehān was in most cases bhiṭi land (homestead land) and agricultural land. In fact, sudi rehān was notorious and many people lost land through it. Not only did it separate people from their belongings but the compound interest led to debts for extended periods of time. I have collected some cases in which farmers were evicted from their bhiṭi bārī because they were unable to pay off debts which had multiplied through compound interest. Two families were connected with the money lending business. They were gōṣṭhī T, and the Bhowmik, a Hindu family which migrated to India after partition. However, Ainuddin Shoud (gōṣṭhī T) discontinued money lending soon after his Haj. The Bhowmik family continued their business until their migration in 1947.

In Shimulia, in the bhog rehān category khai khālāsī was prevalent. Khāi in Bengali means to 'eat' and khālāsī means 'clearance'. Hence, it implies clearance of debt through the appropriation of agricultural produce

kābalā. For example, when a mortagor takes Taka 8,000 for a piece of land and the actual price of land is taka 10,000 the agreement will follow sāph kābalā terms. However, most mortgages here do not belong to this category.

In Shimulia today, both sudi rehan and bhog rehan do not exist. The former became extinct with the partition of India in 1947, and the latter went out of practice during the late 50s. In the following I will discuss how this mortgage system declined in the area.

In Shimulia bhog rehan in the form of khāi khālāsī continued till the early 1950s. But the khāi khālāsī started to decline with the partition of India in 1947. Before 1947, poor farmers mortgaged their lands for consumption needs. Particularly during crisis periods, poor farmers used to mortgage their lands to obtain loans. This mortgage system is more sober than the sudi rehan and other mortgage systems. One need not pay the interest and loan back in cash, rather it is deducted through the appropriation of agricultural production. Also, money was short in supply along with few outside employment opportunities. Besides, the rich farmers also used to mortgage their 'surplus' lands for khāi khālāsī terms for one to two years. In this way, they obtain cash without being involved in farm management. The place had a labor shortage and the rich farmers used to let out their surplus lands for share-cropping.

Khāi khālāsī started to decline in the 1950s following the increased economic opportunities brought about by the establishment of mills and

Table - 43

Distribution of Bandak or Mortgage tenure 1978

Land ownership (Acare)	Land mortgaged in		Total Land	No of Family	Family
0 - 0	0.15*	0.90	1.65	3	1.18
.01-.49	0.45	0.45	0.90	2	0.79
.50-.99	0.32		0.32	1	0.39
1.00-1.49	0.60	0.18	0.78	2	0.79
1.50-1.99	0.23		0.23	1	0.39
2.00-2.49	0.45	0.35	0.80	2	0.79
2.50-2.99	0.40		0.40	1	0.39
3.00-3.49					
3.50-3.99					
4.00-4.99					
4.50-4.99					
5.00-5.49					
5.49-5.99					
6.00-6.49					
6.50-6.99					
7.00-7.49					
7.50-7.99					
8.00-8.49					
8.50-8.99					
9.00-9.49	1.20		1.20	1	0.39
9.50-9.99					
			6.28	13	5.11

*Family & amount or Bandak

factories in the industrial belt. With these establishments nearby, there developed formalized money-lending institutions for the mill employees known as samiti. There are mill workers cooperative organizations which lend money at a nominal interest. These associations partially filled the loan requirement of the villagers during scarcity. Poor villagers obtained loans from these samiti either in their capacity as workers or through their kin who worked in the mills. However, the most important factor which stopped the khāi khālāsi was the infiltration of a money economy. As a result, mortgagees found khāi khālāsi not very profitable compared to bandak or sāph kābla terms. Under the khāi khālāsi system the loan is paid off through the appropriation of agricultural products. On the other hand, bandak or sāph kābāla the mortgagee appropriates the agricultural products without any deduction in the principal sum. Currently, bandak is prevalent, and it is very profitable to take mortgage on land particularly with the increase in the productivity (216.65%) and rise in price of rice (300-400%). Nevertheless, bandak here has declined substantially considering the amount of land involved in this category. Table 43 shows that only 6.28 acres of land have been mortgaged with 13 families involved. This decline compared to bandak tenure - 1945 is substantial. Although, I can not present here exact data. Whatever I have gathered on this issue was from the old people of the village, and their conversation about this problem strongly suggests that mortgage or bandak was much more pervasive than what is found today.

Credit System in Shimulia

The credit system in the village in part was partly implied in the preceding statement on the mortgage (bandak). In addition, there are two forms of informal credit. These are commercial and consumption loans. In the past, when jāmdānī manufacturing was prevalent the pāikārs (wholesalers) and dālāl (brokers) used to advance loans to the poor manufactures and appropriated the profit. However, with the decline of jāmdānī manufacturing this type of credit system became extinct.

Consumption loans are taken when villagers run out of food supplies. I have talked about 30-40 money lenders of small amounts. Most of these lenders are landless middle and subsistent farmers.

However, money lending in the village is a clandestine matter. Both the creditors and debtors do not want to talk about it. As a result I have little specific information on the credit system.

However, I gathered that farmers are involved in advancing commercial loans. I approached several people to learn the exact mechanism or the money lending system. Reports from the villagers help me to reconstruct this procedure. I computed that the interest rate of commercial credit is between 100%-300% per annum depending upon the nature or the trade and the relationship between creditor and debtor. For example, Abdur Rouf of Gōsthī C who owns 0.90 acres of land is a cattle trader. He acquired this amount through this trade. Kahir Ali of Gōsthī S is a middle farmer and he regularly lends money to Abdur Rouf for this trade at 200% interest. Normally he takes loans for Khair Ali for a short period of time. I should

~~mention here that not many middle farmers are capable of providing~~
commercial loans since this involves a large lay out of money.

This is how it usually works. One may advance a loan of taka 100.00 to a person for his consumption needs. The deal is thus if one takes taka 100.00 as a loan, he has to pay the principal sum along with a half maund of paddy (40 lbs) after three months. I have figured the interest rate in terms of the existing price of rice in the open market. During my field work paddy was selling at the rate of taka 80.00 a maund therefore interest on a taka 100.00 to be 160% a year. Why do money lenders ask for a half a maund of paddy instead of money? The villagers explain that the money lenders are Muslims and in Islam there is a strict injunction against taking interest of any kind. They tactfully avoided talking about the legal aspect of the interest by calling interest as Arabic "Profit" since Islam recognizes profit in business. The villagers regard money lending permissible under the Muslim aegis. Moreover, villagers justify the legality of the money lending act by saying that the money lender is not taking interest from money gained by usuary; rather that take māl Arabic "commodity", therefore it could not be usuary at all. However, in economic terms the acceptance of paddy as a profit equals interest and so links the profit to a money market. Rice is the most essential commodity in a scarce economy like Bangladesh and the price of rice always fluctuates. Taking paddy as an interest maintains a link with the market situation. This type of usuary is prevalent throughout Bangladesh. (see Arens and Van Beurden 1977).

~~Despite the folk justification of this money lending system, there~~
remains a great amount of stigma attached to it which is one reason
why money lending is done secretly.

Very few people can get out of the clutch of debt. Considering
the rate of interest, it is virtually impossible to be free of debt.
For example, when a farmer takes a loan for consumption generally he
pays it off as he harvests a new crop. Maybe he is able to pay off his
debt for the time being, but when he runs out of provisions, he again
goes to the money lender to borrow money.

One of the important changing features of the credit system is
the existence of petty money-lending by the middle farmers of the
village. Rich farmers of Shimulia, unlike the 1940s, are no longer
involved in this transaction. This new class generated surplus from
agriculture they used for buying land as also to invest in business.
In addition, these farmers have succeeded in extending their investments
in Dhaka city in different financial resources through the collaboration
of the absentee land owners of Dhaka city. They can achieve better
profits by ignoring the need for credit in Shimulia itself.

Inflow of Increased Outside Investments in Shimulia land

We have already seen that 90.90 acres of land owned by people from
Dhaka city. Also, we have noticed that there is a new settlement in
Shimulia known as natun pāṛā inhabited by outsiders coming from different
districts of Bangladesh. Against this background, I have observed that
many outside people invested in land in the village. During the later

part of my field work people from Dhaka used to visit almost everyday to buy lands for housing sites. I came to know from villagers that most of these buyers' sources of money are remittances from the middle east.⁷

Summary

This chapter dealt with changing land tenure pattern since 1945. It included a statement of revenue history of Bengal and Shimulia. It also included a discussion of the different land types and tenure categories. The communal riot of 1964 caused a radical change in land ownership patterns, although some change in tenure patterns had already begun after partition in 1947. Before the communal riot of 1964, 57.8% of Shimulia land belonged to the Hindus, and the Muslims owned only 29.91%. But after 1964, this picture reversed: Now the Muslims of Shimulia own 60.51% of land whereas the Hindus own only 11.79%. Furthermore, there was considerable amount of investments in Shimulia land originating from Dhaka. 90.90 acres of land of Shimulia belong to the urban land owners. At the same time, the inauguration of the D.N.D. irrigation project resulted in transforming agricultural patterns to intensive wet-rice cultivation with a 216.65% increase in the productivity of land. As a result, there developed a rich Muslim land owning class who consider agriculture as a business venture. They have generated a surplus from agriculture by applying modern inputs with the help of cheap non-local agricultural wage laborers.

⁷ Bangladesh earned 115 million dollars in the form of remittances by its skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled laborers from the oil rich Middle Eastern countries during 1978-79.

Further, the rich farmers developed a close relationship with the urban land owners. They provide favors to the rich farmers in numerous ways. The urban setting of Shimulia, including the availability of mills for employment and credit, the increasing high price of land, the investment opportunities in Dhaka city for the rich and urban communities developed with urban land owners have dramatically altered the socio-economic landscape of Shimulia. It is increasingly an "urban village"; no longer part of the rural scene.

Chapter VI

~~SUMMING UP: THE PROCESS OF CHANGE~~

IN SHIMULIA AGRARIAN STRUCTURE

In the preceding chapters, I have discussed the process of change in the agrarian structure of Shimulia village from 1945-1978. Here I will summarize my findings with regard to the process of change.

My investigation of the social organization shows that the traditional elements of social organization have been disintegrating. Muslim kinship organization has become weaker, giving way somewhat to class relationships. Interests or "profitability" increasingly has begun to be central rather than traditional kinties. Following socio-economic changes, such as the partition of India in 1947, decline of the jāmādānī industry, the communal riot of 1964, the inauguration of the D. N. D. irrigation project along with the intensive wet-rice cultivation, inflow of investments in land by urban land speculators, the birth of Bangladesh, and the post-Bangladesh scarcity and high inflation.

The study of village land tenure was focused on the basic issue that land is a scarce commodity and its ownership or control is highly correlated with the village class structure. Also, I wanted to discover how changes in land tenure patterns brought about new relationships. I examined the village land tenure over the past 33 years. (1945-1978); this indicates a sharp differentiation process. In the early 1960s, following the communal riot, there emerged a Muslim land-owning class which came mostly from non-khāndān gōsthī. In 1945,

57.87 percent of land was controlled by the Hindus, and Muslims owned only 29.91 percent. Again, the land distribution was uneven both among the Muslims and Hindus. Land was concentrated among 15 mahisya caṣī families among the Hindus and among two khāndānī gōsthī (gōsthī O and T) of the Muslims. But this picture was reversed 33 years later when the Hindus of Shimulia owned only 11.79 percent. It is interesting to note that such a massive transfer of land from the Hindus to Muslims was also uneven. Only a few families among the 22 gōsthī increased their holdings (see Table 38, Chapter V). As a result, a strong, enterprising land-owning class emerged in Shimulia.

This transformation also created instability and fluidity in the social organization. For example, 70 percent of these families came from non-khāndān land owning gōsthī. Only 30 percent of the rich families came from traditional khāndānī gōsthī (see Table 38). Such an unstable and fluid character in social mobility has theoretical importance in the wider Bangladesh context. We have observed that in Shimulia there is no correspondence between traditional high status lineage families and the land concentration. However, in the late 1960s, Bertocci (1972) found a strong correlation between traditional high status lineage and land holding concentration in two villages of Comilla District. He observed that 90 percent of rich peasants (surplus farmers) came from traditionally high status lineages even though Bertocci noticed rapid mobility within the system which he termed "cyclical kulakism" (for details see Bertocci 1972). In contrast to Bertocci's findings, Shimulia proved to be vulnerable to these changes.

As a result, there is a polarization between rich and poor members of a given gōṣṭhī. Rich member families no longer feel obligated to help out the poor families of the same gōṣṭhī. There are cases where rich farmers let out their lands for share-cropping to non-kin tenants with non-kin considerations underlying the decision-making process. Further, the data revealed that the differentiation process existed in gōṣṭhī organization. Rich families of different gōṣṭhī (both khandānī and non-khandānī) created friendly relations among themselves, and in some cases, forged business partnerships. Interests and "profitability" have become increasingly the basis of their relationship.

The newly emergent rich farmers are characterized by entrepreneurial behavior. They consider agriculture to be a commercial venture. These farmers invest in agriculture for high production in the form of buying modern inputs for its pursuit. As a result, they produce surplus over and above their consumption, the profits from which they use to acquire land as well as in business of different sorts. The rich farmers, among other things, invested in the import of yarn, wholesale and retail trading, construction activities, and contractual supplying of goods to various organizations outside Shimulia. It is interesting to note here that most of the rich farmers have engaged one or two of their family members in such businesses. Further, following the communal riot of 1964, and with the rise of rich and enterprising farmers, the inflow of urban investments in Shimulia were channelled through a group of urban land speculators who are urban professionals. These farmers were instrumental in buying land in the village on behalf of the urban speculators (see Chapters III, IV and V). There

are 90.90 acres of land owned by 39 absentee landowners from Dhaka. ~~Prominent among these absentee landowners are physicians, lawyers,~~ government officials, and businessmen. Further, there are two farms in Shimulia run by absentee landowners through their farm managers. In general, investments from the urban area altered Shimulia agrarian relations.

With regard to tenancy, a new situation emerged. A distinct type of share-cropping system developed in Shimulia which cannot be called tenancy in the ordinary sense. Rather, the rich farmers have become the share-croppers for absentee land owners who produce for the market. These farmers have taken for themselves the superior share-cropping lands, and the remainder of these lands are distributed to middle, subsistence, marginal and landless farmers to create patronage which they channel into factional politics. Thus, the rich farmers have taken the position of overall supervisors of the absentee owners land. Similarly, for the managed farms, a few rich farmers have become the de facto supervisors of these farms (see Chapter V).

These developments in Shimulia have culminated in mutual relationships between rich farmers and urban land owners. The rich farmers by virtue of their network linkage with the absentee landowners obtained benefits in the form of insecticides, HYV seeds, and chemical fertilizers at subsidized rates, import permits for yarn, construction and supplying works, etc. Since 85 percent of the rich farmers are connected with business enterprises, they sought help from the urban absentee owners for investments in urban areas (see Chapter V). There are eight rich farmers who have tried to diversify their investments

particularly in different sectors of Dhaka.

With regard to labor, a market situation has emerged. The poor farmers of Shimulia often sell their labor in the nearby mills and factories, as well as working as ditch workers, porters, etc. at Demra bus station and Sharulia Bazar. There is a demand for this temporary labor in the locality and their wages are higher than agricultural wages. Our data show that on an average the agricultural wage is 50 percent less than non-agricultural wages; 100 percent less in the case of wages of mill or factory wages (see Table 39). As a result, the inflow of outside agricultural laborers to the village has increased. These are seasonal migrants and destitute laborers who are in abundant supply. They have no bargaining power whatsoever. The rich farmers prefer to hire these laborers since they are cheaper and the farmers can disengage themselves from kinship and samaj obligations.

A significant facet of the changing labor organization is that the village labor force has occupied a minimal role in agriculture. Wage laborers in mills and factory workers participate in the village social and economic organization to a very limited extent. This is just the place where they live. A few village families have already taken up residence in the shanties of Sharulia Bazar. Another crucial trend with respect to the village land is that it has been affected increasingly by the urban market, particularly remittances by Bangladeshi in the Middle East. Poor farmers are forced to sell their lands because for them, land has become uneconomical. Some

poor farmers have sold their lands to migrate to interior villages where the price of land is lower than in Shimulia. The overall change engendered indicates that the village will eventually cease to be a separate entity and become a part of Greater Dhaka.

Postscript

Upon completion of my field work in August 1978, I returned to Syracuse University in the United States to write my dissertation. I spent three years there, and returned to Bangladesh. Upon returning to Bangladesh I visited Shimulia to meet my erstwhile informants and to learn of the changing aspects of village life. The changes that I noticed are significant from the point of view of patterns of change in investment and land use patterns in Shimulia.

There were marked changes in investment patterns. During the span of three years, two households belonging to the rich farmer class have transferred substantial amounts of capital to the urban area. It is difficult to ascertain the exact amount of capital thus moved.

Upon returning to Shimulia, I discovered that Akram Khan's (gōstī M) second son now owns a Chinese restaurant in one of the important places of Dhaka. I believe he invested a minimum of 4-5 lakh Taka (\$25,000) in that business. This was a consequence of capital being moved to the city. With this also, it has changed its land use pattern. During my field work time (see gōstī M) it derived large surpluses from agricultural products. Akram Khan's family share-cropped 4.50 acres of land owned by urban landowners, seeking high productivity. However, on my return, this household had tenanted out about half of

its holdings to other farmers in the village, which surprises me.

~~These features are indicative of a new trend in investment patterns.~~

They strongly suggest that this household not only transferred substantial portions of its capital to Dhaka, but also shifted its interests from land based action to investments in the urban area.

Tajul Islam, the eldest son of Khalil Sardar (gōṣṭhī R), now owns a printing press in Dhaka. Khalil Sardar is a rich farmer who, like Akram Khan, groomed his son for several occupations. All his sons are very interested in agriculture since it is now a productive venture. Consequently, Khalil Sardar's household generated a considerable surplus from agriculture. But when I visited Shimulia after my return from Syracuse, I found that his eldest son had left his job as accountant with the Water and Power Development Organization and bought a printing press in Dhaka. Not surprisingly, the major portion of the capital for his printing press came from agricultural surplus. Unlike Akram Khan's household, this household has not withdrawn from land-based action. It still considers agriculture as a viable source of investment and production.

The inflow of investment in Shimulia land has accelerated. Villagers indicated that a large amount of land has slipped into the hands of outsiders, particularly owners from Dhaka. Upon inquiry, I gathered that these owners' source of income is from the remittances from the Bangladeshi in the Middle East. Interestingly, following this development, the D.N.D. authority has shown concern over the penetration of non-local owners in Shimulia, vis-a-vis the overall D.N.D. project area, particularly their attempt to build housing sites on agricultural land.

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