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THE SOCIO-CULTURAL DETERMINANTS OF
FERTILITY AND THE POPULATION POLICY OF INDIA

MANJU SEKHRI

Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, University of Durham.

September 1978

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ABSTRACT

The Pasi share with most of the lower caste rural people the problem of rapidly growing population. Population policy of the Indian Government has failed to initiate fertility decline under present conditions of Pasi existence. The people have not responded to the programme primarily because birth control contradicts the vital interest of the Pasi population. The Pasi favour large families because they are essential for economic survival. Their subsistence economy is based on man-power and every farmer knows that if he is to survive he must rely upon his family for the necessary labour force. The fact that the family is the basic unit of work has important fertility implications. Since it is the source of economic and physical security in the village, children, especially sons, are vital to the Pasi people. Therefore institutional and organizational characteristics such as extended family structure, male dominant authority-pattern, early entry into marriage and home-based role for women, encourage high fertility.

The necessary conditions for the acceptance of the population programme do not exist in the Pasi community. A great majority of the people do not favour a small family. Although a Family Planning and Welfare Clinic is attached to each village, only a small minority of the Pasi women have any knowledge of modern means of contraception. The structural and organizational characteristics of the Pasi are such that the values and knowledge about family planning cannot be realized and expedited by the young couples. The locus of authority even in decision-making regarding fertility matters resides not with the young couple but with the older members of the family.

The study confirms that socio-economic change is the basis for an effective solution of population problems and points out that factors promoting socio-economic development also encourage the successful implementation of family planning.

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INTRODUCTION

The population of India on Census Day, 1st April 1971, was 374,948,809 - showing an increase of 24.7% in the last ten years. It is no exaggeration that the emotive term 'population explosion' is used to describe it. At its present rate of increase India will double its population in 28 years, compared with Canada in 140 years, and England, if it maintains the growth rate of 1961, in 120 years.

This run-away population increase made the Indian government aware of the urgency of adopting a policy which was explicitly related to reducing the birth rate. India embarked on an official policy of population control in 1951. Its aim was to stabilize the population of the country at a level suited to her resources. The population policy of the Indian government was an integral and essential element of its overall development plan. Economic development and population control were not considered as separate issues but interdependent. However, emphasis in the early years of the development of the population policy was laid on family planning issues as it was believed that if contraception had high acceptability, effectiveness and availability, the effect on birth rate would be seen even before the economic development and this in turn would certainly speed up the process of modernization.

The impact upon the birth rate during the first decade of the population policy was far below that anticipated. The 1962-63 report on Family Planning estimated a reduction in the birth rate to 25/1000. The crude birth rate in rural areas in 1974 was still an estimated 38.9/1000 and in urban areas 30.1/1000 compared with the crude death rate of 16.4/1000 for rural and 9.7/1000 for urban areas. For the first time Mrs. Gandhi, on 15th August 1974 in her Independence Day address to the nation, told the people that India had a serious problem of

overpopulation. At the United Nation's World Population Conference held in Bucharest in October 1974, the new Planning Minister for India emphasized "... even with the use of the most advanced technology we cannot go on raising the population in a finite world indefinitely". He also pointed out that "purely clinical approaches are not enough to influence effectively the general fertility levels" (Singh, 1974).

The Government's disillusionment with the clinical approach is not without justification. Despite the development of countrywide family planning clinics, it had not made the kind of impact that was anticipated. It had been most successful in the higher socio-economic strata and least in rural areas.

The object of this thesis is to seek a social explanation for the high birth rate among the Pasi community settled in the Lucknow district. This study aims to reveal the framework within which social and psychological forces affect the birth rate and decision-making with regard to the size of the family, and the magnitude and direction of such forces. While there is no shortage of quantitative data, available from censuses and surveys, an explanation for these differences can only be obtained from an in-depth study of small groups.

This study is an interpretation of demographic data in a cultural and behavioural context. It does not just measure fertility rate but considers fertility rate as a mean of explaining the differences in social institutions and technological conditions in different communities. It will not only explain why people have high or low fertility but, in addition, the relationship of the socio-economic life of the Pasi to the Government population policy. When motivations for large families are understood and institutional obstacles to family planning are known, a different approach that is acceptable to the people concerned can be followed. All the details of the family planning/population programme

will not be included here. The study will only review the socio-economic setting within which the family planning programme operates and how social and personal circumstances help or retard the transmission of family planning knowledge and influence its acceptance.

For this study only four basic variables were chosen - marriage, family, desired family size and status of women - because they expose and study what Davis (1955, 1967) calls 'reflexive and behavioral' nature of demographic change. By reflexive it is meant that one factor has the capacity to initiate and bring about change in other components of the social system, e.g. age at marriage is governed by economic status and a change in economic status can raise or lower that age.

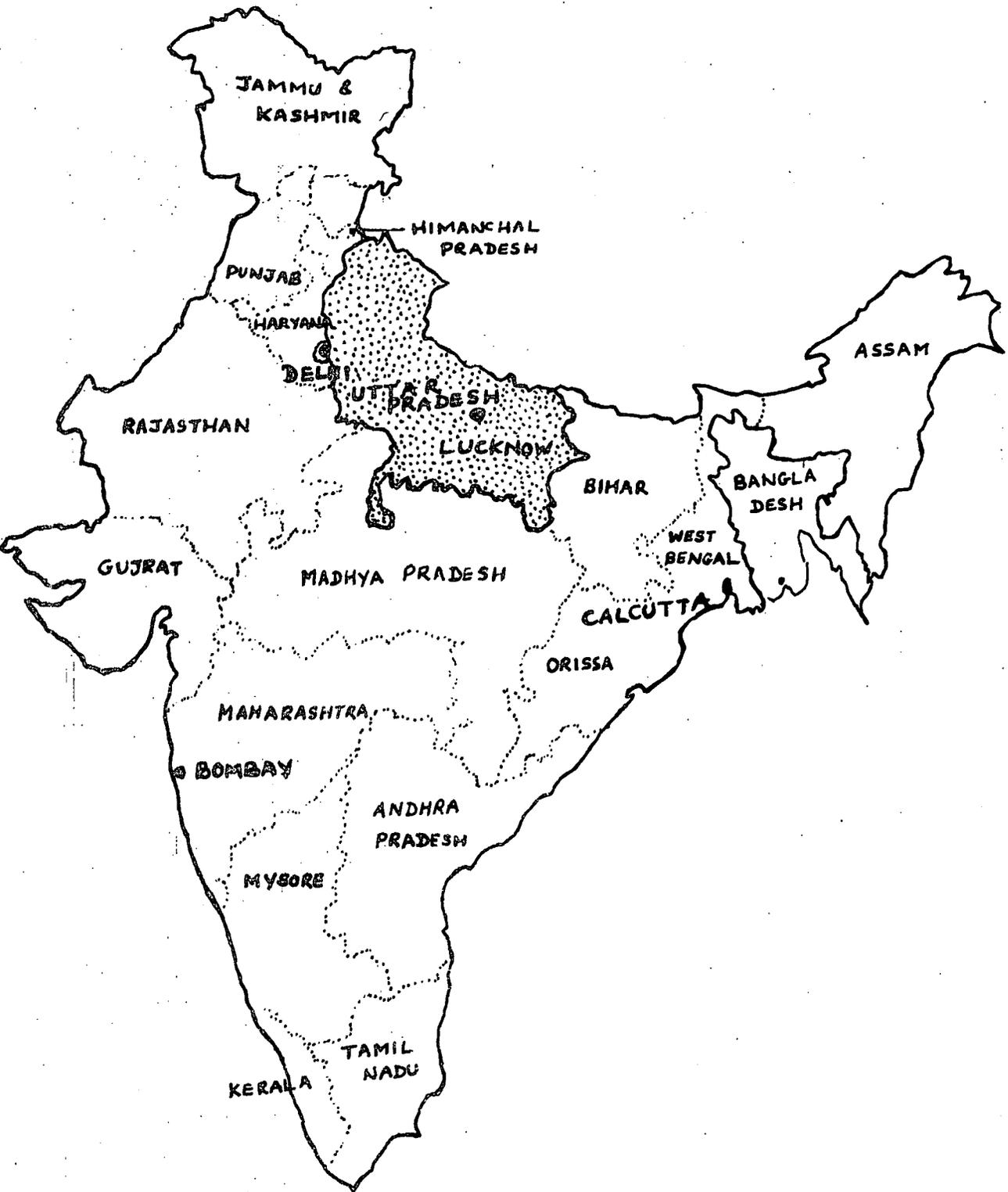
METHODOLOGY

The basic information was obtained by questioning individuals and completing questionnaires. The questionnaire was designed to obtain information regarding the social and economic background of the women and their fertility behaviour and performance. The study covered all Pasi women in the reproductive age group, i.e. 15-45 years who have at least had one live child. To find out all eligible women a house-to-house survey was carried out in all the areas under study. This preliminary questionnaire covered basic demographic details such as the age, sex, marital status and history, educational achievement and kin-relationship to the head of the household of each member and was used to eliminate households that did not offer any suitable respondent.

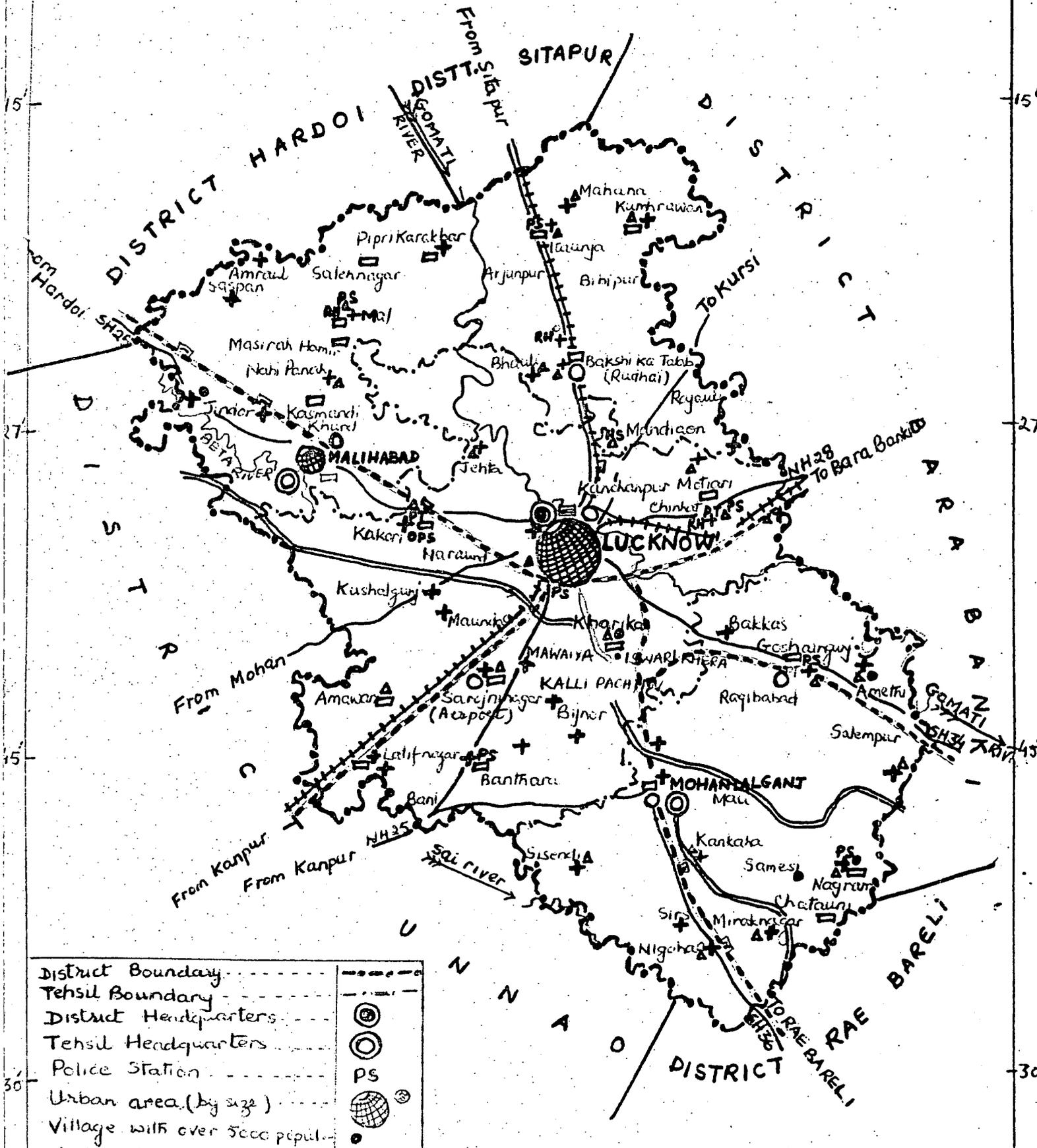
The second questionnaire contained eighteen broad categories of enquiries. The questions were divided into four major groups according to the factors that were under study - i.e. marriage, family, desired family size and status of women. The questionnaire included both open ended and closed type questions. Some of the background information was also collected through the 'observation' method. Interviews with the members of the caste-panchayat and other older members of the community also provided vital insight into relevant matters. The questionnaire was printed in English but a Hindi translation was kept all the time for the sake of standardization. The interviews were conducted in their local dialect which resembles Hindi.

In total 342 fertility schedules were completed. Despite the personal nature of the questions and the length of the questionnaire only six remained uncompleted and were discarded due to non-cooperation of the respondents.

Before the actual field work started a preliminary visit to each



Map 1: The map of India showing the place of the field-work

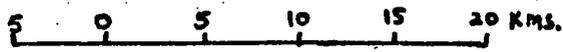


District Boundary	- - - - -
Tehsil Boundary	- - - - -
District Headquarters	⊙
Tehsil Headquarters	⊙
Police Station	PS
Urban area (big size)	⊙
Village with over 5000 popu.	⊙
Highways: National; state	NH24 SH34
Other important Road	- - - - -
Railway line with station	- - - - -
Broad Gauge	- - - - -
Metre Gauge	- - - - -
Canal	- - - - -
Post and Telegraph office	PT
Hospital, F. Planning Centre	+
Degree College, High School	□

Map 2

DISTRICT LUCKNOW

(showing the villages under study)



area was made to contact the village leaders so that rapport could be established with the respondents and at the same time in a pre-testing of the first draft of the questionnaire was carried out and some necessary modifications were made. The data were collected between September 1972 and January 1973.

When collecting data on motivations and attitudes, the unreliability of replies posed problems making judgement of response more difficult and verification of authenticity absolutely essential.

It was quickly found out that the exact word-structure of the questions to be used in identical manner was impracticable. Some women required much explanation and illustrations. Since some questions were complicated, I used the interview technique to make sure that the responses were the same as the respondent meant in her words. The essential meaning of her expressed feelings, beliefs etc. was then extracted from her words. Eg. the 17th and 18th questions were designed to draw from the subjects some indication of their sex-role orientation. The question was presented in two ways to help the respondents crystallize their ideas.

One of the major tasks during the data collection was to check the attitudinal consistency in the response of questions. For the purpose of minimizing errors, bias and superficiality in responses, most questions were cross-checked. Consistency was evaluated by means of concordance with responses to other questions. Although there were large numbers of these checks, two examples will suffice to illustrate the point -

- (a) The answers obtained for questions 7 and 10 about the ideal family size were cross-checked for consistency.
- (b) The vital information obtained on the Fertility Questionnaire was cross-checked with the Household Schedule.

Deliberate attempts by the respondents to bias answers or to conceal

true attitudes was also a problem. This was also overcome by using the interview method. In this way 'courtesy bias' (response given to please the interviewer) was also eliminated.

The Area

The study was carried out within the geographical boundaries of district Lucknow, which is the capital of Uttar Pradesh and is situated in northern India 606 miles west of Calcutta and 303 miles east of Delhi. It is bordered to the north by the district of Sitapur, to the east by Barabanki, to the south by Rae Bareilly and to the north-west and south-west by the districts of Hardoi and Unnao (see Maps 1 and 2). All the data were collected from villages falling within a 20 mile radius of Lucknow city.

For purposes of general and revenue administration the district of Lucknow has been divided into three Tehsils (sub-districts) - Lucknow, Mohanlal Gunj and Malihabad. The Lucknow Tehsil is composed of three Parganas (administrative sub-division) of Bijnor, Kakori and Lucknow. The Mohanlal Gunj Tehsil is made up of two Parganas of Mohanlal Gunj and Nigohan. The Malihabad Tehsil comprises the Parganas of Malihabad and Mahona. For the purposes of law enforcement the district is divided into many smaller areas known as Thana (Constabulary or Police Circle).

Some census details of the villages studied (obtained from the District Census Handbook 1971)

Kalli Pachim - The village lies in the east of the Bijnor Tehsil of Lucknow, a short distance west of the main road from Lucknow to Mohanlal Gunj and 19 miles from Lucknow City. It has an area of 2,953 acres and a population of 3,035 of which scheduled castes form almost 70% of the total. The village has no power supply, no post and telegraph facilities

but has one Junior Basic School. Towards the south-west of the village is the mound of Kali Kheri, which is believed to represent one of the twelve forts of Raja Bijli, the Pasi chieftain who held the Bijnor Pargana.

Harbatmau Mawaiya - The population of the village is 1,934 of which scheduled castes form 55.43% of the total. The village has a Junior Basic School, but no medical facilities, no power supply, no post office. The total area of the village is 1,519 acres.

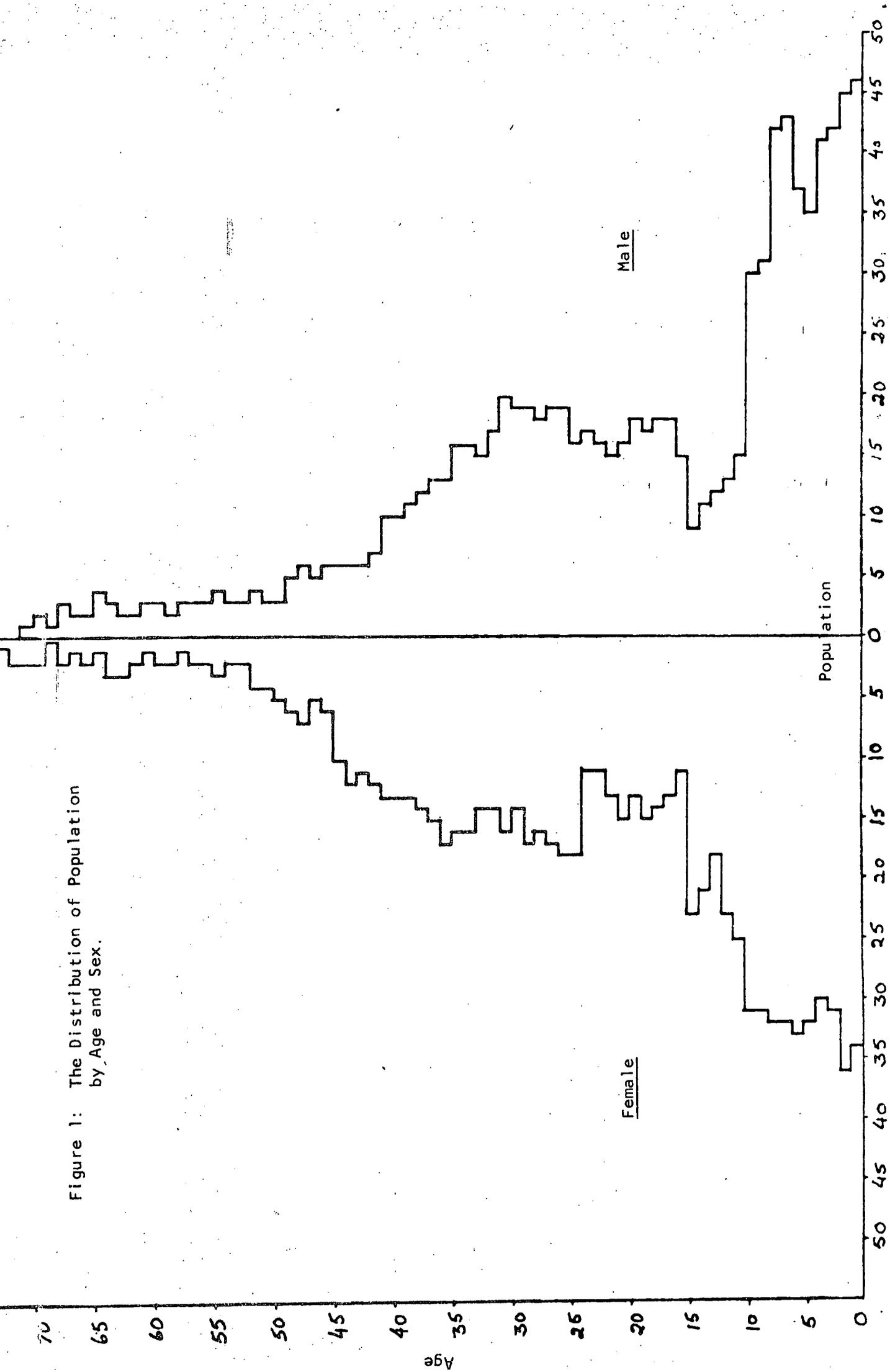
Barauli Khalilabad - The village comes under the pargana of Bijnor, Tehsil of Lucknow and has five hamlets. The total area of the village is 1,639 acres. It has 209 houses and 267 households. The total population of the village is 1,159 and scheduled castes form 72.5% of it. There are no medical or postal facilities. It has a Junior Basic School.

Kharika - This village comes under Banthara Thana (constabulary) and pargana of Bijnor. It has an area of 877 acres and accommodates 562 houses and 642 households. Total number of the population is 3,111 of which 20.3% is formed by the scheduled castes. This village lies 11 miles from Lucknow, has a Primary School and the Secondary School is a mile away.

Martinpurva - It is situated on the city outskirts and comes under Thana Hazrat Gunj (see Map 3). It derives its name from the La Martinier College which is situated nearby in a park close to a small lake. The village has electricity supply and a Primary School. Apart from the main settlement many houses are scattered thinly over a large area and the geographical boundary of the village is not exactly defined.

32 Pasi families were studied from this multi-caste village.

Figure 1: The Distribution of Population by Age and Sex.



Basic Demographic Details of the Sample

Total Population and Households

A total of 336 Pasi households residing in 382 houses were studied. The total number of population belonging to the 336 households was 1,906, which works out to an average of 5.67 per household. The average size of household for the country as a whole is 5.2 (United Nations Year Book 1971). A household is defined as a commensal unit for this purpose.

Age and Sex Composition of the Sample

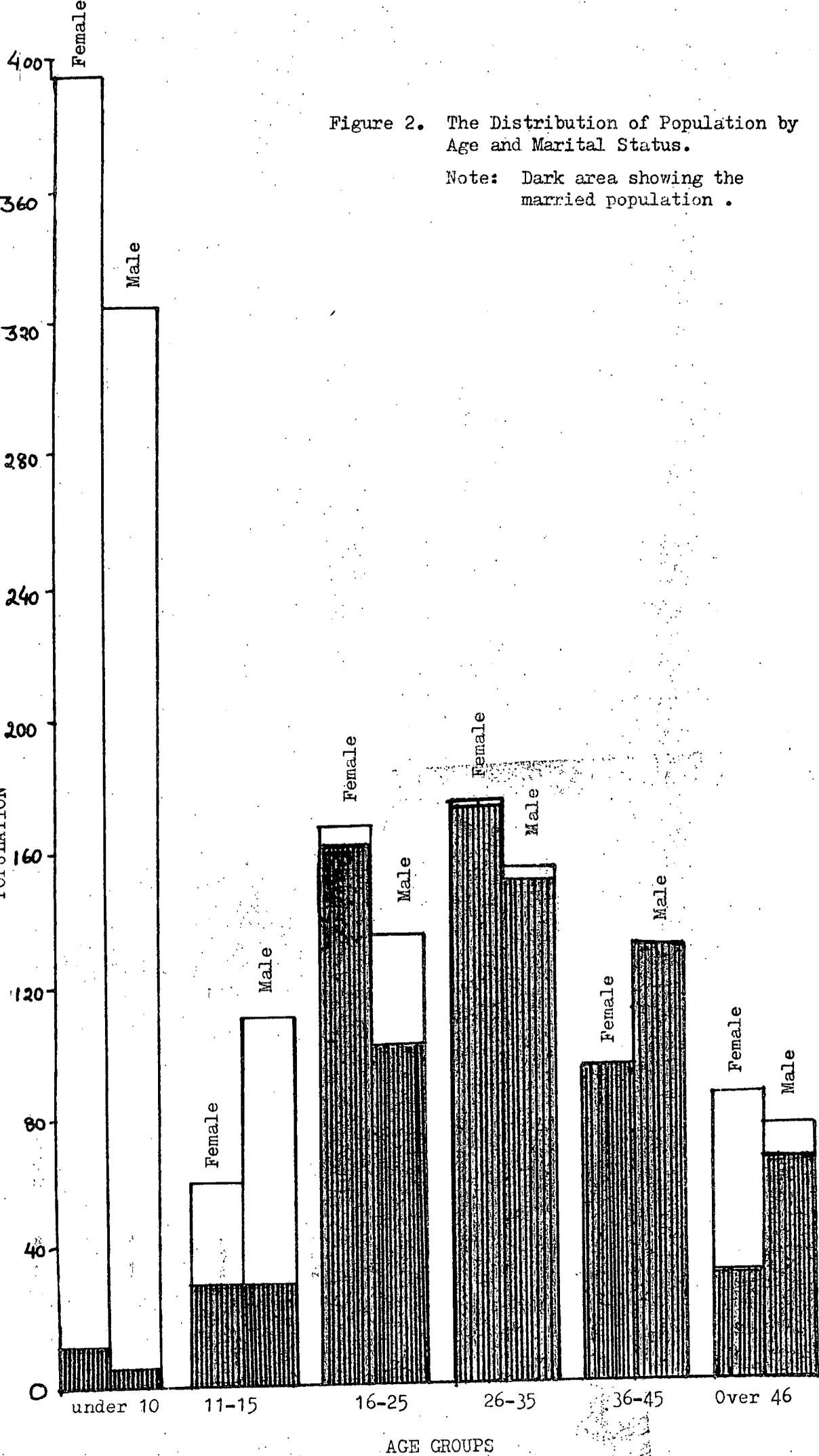
The age distribution of the sample in broad groups is given in Table 1. It will be seen from the table that age group 0-15 forms 46.73% of the total population.

Age group categories	Total No. of Population	% of the Total
15 and under	891	46.73
16-45	850	44.62
46 and over	165	8.65

Table 1: The Age Distribution of the Sample

The sample was composed of 945 males and 961 females. Females thus forming 50.42% of the total population. The ratio was 1017 females/1000 males. The number of adult males in the reproductive age group works out to 1.129 per household, whereas for females the figure comes to 1.224.

Figure 1 shows the population by sex and age. It is seen from the figure that children under fifteen form the largest proportion of the population and that the female population under 10 years of age exceeds the male population falling in the same age group. The figure also reveals a dramatic decline in the number of children in the 11-15 age group.



Distribution of Population by Age, Sex and Marital Status

Figure 2 shows the difference in marital status composition between the various age groups. The classification for marital status given here includes only two categories - married and unmarried. The 'married' category includes those individuals who are in some kind of permanent marital union. It also includes those young people who are 'married' but have not started cohabiting yet. The term 'unmarried' includes those who are not married yet or those who were once married but whose marriages have been terminated or dissolved.

The figure shows that 3.15% of the total number of girls under 10 years are currently married as compared to 1.86% of the boys. The figures for the 11-15 years age group are 27.28% for boys and 50% for girls. 97.56% of the total number of women in the 16-25 years age group are married as compared to 78.13% of men. In the age group 26-35 years, married women make 99.01% and married men make 97.40% of the total. All men and women in the 36-45 years age group are married. Only 37.21% of the total number of women over 46 years are in marital union as compared to 86.97% of the men.

The figures highlight the age disparity of the marriage partners. The Pasi brides are usually 2 to 5 years younger than the grooms. As a consequence the proportion of unmarried males is usually larger than that of the females in all younger age groups.

Natality

Natality is measured by crude birth rate. Crude birth rate is the number of births that occur during the year divided by the population as of 1st July of that year. It shows the number of births per thousand population. A complete reliable record of births and deaths was not kept separately for the Pasi in any of the villages. A crude birth rate of 41.3/1000 was calculated from the data obtained from the village Patvaris (village clerk). It is higher than the estimated average for rural India for 1972 which was 38.4/1000 (Cho, 1960).

Mortality

Mortality is defined as the number of deaths per thousand of population for that year. The calculations for the mortality rate for the present sample are also based upon the data obtained from the village Patvaris. It is 19.1 as compared to 18.9 for rural India for 1972 (Demographic Yearbook 1976).

The rates for child mortality and infant mortality are calculated from the data collected during the fieldwork. The child mortality rate for the present sample is 69.4 per thousand and that for infant mortality, i.e. number of deaths of babies under 1 year per thousand live births, is 109.1.

Growth Rate

The figures show that the Pasi have reached the transitional stage of population adjustment when the death rate has been reduced to a considerable extent but the birth rate is still very high. The rate of growth for the Pasi sample is 22.2/1000. The corresponding rate for rural India works out to be 19.5/1000 (Demographic Yearbook 1976). This growth rate is alarming because of its growth potential. As Table 1 illustrates, nearly 47% of the Pasi population is under 15 years of age and will soon enter the reproductive stage.

THE PEOPLE

The Status of the Pasi in Hindu Social Order

The most significant feature of Hinduism is its social stratification and compartmentalization of human groups, each having a different ritual and social status and the membership of which is determined by birth. These horizontal and vertical groups form a close system of stratification, making upward mobility generally impossible. Groups falling in one horizontal stratum are further divided according to their status within the larger group. There are four major varnas or strata based upon hierarchy - Brahmins ranking at the top and Sudra at the bottom. Kshatriya and Vaishya fall in between the two extremes. Each varna is divided into hierarchical castes and each caste is further divided into hierarchical subcastes. In this hierarchy of status, religious, economic, political and juridical powers increase in ascending order thus directly limiting the status of lower castes, while the degrees of disabilities and backwardness are in descending order.

Apart from the above mentioned strata there is a fifth category referred to in Manusmriti by several names like Aspriha (untouchable), Antyaja (last born), Panchama (the fifth) and Chandala. Exactly which modern group is referred to cannot be pinpointed, but there is no doubt that they were all untouchables. These untouchables occupied a curiously ambiguous position in ancient society. They were not included in the 'chaturvarna' (four-fold) scheme or the ideal model of the Hindu society, but were regarded as outcasts. Doctrinally they were not a part of Hindu society but nevertheless governed by it and their behaviour dictated by Hindu Law. Their services were indispensable to the community but their touch was polluting. The Pasi belong to this 'untouchable' group.

The Origin of the System of Stratification

The origin of this system of stratification is a matter of speculation among scholars but the most frequently repeated theory suggests its roots lie in racial conflicts. Race conflicts have played a very important part in world history. Sociologists, like Gumplovicz and Oppenheimer, hold that 'states were founded upon conquest and migration and in organizing society the conquering race constituted itself the ruling class while the conquered were relegated to servant status' (Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, article on Race and Conflict, p.36). The Census of India, 1931, also records the fact that in prehistoric times when Aryan invaders made themselves the masters of the indigenous population (i.e. non-negroid aborigines of India, to which racial stock most of the untouchables have been held to belong) the relationship between upper and lower castes came into existence. These non-negroid aborigines were the earliest inhabitants of India, but there existed several other racial stocks such as Mediterraneans and Alpines. It is believed that the racial stock to which most of the contemporary ex-Untouchables belonged occupied a low position in the pre-Vedic civilization of Mediterranean-Armenoid races and their position was further lowered as a consequence of Indo-Aryan invasion. Harold Issacs (1965) associated Sudras with the 'subjugated people of that prehistoric time and the Untouchables with some lower than low separation that was made at the bottom of the scale.'

According to the holy writ of Manu, the Untouchables originated as a hybrid group. Manu gives a list of subcastes that were born of the tabooed union of high and low castes and he classed them under 'varnasamkara' (hybrid). Those that were out of the range of the four Varna have been further divided by Manu into two classes - Anulomaja (hypergamous) and called them 'Bahya' (outside), and Pratilomaja

(hypogamous) and called them 'Hina' (lowly or baseborn). Although Bahya and Hina both belonged to mixed parentage, he assigned Hina a much lower status than Bahya. There was then a third group originating as a result of interbreeding between the children of mixed caste and their rank went lower and lower as the children propagated their race. The interbreeding of pratilomaja (base born) certainly forms a great proportion of present day ex-Untouchables but there are some ex-Untouchables that represent stock independent of the mixed kind.

The origin of Untouchability according to Professor Rice (1929) can be found in race and occupation. Racial intermixture may have its share in creating the Untouchables but there is no doubt that expropriation, economic degradation, disintegration of Hindu society and insular social habits are responsible for their degraded position today. Anthropometric tests do not show any clear racial features peculiar to this group but certain stereotypes are common. Manu's classification also goes contrary to the theory that ex-Untouchables represent a pure stock. They are, according to Manu, only a distant descendant of the four castes originally forming the Aryan stock.

The menial and polluting occupations not only caused economic degradation and social servitude to these people but they also imparted a permanent disability, i.e. Untouchability. Any contact with these people will cause a temporary pollution to caste-Hindus. In Henry Ornestein's (1968) words "pollution signifies involvement with life substances and processes which is to be avoided so far as it is possible and proper. Polluting things or processes include birth, death, sexual intercourse, bodily excretions, harmful actions and so on. Purity means, perhaps spirituality, in any event, the absence of biological involvement. Polluted things defile pure ones and exposure to the latter removes the effect of the former." Therefore the

occupations connected with life substances and processes were considered polluting in nature and the castes that were assigned such duties by the traditional Hindu law were considered Untouchables. The Kori, Chamar and Dom castes depend upon dead cattle for their living therefore they are Untouchable. The status of washerman can almost certainly be attributed to their contact with menstrual clothes. Sweepers and lavatory attendants fall in this category because of their contact with human excreta. Killing for living is polluting. Eating pigs and cattle is considered a hideous act and castes that allow such indulgence are also Untouchable. Pasi, like the majority of the Untouchables eat pork which could partly explain their low status. Baines (1912) assigns Pasi a low position because of their traditional connection with the intoxicants. Pasi have been classified as Toddy drawers. Toddy is considered 'impure' because it is intoxicating and has been fermented. The other urban castes such as Sunri-Saha and Kalal-Kalvar have also been assigned a low position because of their occupational association with the 'forbidden article'.

The Scheduled Castes

The population under study was an Untouchable caste in the past but since the abolition of Untouchability in 1955, many other names have been used for them. Mahatma Gandhi called them 'Harijan', i.e. children of God.

India today claims to be a true democratic country and a unique feature of the Indian constitution is the preferential treatment of almost 15% of its population. In the 1931 census a list for all backward castes, classes and tribes was drawn up for the purpose of preferential discrimination. The grounds for the inclusion were not only Untouchability but social, economic, educational and political backwardness. However, due to these disabilities all Untouchable

castes fell into this group along with some 'touchable' castes and tribes. This group acquired the official term of 'Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes' in 1935. Mahatma Gandhi introduced a new term, 'Harijan', for the Untouchables. The new term was intended to give new dignity to the Untouchables and to impress on caste Hindus the need to admit these unfortunates into the Hindu society. The term 'scheduled caste' has a political and administrative identity whereas the term 'Harijan' is unorthodox and places more emphasis on human dignity and equality. I have used the term 'ex-Untouchables' because it conveys the true meaning and its use is limited only to those castes which have actually been assigned the Untouchable status by Hindu society. The terms Scheduled caste, Harijan and Untouchable are therefore not synonymous, except that in common parlance they all carry the stigma of an outcast.

Through protective discrimination the government aimed to remove the roots and causes of the backwardness of these people. It provided them with opportunities in education, occupational training and financial grants for farming, cattle breeding and cottage industries. It also equipped them with political and administrative power through the reservation of seats in parliament and in local government.

The Pasi

To an upper-caste Hindu all ex-Untouchables belong to an undifferentiated block. However, among the social complex of the ex-Untouchables, Pasi not only form a definite entity, they have at least 14 known subgroups or subcastes, each with a definite name and each endogamous. Each name reflects their history, their status during the time of change and their philosophy of life.

The word Pasi has a Sanskritic root (pa = hand, asi = ~~weapon~~ meaning one who possesses a ~~weapon~~ in his hand). Pasi believe that they

are the successors of a ruling class and that their ancestors ruled in Northern India just before the Muslim rule. The subcaste names, like Rajvanshi (Royal), Vikram (great fighter) and Rawat etc. endorse their belief. The subcaste names show their association with ruling caste or warrior class. The most common subcaste of Pasi settled in Lucknow is Gujar, meaning 'one who possesses Gurj (an ancient Indian weapon)'. Trisulia (pronged weapon), Kamania (bow and arrow), Khatic (chopper), Borasi (war crazy), Raj Pasi (the ruling Pasi), Shar Pasi, Aheria, Bahelia, Goduha, Arakh, Bachar and Bal Pasi are the other less common subcastes. These subcastes were not originally graded but were in fact the names of their regiments, which, after the downfall of the Pasi dynasty served the purpose of subcastes and according to their geographical situation, commensal habits and occupational status were placed in grades. Baines (1912) classified Pasi with the Toddy drawers. He believed that the name is derived from a noose "probably in reference to the belt by means of which the palm is climbed, or, where the caste is addicted to wandering in the jungle for hunting purposes, from the snare they used. In Oudh, where the Pasi had a had reputation, the noose in question used to be identified with that used by the Thag in strangling their victims."

The literature published by Pasi Jagriti Mandal provides evidence that the Pasi, in the past ruled in northern India and protest that since they are now relegated to the Scheduled caste, even the academicians do not mention their achievements in the history books and the Department of Education is also silent about it. Pasi further support their claim by saying that in the Geography Text Book of the lower Primary School in 1929 it was mentioned that "Lucknow was founded by Lakhan Pasi, Malihabad by Mohley Pasi and Bijnor by Bijli Pasi.

Dr. Gaya Prasad Prashant* has also mentioned this in his book 'Bharat Me

*The original sources are unobtainable and therefore have not been consulted. Quoted from Pasi Jagriti Mandal, pp.11-15.

Panchayati Raj'. Lucknow District Gazetteer*, Vol. 37 (British period), pp. 137-138, Sitapur District Gazetteer,* Vol. 2, p.112, Bahraich District Gazetteer,* pp. 116-117, mention the glorious achievements of the Pasi in the past.

District Lucknow Gazetteer, Vol. 37, on page 138, states "... thus in the north and west as in Hardoi and Lucknow, the ancient rulers are said to have been Araksha and Pasi, while the legends of people assign the Mohan Lal Gunj Tehsil along to Bhar. All these people appear to have been very much alike. They were all notoriously addicted to drink and there is hardly a story told of the capture of any fortent that was not affected by plying the occupants with wine."

There are still several remains of the Pasi dynasty in Uttar Pradesh in the form of mounds and neglected, demolished forts, for example, the fort of Raja Satan, Natva Dih of Raja Bijli, Kila Mohammadingagar, can still be seen in Lucknow.

Downfall of the Pasi

After the Muslim invasion of India in 1300 A.D. all except a few states went to Muslim kings and their dynasty lasted for 900 years. It is believed, and the fact is further endorsed in the book 'Eighteen Fifty-Seven', (Sen, 1957), that the Muslim rulers recruited Pasi warriors in their army. In the mutiny of 1857, when the Muslims lost, the captives were shot by the British; the great majority of the captives were Pasi. In the same book, Birjis Qadar prophesied a gloomy future for the Pasi, and she reminds them that maintaining peace in all villages and towns is their ancestral occupation, but the British were employing outsiders and denying the Pasi their hereditary occupation. This not only brought economic hardship to the Pasi but, as a result of constant clashes with the British forces, they were classed as 'criminal tribes' and their

*See footnote on previous page.

activities were controlled.

Without any traditional occupational skill, without land and education, the Pasi became downtrodden and their condition deteriorated with time. Today the majority of Pasi are unskilled labourers and only a minority depend entirely upon agriculture for their living.

The Pasi's Social Identity

All Caste-Hindus strictly maintain social distance from Scheduled Castes and their behaviour towards all of them is more or less uniform. This is due to the restricted opportunity for rank-defining transactions between them. All ex-Untouchables share the disabilities alike. They are refused the services of village Brahmin and Barber but their services are available to the entire village. This pattern is based on the logic that commanding services and transfer of food makes the giver higher, and rendering services and receiving food makes the receiver lower.

The ex-Untouchables do not constitute a homogeneous unit. They are the fifth category in the Hindu social order, not exactly part of it but an addition to it. Therefore the entire pattern of gradation in each Varna is repeated among the ex-Untouchables. Commensal, connubial and occupational restrictions are observed between all castes of the ex-Untouchable group. Chamar, Kori and Dom belong to a lower status than the Pasi, the rest of all major Harijan castes in Lucknow are higher than them. Pasi, unlike the other three castes, do not engage in a polluting traditional occupation like skinning, tanning, shoe-making, or render service during funerals. They neither accept food from these three castes nor do they have marital alliances with them. Table 2 shows the position of the Pasi in the Caste hierarchy.

Rank	Name of Caste
1	Brahmin
2	Nai
3	Ahi r
4	Bhujwa
5	Teli
6	Gararia
7	Pasi
8	Kori
9	Chamar
10	Dom

Table 2: Position of the Pasi in the Caste hierarchy based on the rank-defining transactions

Geographical Distribution

Pasi are scattered all over northern India. They constitute 4.2% of the Scheduled Caste population of Bihar, .003% in Orissa, .01% in Rajasthan, 13.87% in U.P., .015% in Gujrat, .178 in Haryana, .14% of Himanchal Pradesh and .091% of Maharashtra. Pasi do not have a common language but they speak the regional language. The language barrier results in weaker affinity between the Pasi of different states. The difference is not only in language but since gods, goddesses and shrines are local - fasts, fairs and festivals also vary. Due to geographical and seasonal variations, home-grown produce gives the diet a regional flavour and eating habits differ in various parts of the country. The mode of clothing and jewellery further adds to alienation among the Pasi of different states.

Terminology

In a multi-caste community the caste name follows the first name and serves the dual purpose of identification and informing others to

maintain their distance accordingly. Among all ex-Untouchables individual identity is traced through father and since there are no surnames, the father's first name is used for identity. The personal first names are usually explicit or derogatory. The name is often associated with some fact about the person, e.g. Karia (black), Manjhali (middle one), Barkau (eldest), or relates to any incident or occasion such as Basanta (spring festival), or the day they were born, e.g. Mangala (Tuesday), Punvasi (full moon day), or to natural objects like Chanda (moon), Tulsi (Basil bush) or the name of gods and goddesses. Their names are also related to their status which explains the presence of such names like Fakirey (beggar), Garibey (poor), Gobur (cow dung), etc. Such humiliating names were given to a Pasi child to inculcate the idea, which the interpersonal relations reinforced later, that there was a hierarchy of relationship and they should observe the formalities of subordinate roles. The names were not usually selected by parents but were either 'acquired' or given by friends or relatives. In the past the masters gave the name to the servants' children. A married woman is not expected to tell her name to others nor would others call her by her personal name. She is either called by her kinship relation to the head of the household or as the wife of Mr. X. Sanskritic and high sounding names are usually not chosen for a Pasi child. A sophisticated modern name, they believe, is acting above their level.

The abolition of Untouchability, education and urbanization has influenced all aspects of Pasi life and a change in the pattern of names of children is quite noticeable. Although the old meaningless or detracting names are still common, the names of modern film stars, politicians, religious leaders and saints are slowly filtering through the old pattern of identity. This could be a major step towards blurring their identity as outcasts and with a high sounding Sanskritic name

assimilation in the new environment would occur with minimum embarrassment.

Occupation

A high proportion of the Pasi are engaged in unskilled labour, either on farms or on building sites. Those who live in rural areas usually have a small patch of land to supplement their food supply. Those who have a larger cultivable land keep plough cattle, but others either share cattle on 'adhia' (fifty-fifty) basis or borrow it. Female labour is indispensable in certain areas of agriculture like thrashing and winnowing cereal crops, weeding and planting rice. Therefore a large proportion of women are employed for at least three months every year.

Education

Although the majority of adults in the present study are illiterate, they place high value on the education of their children. Pasi are aware of the fact that the advantage from the protective discrimination policy can only be gained through education. They want their children to acquire modern education to equip themselves to face the changing conditions of modern India and attain new skills to secure better jobs in cities. Women's education is also encouraged but not so much from the point of gainful employment as for the liberation and aspiration it would bring to women in every day life.

Religion and Belief

All Pasi living in the area of study are Hindu but there are cases, related by informants, of conversion to Christianity. Pasi show a curious mixture of Animism and Hinduism. Although in every village there are temples of the recognized gods and goddesses of the Hindu religion, the day to day religious life of the Pasi is centered around the shrines of the lesser gods. Spirits are believed to dwell in trees, plants, stones

and several other inanimate objects, therefore Pipal (*Ficus religiosa*), Tulsi (Basil bush) and Banyan occupy an important place in religious practices. They celebrate all religious festivals of Hindus such as Karva-Chawth, Nag Panchami, Raksha Bandhan, Holi, Diwali and Dussehra, along with the local Pasi festivals such as Said Salar Ka Mela and Mela Kalli Pachim and Suraj Kund.

Except for a few minor ailments and injuries, the majority of the epidemics, chronic and recurrent diseases are still regarded as 'sacred' and are attributed to supernatural causes like evil eyes, magic, wrath of god and spirits. During my stay at Barauli a woman believed that she was visited by the 'Bhuiya Bhavani' (the Earth Goddess). The woman was in great distress and despite all arguments she refused to see a doctor for fear of displeasing 'Bhavani'. The 'Sayani', a woman residing in the nearby village, was called and the patient was taken to the outskirts of the village and under a ficus tree 'Bhavani' manifested herself and told the 'expert' of the reason for her visit and what sacrifice was required for the woman to regain her normal condition. I was later informed that the sacrifice of a pig was made and the woman felt better instantly.

Food and Dietary Habits

Due partly to poverty and partly to economic structure, the Pasi have a very limited diet. Food is rarely bought outside the local market. In fact, a major part of the food is given in return for services. This is usually the cheapest and most common cereal, such as maize, millet or poor quality rice. Some landowners even grow a cheaper variety for such payments. During the harvesting season, when women are employed, two meals a day are available to all families but during the intervening period when food stocks are exhausted and labour is not required, people either go into debt or starve. All good quality cereal crops are grown for cash. Green vegetables are rarely grown in the villages. Only a few

families grow gourds or similar fruits and vegetables for personal use. Leafy vegetables like spinach which grow wild supplement their staple diet of millet, oats and rice. Fruits are never grown as a cash crop but children sometimes pick mango, blackberry or singhara (water chestnut) which grow wild in the fields and ponds. Fruits are not considered an essential part of the diet but a luxury. Similarly, ghee (clarified butter), meat and eggs are very rarely used.

The Pasi are notorious for their habit of consuming Tari (fermented juice of the palm tree) and drugs. Men working in the city are addicted to Tari (toddy) or distilled liquor while those confined to villages devote themselves to Opium, Bhang (cannabis Indica) or Charas (drug prepared from hemp seeds). On occasions such as weddings, Holi etc. Pasi women also join in drinking. The practice of pacifying babies with a drug locally known as Mussabbar (juice extracted from the Aloe plant) is also known to the Pasi women.

Habitat

The concept of separation or exclusion to maintain ritual purity, so basic to Hindu philosophy, persists in the arrangement of the houses. The Brahmin or other higher caste houses form the nucleus of the village usually with a well, tap or another facility for drinking water, a temple or some other place of worship and probably a small village shop nearby. The lower castes form their separate settlements near the village boundary. This kind of segregation was also practised in ancient times when the Sastras, including the Manusmriti, condemned the Antyaja to an abode outside the village, thus giving them their base status.

In the villages where the present data were collected, the Pasi lived in settlements called Pasiana. Their houses had mud walls and thatched roofs. They were usually small, two-roomed, with a small verandah shared by cattle and menfolk alike. Some houses had a backyard

also. There was only one through door and no windows for ventilation or light. There were no public or private toilet facilities in the Pasi houses in the villages. Fields were used for this purpose. Only in Martinpurva was there a common private lavatory. In rural areas no private supply of water was available in the homes, but usually water from a well, pond or pipe was drawn in buckets and stored in the house. Washing clothes and kitchen utensils was done at the common platform near the tap, well or pond. In the suburban area of Martinpurva although there was a supply of electricity only a couple of houses could afford it. In the rest of the villages there was no electric supply but oil lamps were used for artificial light.

In none of the villages except Kharika was a place formally set aside for meetings. Discussions usually took place outside the house of some influential man.

The main roads leading to the villages under study were straight and wider than the other roads inside the villages. The layout of the village - the scattered houses and narrow dirt-tracks gave an impression of informality. During the rainy season the lanes got very muddy. Some narrow lanes were paved with bricks to avoid waterlogging.

Social Contacts

So far as village life is concerned, each caste is a distinct unit and contact with other castes is very limited. But due to the absence of any traditional occupation among Pasi, association with higher land-owning castes is frequent, although purely on a business level. There are no commensal relations between Brahmin and Pasi, but strictness of all restrictions is maintained more with Chamars than with the Pasi. There are no connubial relations between any castes. Water and the smokers pipe (chilam) are not shared between Pasi, Chamar, Dom and Kori.

All castes participate in some religious occasion or Katha (recital of Holy books), but they all squat at a distance from each other and there is no exchange of food and water between them. Harvesting time brings some opportunity of common participation. Contact between different castes outside the village - in public transport, classroom and factories - is inevitable but once inside the village the distance is restored.

Planned Community Work

There were no medical facilities available in any of the villages studied but a clinic was situated within a ten-mile radius of every village. Only in the village of Kharika was there a man with some knowledge of traditional Indian medicine for common ailments and for first aid. In the village of Barauli a travelling doctor of homeopathy would occasionally visit, but his trips were neither regular nor frequent.

As vaccination against smallpox is compulsory, a qualified government doctor makes frequent and regular visits to all these villages for vaccination and blood testing. Malaria prevention and eradication is generally more acceptable and welcomed for its novelty. D.D.T. spraying and preventive medicines are not objected to, but blood testing is avoided by the villagers as far as possible. People have become used to vaccination therefore there is no real objection to it, although they are not totally convinced that the wrath of goddesses or evil spirits could be avoided by a mere injection.

A mobile Family Planning Clinic visits all these villages regularly for educative propaganda, i.e. to convince the villagers about the benefits and significance of small planned families. The sign of planned families 'Lal Trikone' (red triangle) and the slogan 'Chhota Parivar Sukhi Parivar' (small family, happy family) can be seen on several houses. Film shows and discussion groups came once or twice to all villages but very few

women attend the discussion groups due to fear that the government officials would exert pressure to sterilize them.

Powdered milk and bread were distributed once or twice in the villages but due to some unknown reason the scheme was cancelled.

Adult education classes were started at least once in all the villages and were greeted with enthusiasm, but none of them lasted for more than 5 or 6 months. Due to shortage of staff, lack of facilities for artificial light, seasonal pressure of work and other domestic problems, the majority of people discontinued after a short time. Gram Sevika (Women Helpers) and V.L.W. (Village Level Workers) have been employed to help in government schemes concerning agriculture, sanitation and hygiene. For general and domestic education a Mahila Samiti (Women's Association) exists in the village of Kharika. It invites people from different disciplines to talk to women on different topics related to village life.

There are at present two registered Pasi Associations in Lucknow. One is active at national level and the other at provincial level. The latter has its headquarters at Lucknow. Both publish literature concerning the welfare of the Pasi and through its medium they also put their grievances and demands to local and central government. The publication 'Pasi-Mitra' (Pasi friend), on the cover page has a caption from Ram Charit Manas (the Holy book of Hindus) which sums up the discontentment of the Pasi. According to this quotation 'caste insult is the extreme of all worldly miseries'.*

Through these associations, Pasi claim the right to be assimilated into society. The association reminds its members that although Untouchability is legally abolished the stigma attached to their name has not gone yet. Unless backwardness in economic, political, social and

*'yadyapi dukh darun jag nana, sabse kathin jati apmana.'

educational spheres is defeated, the claim to higher status cannot be accepted. The association has taken positive steps to remove these evils from society. There are two sub-committees established for this purpose. 'Hanter Sena' has recognized the problems of child marriages, broken marriages and undue interference of kin and friends in the matters of sex and marriage. Their object is to bring about radical changes in the marital institution. Marriages between unsuitable partners are to be discouraged, marital alliances made for the sake of financial gain are to be stopped and parents arranging such marriages are to be excommunicated. It also aims to create conditions in which child marriages would be undesirable and economically disadvantageous.

The other sub-association was formed to bring about a change in the occupational sphere and to solve the unemployment problem among the Pasi. It is known as 'Pasi Bahudhandiya Adarsha Sahyogi Samiti' (Pasi Multi-Occupational Co-op Society). It issues share units worth Rs. 10 each and a shareholder of 10 or more units would become a member of this society. The society provides an advisory service and loans to develop or start a new business.

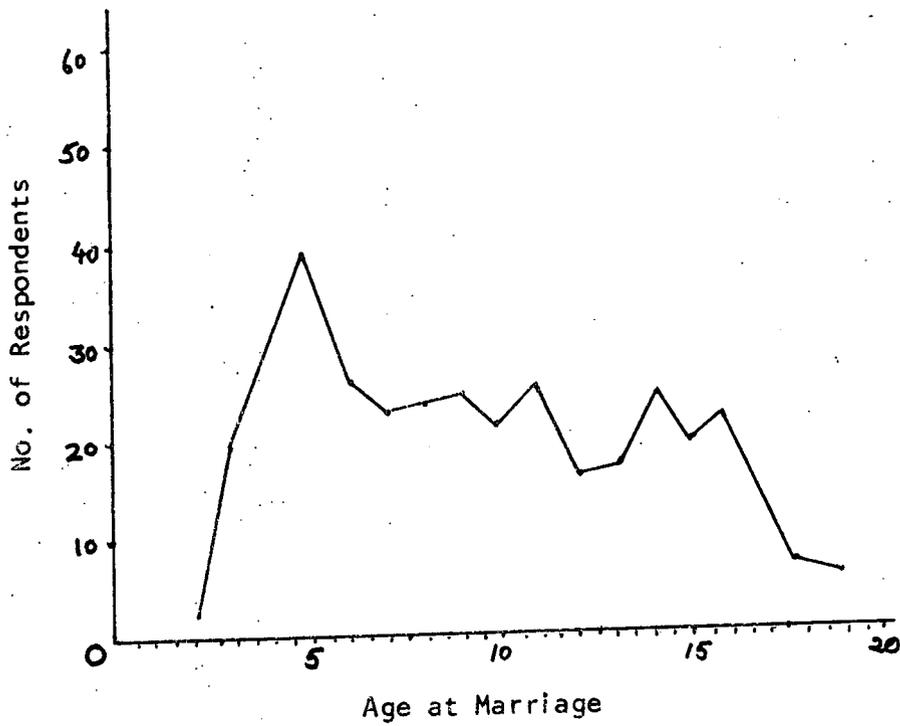
Although these organizations have existed for the uplift of the Pasi since 1950, they seem to have exerted little discernible influence in the villages studied. Apart from only a few educated Pasi none of the villagers know about these organizations. Enough propaganda literature is published but partly due to the cost of the magazines and pamphlets, and mainly because the majority of the adult population is illiterate, it is of little use.

MARRIAGE AND FERTILITY

Reproduction in most societies commences after marriage, therefore marital status is an important variable that influences the population structure and size. The pattern of marriage and its dissolution rate directly affect the population size and differential death and migration rates for different marital status contribute indirectly to it. The pattern of marriage, i.e. incidence and age at marriage and remarriage vary greatly among societies. Also relevant are the government imposed laws which regulate the age at marriage, partnership choice and the grounds on which divorce and separation can be sought. Primitive and traditional societies impose their own rules and regulations on their members according to their needs and customs.

Death, birth and migration are the three basic demographic variables and in the rural Indian context the first two are generally considered uncontrollable and therefore mostly unplanned, and migration becomes necessary only when the village economy fails to support all the population. As marriage is the only controllable demographic decision that can affect birth rate, the study of marriage pattern differentials is of major importance. The age at marriage seems a very promising avenue for the approach to reduce birth rate, specially because no scientific means of birth control are widely used among the Pasi. As in the absence of contraception marital fertility relates directly to the reproductive years spent in sexual union, the age at marriage becomes the most important factor to influence total fertility.

The present analysis is an appraisal of the Pasi marriage system and includes an analysis of marriage rates, a discussion of the differentials in the marriage ages, an evaluation of differentials in divorce, separation, consensual unions and widowhood and their effect on fertility.



Graph 1: Distribution of Respondents by their Age at First Marriage

Marriage among the Pasi of Lucknow

The sole purpose of Hindu marriage can be summed up by the prayers at the wedding ceremonies of Rigveda - 'O bounteous Indra, make this bride blessed in her sons and fortunate. Vouchsafe to her ten sons and make her husband eleventh.' (Rigveda X,45) 'May Agni, the Lord of the House protect her. May He lead her offsprings to an advanced age; may her womb be blessed, may she be the mother of living children, may she behold the joys of her sons.' (Rigveda I,68).

To Hindus family life represents an essential stage in the life-cycle of a person. It begins with a celibate life and goes through a family stage, then a stage of resignation from worldly goods and finally renunciation of all worldly connections. The fourth stage is denied to Sudras and Untouchables because they are considered impure. Family life starts with marriage, therefore without marriage formal worldly obligations cannot be discharged. Marriage to a Hindu is a biological, social, economic and religious necessity.

There is no minimum age for marriage among the Pasi. Graph 1 shows the frequency distribution of the respondents according to their age at first marriage. As all Pasi agree, marriage entirely depends upon the availability of resources or access to them. As soon as enough funds are available, the marriage of a child is fixed and solemnized. The auspicious period for weddings follows just after the harvesting of two major crops and the intervening months when the supply of wheat and rice is short coincide with the inauspicious period.

Women usually take the initiative in matrimonial matters, but all outside work and visits concerning the groom searching depend upon males. Information about the potential bridegrooms is supplied either by relatives and friends, usually women, and/or professional matchmakers. Matchmakers are not usually paid in cash but every successful introduction

brings the 'bichaulia' (matchmaker) a share of the wedding feast. Because of the extreme youth of the bride and the bridegroom, they show no interest in the wedding and if the grandparents are alive, even parents have no absolute right over any kind of decision concerning the nuptials of their children.

The girl's parents first pay a visit to the potential bridegroom's family and if they approve the match a sum (between fifty and two hundred rupees) is paid to the boy, which removes him from the open marriage market. This payment to the bridegroom is known as 'Barchhidi' (securing the bridegroom) among the Pasi of Lucknow. However, in practical terms this is not binding on either party. This is followed by a visit of the boy's family to the girl's home. During this visit, they decide the approximate date and other preliminary details of the marriage. On returning to their village the boy's parents discuss the auspicious date for the wedding with their priest. Their second visit to the girl's family is a very formal occasion because -

1. Now a customary declaration of the future union is made to the community.
2. At this occasion members of the two families meet each other.
3. The girl receives the gifts of clothes, jewellery and sweets from her future in-laws. It is customary to bring a set of silver bangles, necklace and anklets for the girl.

The focal point of the wedding ceremony is the worship of the bride and groom by the bride's parents and the entire paraphernalia concerning this worship and that of the god and goddesses goes with the bridal procession to the bridegroom's village. The party usually goes in a succession of bullock-carts, buses or in any combination of these. If the groom's village is not very far, the party may go on foot. The entrance to the groom's village is marked by a grand display of fireworks

and bands. The party stops there for drinking and dancing and sometimes cheap professional dancers are also invited for entertainment.

The groom's male family members come to the village entrance to greet and welcome the party. From here on the party is the groom's guest, therefore all expenses of the festivity and gaiety are borne by them. Pasi marriages consist of not one but several ceremonies in which not only the couple but many other relatives participate. However, the most important ceremonies in which the marrying partners are involved are called 'Pai Poonji' and 'Bhanvari'. The former is the worship of the couple by the bride's parents and now they ceremoniously hand over the wedding gifts and jewellery to the groom's parents. The latter is the seven vows of marriage taken by the couple in front of the sacred fire. This is followed by the marriage feast and the party departs, usually the next day.

The bride returns to her parental home immediately after the wedding for a long stay. This marks the end of childhood and the beginning of womanhood. By the time of the 'Gauna' ceremony (return-marriage), which usually takes place within one year of attaining puberty, a girl is well versed in cooking, cleaning and other household and farm work.

If the girl is getting married after attaining puberty the wedding takes place in her own village and the 'barat' (the groom's party) comes to her village of orientation and the bride goes with her husband after the wedding ceremony. The number of members in the groom's/bride's party denotes the social status of the family. A large procession means that the family belongs to a higher status and has greater contacts, whereas a small procession means that the family has nothing to boast of. It is not only a public display of the family's social status but it is also a public acknowledgement of the relationships and bonds with the members who are invited to the procession. People show their public disapproval

of a family by not inviting them to the wedding or show their acceptance or approbation by including them in the marriage party.

The gifts brought for the bridegroom on this occasion are also a sensitive indicator of the status of the bride's father. He also brings gifts for the groom's father, mother, uncles, paternal grandparents and every member of his immediate family. The groom's father, mother and grandparents receive a set of clothes and the rest receive a cash sum of about Rs.5. If he can afford it, a nominal gift of Rs.1 is paid to every person belonging to his 'Biradari' (fraternity). An average Pasi family will also give five big brass kitchen utensils to the bridegroom's family.

The bride also receives gifts from her parents and close relatives. The relatives usually give a cash sum but her maternal uncle brings clothes and a small article of jewellery such as a nose-stud or earrings for the bride. An average Pasi family gives five 'thans' (sets) of silver jewellery, the cost depending upon the weight of the articles. Those parents who can afford it give solid and heavy jewellery, others give smaller and hollow articles to maintain the number.

Gauna, in a real sense is the beginning of marital life because cohabitation starts only after Gauna. It is again an expensive occasion for the two parties, although transactions are on a slightly smaller scale than marriage. The bride's family has to give again the grains and rice, fruits and nuts and a watch, bicycle or a radio to their son-in-law, but it is the groom's family which is under greater pressure to show their prestige and status by bringing expensive gifts, clothing and jewellery for their daughter-in-law. These include the wedding gifts to the bride which are kept by her in-laws after marriage. This jewellery becomes a bone of contention if the husband's family have had to mortgage it to avoid economic hardship and are not able to recover it. In such cases the bride's family can refuse to send their daughter to her husband -

temporarily or permanently.

Much value is put on the possession of valuable jewellery by the women, as it can be exchanged for ready cash in times of economic hardship. The jewellery is completely her personal property and her husband has no right over it unless she formally gives it to him.

Impact of Age at Marriage upon Fertility

The age at marriage has varied in India over the centuries but the custom of child marriage among the Pasi is as long as history itself. For how long this well established practice has been going on is of less importance than the fact that it is an integral part of Pasi social life.

Age at marriage among the Pasi might appear to have no effect on fertility, as conjugal rights are granted only after Gauna, but it actually influences both the desired and the ultimate size of the family. Its direct effect on family size can be seen on the age at effective marriage or age at consummation. The earlier the consummation, the greater is the span of reproductive time spent in sexual union, hence the higher would be the fertility. The figures indicate (see Table 6) that early marriages have a much greater chance of early consummation, although the opposite does not hold true. As seen earlier, return marriage or Gauna requires savings, those with early marriages of their children have a greater span of time to secure the sum to send off their daughter as soon as she reaches puberty. Those who marry their children late have to delay the ceremony until the required sum is saved. Indirectly, the age at marriage affects fertility through dissolution rate. Dissolution rate is generally higher among early marriages except among farming families who offer greater marital stability to everyone. Illiteracy and other intervening variables with a definite effect on fertility are also related to age at marriage. A married girl has less chance to continue her

education than an unmarried girl. Among the Pasi a married girl, irrespective of her age, is expected to learn housework, farm work and the rearing of children. Although still living at her parental home, she is under the control of her in-laws and their interests are safe till their future daughter-in-law is submissive to their wishes. Education is supposed to bring individualism and emancipation to women which is contrary to the conditions of a peaceful existence in the joint family. Therefore, in-laws are never in favour of continuing the education of a girl after marriage. Parents may however hold other opinions but they never press the matter due to fear of the termination of their daughter's marriage. That to them, besides other things, would mean the loss of a small fortune.

Marriage Patterns

Marriage patterns vary among societies and even in one society over a span of time, due to changing social conditions. The pattern of marriage, i.e. the approximate age at marriage, the proportion of the population that marry, restrictions upon partnership choice and number of marriages - all emerge from the existing social conditions. The three factors that determine the pattern of marriage in any society, as listed by Ruth B. Dixon (1971) are :

1. The desirability of marriage.
2. The availability of mates.
3. The feasibility of marriage.

The data compiled by her show that India and Pakistan have the lowest average age at marriage (16.8 and 16.5 years respectively) whereas at the other extreme in Ireland only 78% of women marry and the average age at marriage is 25.5 years. The general conclusion drawn from her study is that in a society where marriage is desirable on social, economic and religious grounds and feasible, provided that mates are readily available

a high frequency of marriage and low celibacy rate would be found.

The Desirability of Marriage among the Pasi

The strength of motivation to marry in any society can be measured by the positive benefits and social rewards that are gained by getting married and the privileges that have to be forfeited and penalties that have to be paid for not getting married. Also important is the attitude of society towards emancipated women, alternatives open to women to earn their livelihood and facilities provided by society to encourage freedom of choice in matters concerning career and role.

Marriage is desirable among Pasi not only because it is considered appropriate but also on economic, religious, social and moral grounds. Getting married and begetting children is a religious obligation. Scriptures regard one's wife as 'ardhangini' (half of oneself) i.e. without a wife a man is not complete. The complementary aspect of this relationship is seen not only in everyday life but on formal and ceremonial occasions too.

Parents' salvation depends upon their children's wedding. They earn merits by marrying off their daughters and are penalized if they fail to do so. Among the Pasi a virgin until puberty is elevated to quasi-divinity and her wedding provides them with an opportunity to worship her.

In India, whether rich or poor, rural or urban, all consider a female child a liability and a male child an asset. The birth of a baby boy is an occasion for rejoicing whereas parents and relatives are indifferent to the birth of a girl. A girl is never considered a part of her parent's family and is said to be 'the wealth that belongs to someone else' and parents are only guardians until that person claims her. This religious belief leaves them with no option other than marrying her off.

Even a casual observer of Indian village life would not fail to identify the theme that affirms the ascendancy of the male principle.

A woman, on the other hand, is never considered as an independent person in her own right. When she is young, parents or brothers have command over her, after the wedding her husband is the master and in old age she depends upon her sons. This change of guardianship during different phases of life suggests two points: -

1. That she is defenceless, weak and inexperienced to lead an independent life, hence she should not be allowed to enjoy freedom.
2. Marriage is essential to a woman for the security it provides her in old age.

The indispensability of women in farm work makes her an economic asset. The desirability of marriage for this reason is especially strong for those who have a large area of cultivable land.

Customary Pasi laws also consider marriage a necessity for a girl and leave her no choice in this matter. Since children, especially sons are indispensable in Hindu religion and social life, an unmarried girl, in customary Pasi law, is not entitled to any share in the family property.

Among the Pasi marriage is not only essential, but it has to be in childhood if parents wish to ensure a good match. The penalties for marrying late are numerous, such as criticism, gossip and scandal about the girl, humiliation of the parents for not fulfilling their responsibility in time and difficulty in finding a good match. It is almost impossible to find a young bachelor from a farming family for an adolescent girl. For her there would only be poor, unsettled labourers or widowers. Not only does the girl suffer all her life by marrying late but according to the ancient law her father commits 'an act of sin if his daughter is married after puberty' or 'if he allows her to commence her menstruation at his house. Some think this to be a sin equal to the killing of a Brahmin or a cow, and the sin increases in arithmetical progression with the number of menstruations unmarried girls have at their parent's house' (Beochar, 1929).

The Availability of Marriage Partners

In societies where the sex ratio is equal, suitable partners for marriage are more easily and readily available than in societies where the proportion between the sexes is not equal. However, marital alliances also involve the criteria of personal choice. Some characteristics are more desirable than others and individuals with desirable qualities get married earlier than those who have to wait until a 'suitable match' is found. Among the Pasi, poverty is the most undesirable characteristic, therefore poor girls have to wait much longer to get married than rich girls. Since the availability of marriage partners from the families of higher socio-economic status is limited, there is always competition to secure a partner as early as possible for their daughter.

The necessity of marital life and hence the universalization of marriage is a common feature of all Indian societies. It does not, however, mean that the choice of partners is very wide. Pasi have both endogamous and exogamous rules restricting the selection of a partner. All Pasi subcastes are endogamous and any breach of caste endogamy is punished by excommunication. Pasi also observe lineage restrictions, i.e. an individual is not allowed to marry a relative who is linked with a common ancestor within at least four generations on the father's side and three on the mother's. Village exogamy demands marital relations outside their own village. Communication with other villages is very restricted and depends upon the socio-economic status of the family. A very rich family can have a wider social circle due to its business and social contacts and their ability to travel, whereas a poor man's contacts are confined to a few neighbouring villages through his relatives and friends. These restrictions make the marriage market very competitive and since the demand for rich and eldest boys is great, the age at marriage falls to its minimum. Another outcome of this competition for

securing a boy from a rich family is an undue shortage of rich eligible bachelors in their late teens.

McFarland (1970) formulates a relationship between the number of potential mates and the chances of getting a marriage partner. He concludes that the 'expected proportion of group members unable to find eligible partners under mono and endogamous conditions decreases monotonically as the group size increases approaching a limit of zero as the group size becomes large, but becomes substantial for small groups, when males and females are equally likely to become group members and appropriate sex and group membership is the only criteria of eligibility.'

Feasibility of the Marriage

Even when the partners are available and marriage is desired, the practical difficulties may not make it possible to arrange the wedding. Feasibility of marriage can be measured by relatively high or low requirements from either side and availability or access to resources to meet these requirements.

Since the Pasi couple do not normally set up individual residence just after marriage but live in a joint family, financial circumstances of the boy or his earning capacity is not taken into consideration. In the villages almost all men have job security. Those from agricultural families are absorbed in the family farming and the rest can either rent land or work as farm labourers. This job security not only leads to universalization of marriage but also results in early marriage.

The foregoing account suggests that in societies which favour joint family living, an early and more nearly universal pattern would be found. In societies where expectations from individual partners are high, the age at marriage would be comparatively higher and a greater proportion of people who fail to meet these requirements would remain unmarried.

Pasi Social Organization - An Instrument to Early Marriage

The preceding paragraphs clearly point out the two important features of Pasi marriage - parental control over children and social pressure over parents to conform to the traditional pattern.

The age at marriage in societies that practice arranged marriages depends upon the social and economic value of children in that society. Where the state or other agencies take over the responsibility of elderly parents, where celibacy or bachelorhood is now frowned upon and religion does not demand progeny of its devotees, children cease to be indispensable. Therefore in such societies parents have considerably less to lose by the marriage of their children. On the other hand, where social and economic existence depend upon children, marriage of a son may mean the loss of security for parents. It therefore seems obvious that parents would consciously or subconsciously try to postpone the marriage of their children. To avoid parents' selfish interests interfering with the natural course of life of their children, society develops means and conditions in which any action deficient in consideration for others is checked.

The Pasi social system shows an ideal way of avoiding such conflict. Some structural characteristics, such as patrilocal residence, patriarchal authority pattern and patrilineal kinship recognition, emphasize the affinal bond and make children's weddings essential to maintain these obligations. Through marriage the couple acquire the prestige that goes with 'being married' and parents' status is elevated by having a daughter-in-law at home. Not only does social status change but the entire authority structure in the family is redefined at the wedding of a son. The transfer of domestic duties to the daughter-in-law is a much cherished dream of all Pasi women.

Through marriage, couples receive the right to sexual access and

legitimate children. Societies that tolerate pre-marital sex and illegitimacy do not have this fear of impending evil to force parents to arrange early marriages for their children. Among Pasis, one such dishonour would not only affect the life of the participants, but the entire family would be ostracised. Therefore by having an early marriage for their children parents not only ensure a legitimate grandson, they also ensure the purity and continuity of the lineage.

Sexual division of labour and gainful employment on farms brings economic advantages too, because the earlier the sons get married, the sooner is the family income supplemented. My respondents believed that ideally daughters should not be allowed to go out for paid employment because the Hindu religion forbids any kind of gain through daughters. This restriction does not apply to daughters-in-law. They can and do go out for gainful employment. Parents are also anxious for the early marriage of their sons because a daughter-in-law would ease the family work load and replace the services of daughters who had left home after marriage.

Census records of Europe (Coale, 1965) show that marital pattern played a very important role in reducing fertility. Widespread celibacy excluded a fair proportion of people who would have contributed to an increase in the population, and late marriage reduced the age-specific fertility rate because the most fertile period was spent without any sexual union (Statistical Review for 1965 for England and Wales).

The marriage ceremony in most societies gives the couple conjugal rights, but among Pasis the right to sexual access is not granted until after the Gauna ceremony. Since in the practical sense, Gauna starts married life, in statistical analysis the term 'effective marriage' would apply to the Gauna ceremony.

As there is social pressure against both too early or too late

Gauna ceremony, the age-range for Gauna is very narrow in comparison to marriage. There are three basic factors that decide the age at effective marriage - (a) puberty and physical maturity, (b) social and emotional development, and (c) financial position of the parents. Although there is no data available on age at menarche of the Pasi women, my respondents estimate it as between 13-14 years. They also believe that puberty initiates the age of 'suhag and singlar'. Suhag denotes physical maturity of the girl to bear children and ' singlar' refers to the emotional and sexual development required to assume the new role. It also refers to physical maturity to cope with housework and farm work.

Age at the time of data collection	Mean Age at Effective Marriage		
	under 15	15-16	17 and over
31 - 45 years	6.15	6.50	6.25
21 - 30 years	3.86	3.81	3.82
15 - 20 years	1.40	1.38	1.38

Table 4: Distribution of Pasi respondents by age at effective marriage and number of live births

The mean number of live births, born to women in three age groups according to age at return marriage is presented in Table 4. The effect of multiple marriages on fertility has been dealt with separately.

The data show that given a constant duration of marital life, those who consummated marriage early do not bear more children than those who consummated late, Coale and Tye (1961) have mentioned that even in societies where completed family size is not very different, a wider gap between two generations puts an automatic check on fertility.

The age at marriage and effective marriage has been shown to be sensitive to variables such as economic status, education, place of residence and occupation. Their effect upon the fertility of the Pasi women can be seen below.

The Relationship between Literacy, Age at Marriage and Age at Effective Marriage

The status of education for the present study is defined and classified solely in terms of the degree of absorption of the 'written word'. The Pasi couples are divided into four groups ranging all the way from illiterate at one end to graduate at the other. Statistics of the educational status of the married Pasi couples is given below.

Educational Status of the couple	% of the Total Couples	Mean Age at Marriage	Mean Age at Effective Marriage
Both illiterate	66.10	9.20	13.35
Only one literate	31.58	9.12	14.24
Both literate	1.16	11.00	15.30
At least one with college education or university degree	1.16	11.10	15.36

Table 5: Distribution of Pasi respondents by educational status, age at marriage and age at effective marriage

The above data reveal a weak positive relationship between education, age at marriage and age at effective marriage. Average age at marriage for the illiterate group is 9.2 years and that for consummation 13.35. The average age at marriage for the entire group, in which only one partner is literate is 9.12 years and for consummation 14.24. The maximum rise in the age at marriage and effective marriage is recorded where both partners are literate. The difference in the degree of education does not, however, influence the age at effective marriage to the same extent, because good matches can only be secured in childhood and once the marriage has been solemnized 'return marriages' cannot be postponed indefinitely. The Table stresses the point that the effect of education is greater on the age at marriage than on the effective marriage. Another point that deserves a mention here is that unlike literate societies, in villages the three R's are learned later in adult

life too. Possibly a great proportion of the people falling in the 'only one literate' group have learned to read later, which accounts for a slight unexpected drop in the age at marriage and effective marriage.

The Relationship between Occupation and Age at Marriage and Effective Marriage

Occupation is defined as the basic means of earning livelihood by a family. Jobs such as basket weaving, cattle grazing or collecting fodder for others are excluded from the present analysis because their economic contribution is not significant. Most of the Pasi families of the present sample depend upon more than one occupation to earn their livelihood. The secondary occupation is defined on the basis of its economic contribution. If the economic contribution from an occupation is less than half the total earnings, it is classified as a secondary occupation (S0). The sample is divided into the following occupational categories. Figure 3 shows the occupational structure of the sample.

(a) Owner cultivators - Those families who depend upon their own land for livelihood are classed under owner cultivators. None of the families leased land for cultivation.

(b) Unskilled labourers - Includes construction workers and agricultural labourers. Since movement from one category to another in search of employment is frequent and unpredicted, it is difficult to class them separately. The difference between owner cultivators and unskilled agricultural labourers is significant therefore it has been maintained throughout the study.

(c) Owner cultivators and unskilled labourers (S0) - Those families who cannot rely completely upon their land for livelihood and work as unskilled labourers to supplement their income are classed in this category.

(d) Unskilled labourers and owner cultivators (S0) - Those families who

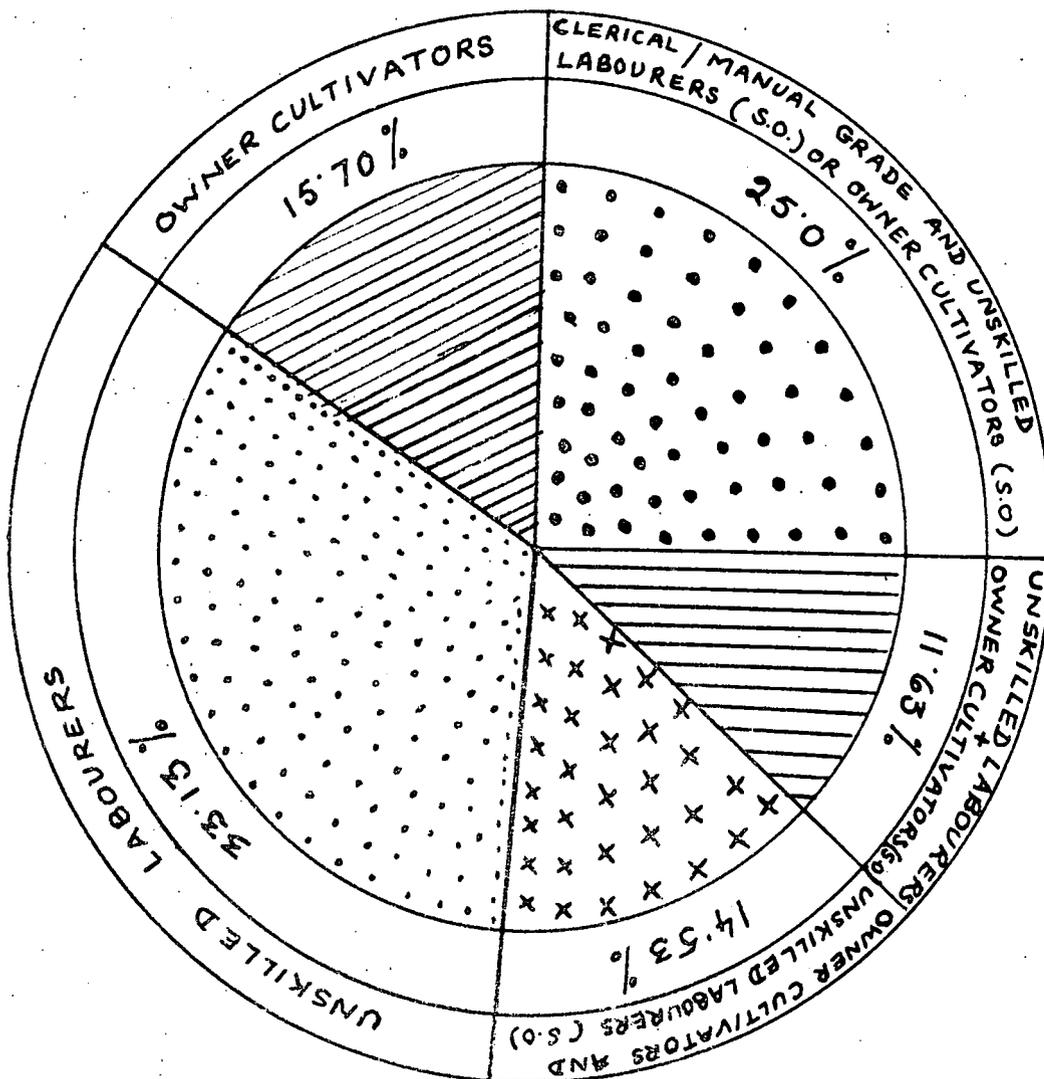


Figure 3: Occupational Distribution of the Population

own a small patch of land which supplies less than half of the total requirements of the family and depend upon unskilled labour for the major share are classed in this category.

(e) Employed in Clerical/Manual Grade and dependent upon any of the above four categories for supplementary income - Includes a wide range of occupations such as Chaprasis (orderly), musicians and school teachers. The main source of income is from their employment. The primary breadwinner is usually employed in the government service or the service of the local bodies or its subordinate offices. The other members of the family either cultivate a small patch of land or work as unskilled labourers on farms or on building sites.

Occupational Class	% of families	Mean Age at Marriage	Mean Age at Effective Marriage
1. Owner cultivators	15.70	8.42	14.50
2. Unskilled labourers	33.13	10.30	14.65
3. Owner cultivators and unskilled labourers (S0)	14.53	8.62	14.22
4. Unskilled labourers and owner cultivators (S0)	11.63	8.68	14.32
5. Clerical or Manual Grade and unskilled labourers (S0) or owner cultivators (S0)	25.00	9.39	14.65

Table 6: Distribution of Pasi respondents by occupation, age at marriage and age at effective marriage

The figures indicate that agriculture produces conditions for early marriage and families depending upon their own farm marry off their daughters almost two years before those engaged in unskilled work. The families that rely on a combination of these occupations for livelihood fall between these two extremes.

The Table further shows that a delay in the age at marriage does not postpone the age at effective marriage by the same proportion. Although

a difference of almost two years is found between the two extremes in the age at marriage, the corresponding difference in the age at effective marriage is only .43 years.

The conditions associated with the life-style of the unskilled labourers appear to be more favourable to early Gauna. The prevalence of nuclear families and the economic necessity for the girls to work outside are the two main characteristics associated with this occupational group. These characteristics not only provide opportunities for the girls to develop the maturity required for Gauna earlier, they also motivate parents to arrange an early Gauna for their daughters. Parents desire an early Gauna on two grounds - (1) because they cannot impose all the customary restrictions on their daughters, they are afraid of criticism, (2) their daughters are more exposed to temptation and moral corruption because of the absence of these restrictions. An early Gauna relieves them of their responsibility. The only factor that delays Gauna among this occupational class is the lack of resources to perform the ceremony. The same motives apply to the third and fourth occupational groups listed in Table 6, but since they have a steady income from their land, the age at effective marriage is lowest among them.

Cohort	Average age at effective marriage	
	Part of Lucknow	Uttar Pradesh Rural Population (From Census 1961)
married in Jan. 1971	16.66	-
between 1966-70	15.28	-
between 1961-65	14.72	-
between 1956-60	14.62	16.87
between 1951-55	14.13	16.10
between 1946-50	13.89	16.08
between 1941-45	10.80	15.88
between 1931-40	-	15.96
between 1921-30	-	15.90
before 1921	-	15.25

Table 7: Increasing Female Age at Marriage

The data in Table 7 suggest the trend towards higher age at first effective marriage. Marriages that were consummated 30-35 years ago show a much lower age and the age steadily rises for those consummated in the last two years. Although not much directly comparable data for age at effective marriage is available, an effort has been made here to see the rate of increase among the Pasi of Lucknow in the context of the total Uttar Pradesh population. The data for the latter was obtained from the report of the National Sample Survey 17th round, conducted during the period September 1961 - July 1962, and is quoted from Zodgekar and Chidambaram (1969).

Since the present study covered only women in their reproductive years, i.e. up to 45, women whose marriages were consummated before 1941 were excluded from this analysis. Similarly women whose marriages were broken without consummation and who subsequently remarried were also not included, because a late age at consummation due to first dissolution would bias the result. Women whose marriages had broken down after cohabitation were included.

Although both data suggest a similar trend, the rate of increase is much higher among Pasi. Between 1940 and 1972, an average increase of 6.86 years is recorded for the rural population of Uttar Pradesh but the average age at first consummation for Pasi women in 1971 was less than that for the entire rural Uttar Pradesh population in 1960.

The past two decades have seen a slow although constant rise in the female age at marriage in India. Several researchers (Das, 1969; Chandrasekhar, 1967) have estimated a reduction in the birth rate ranging from 10 - 30% due to this rise in the age at marriage. As a result of this, a bill for raising the age of marriage for girls from 15 to 20 years was introduced in the winter session of the Parliament in 1967, but was defeated. Dr. S. Chandrasekhar (1967), in the capacity of the Union

Minister of Health and Family Planning, appealed to the public as follows: "the postponement of all future marriages in our country by two years will certainly result in the lowering of our total fertility. It is therefore desirable that we should raise the age of marriage for our girls from the present 15 to 20 years". He estimated this would result in a decrease of 25-30%.

R. Lesthaeghe (1970) developed a model incorporating independent nuptiality and marital fertility for North Africans and Middle East populations and extended this analysis to the South Asian population. He reached the conclusion that "nuptiality changes can produce the same effect on birth rates as changes in marital fertility; moreover, their effect during transition become apparent sooner since they increase the mean length of generations". He further added "an overall fertility reduction initiated by decreasing marital fertility alone would fall considerably short of the target in several developing nations, i.e. a reduction of the growth rate to 1.5% cannot be realized without a change in nuptiality as well".

Coale and Tye (1961) suggest that in high fertility populations, age at marriage can account for up to 20% difference in fertility. They compare Malaysian and Chinese populations, where a difference of 2.7 years is found in the peak age of fertility and conclude that by postponing Malaysian nuptials an average of 2.7 years, a reduction of 10% population can be obtained. Coale and Tye's scheme, when applied to the Indian population, indicates that "if the Indian fertility pattern were to imitate that of the Chinese of Singapore (with her custom of late marriage) then there would be a drop of 8% in fertility.

The Age of Consent in India

The first bill regarding the minimum age at marriage for girls was introduced in 1927 by Mr. Harbilas Sarda in the Legislative Assembly of

India. The Bill, after being duly debated was referred to a Select Committee. The committee widened its scope and it was passed in 1929 and came into effect in 1930 as the Sarda Act. This Act declared that child marriages, i.e. male under 18 and female under 14, were punishable offences, although the marriage itself once performed was not declared void. In 1955, the passage of the Hindu Marriage Act (part of the Hindu Code Bill) increased the age of consent in the case of females to 15.

Pasi, like any other rural community in India, are governed by their own customary laws which emerge from the social forces from which the impetus to family living is derived. Therefore the laws do not deviate much from the communal opinion. Although the Hindu Marriage Act has made it an offence to marry a girl under 15 years, our data, about 40 years after the first legislation, shows that about 50% of all marriages of girls were contracted before 15 years of age and none of the cases were brought before the courts. 69% of women of our sample were not even aware of this law. Our figures suggest that neither is this law enforced strictly on the rural population nor do people have any knowledge of it. The possible reasons for not prosecuting brides and grooms and their parents could be:-

1. Difficulty in locating people in villages due to lack of transport, anonymity of existence of the poor labourers and their uncertain working hours and places.
2. Difficulty in charging the offenders due to absence of evidence of the date of birth to verify the age at marriage. Although the law makes registration of birth compulsory, in the villages it is not always done. The birth of a boy has a greater chance of being registered and noticed but that of a daughter goes more often unregistered. Similarly a written document to verify the date of a marriage is also not available.

Relationship between the Age at Effective Marriage and Mean Waiting Time for the First Birth

Since fecundity varies according to age, i.e. early and later reproductive years being less fertile ones, the question of whether a delay in the age at marriage would make any significant contribution in restricting the growth rate is studied by several demographers and social scientists. Zodgekar and Chidambaram (1969) conclude that "... an increase of 2 or 3 years in the present age at effective marriage among the Indian women cannot be expected to delay the onset of child bearing and thereby reduce the actual reproductive period. On the other hand, not only is there no evidence to indicate any increase in the age at first birth but the possibility of quickening the onset of child bearing cannot be ruled out in the present Indian setting."

Age at Effective Marriage	Mean Age at birth of 1st child	Waiting Mean Time for 1st birth
14 years or less	19.52	5.62 years
15 to 16 years	19.67	3.87 years
17 or over	19.50	2.00 years

Table 8: Relationship between age at effective marriage and mean waiting time for first birth

The choice of age categories is based upon two factors:-

1. Although the age span for effective marriage is 13-18 years, about 43% consummate marriage between 14-15 years of age. Therefore the cases towards the end of the range are less and not sufficient for reliable independent calculations.
2. In the absence of a reliable record of age, any further breakdown would present inconclusive results. The present data does not supply sufficient cases of first consummation beyond 17 years because of the child marriage custom, therefore further analysis is not possible.

The table reveals that those who consummate marriage at younger ages wait for much longer to have their first child than those who consummate late. It also shows that despite the difference in the age at effective marriage, child bearing starts in all three age groups after 19 years of age. Therefore it appears that an increase of one or two years on the present age at effective marriage will not postpone child bearing enough to have any significant impact upon the total number of children born to the Pasi women. The present sample does not provide any information about the effect of raising the age of effective marriage beyond 17 years. The postponement of marriage and consummation and their effect on the total population growth through the intervening variables such as female employment and education is dealt with separately.

Marital Dissolution and Second Union among the Pasi of Lucknow

Marital Dissolution

W. J. Goode (1961) defines marital dissolution as a "break up of a marital union, the dissolution or fracture of a structure of social roles when one or more members fail to perform adequately their role obligations."

In the extended network of role-relationships in all societies it is natural that every individual is under pressure to conform to the expectations of the other members. This constant pressure to fulfil one's role-obligation leads to some dissatisfaction and tension. Since this problem is innate in every group situation, it is essential that if a marital system is to continue functioning properly a mechanism must exist to reduce interpersonal hostilities to a minimum. If a society produces conditions in which interpersonal hostilities between a couple can lead to fraction, it also allows and prepares its members to survive if a marital unit breaks up. If no such alternatives to marriage are open and permitted, society takes more rigorous measures to prevent the

conflict developing between the couple in the first place.

Among higher castes, widow remarriage or divorce is socially prohibited, therefore a more adequate mechanism to prevent marital disruption exists. If marriage relationships are strained the system does not provide a solution. Mysterious disappearances of unsatisfied wives, suicide or murder are only heard among higher castes and could well be explained by the inability of their social system to cope with such problems.

A marital system, like other social systems, is a relational entity and not a substantive one. Therefore the problems which originate from it are also not absolute or independent. In order to perceive the phenomenon of marital dissolution with reference to its situation and context, one has to examine not only the individual marital unit but the entire social structure of the Pasi which is responsible for the particular behaviour of its members. A detailed description of the Pasi family system is given in the next chapter.

Since the reasons for interpersonal tension vary among societies, the solutions for suppressing tensions are also unique for every society. Here I discuss briefly how Pasi society eliminates some of the causes of marital tension and thus restricts the rate of marital dissolution.

It is believed that marriages for companionship have much greater reasons for dissatisfaction. The greater the mutual dependence between the couple, the higher are the expectations from each other. Rural Indian societies take care to restrain marital tension in two ways -

- (a) by reducing the level of expectations from the husband and wife and
- (b) by providing a kinship network that dominates and mediates in all aspects of family life. Unlike the West where marriage is the concern of the bride and groom, among Pasi, parents and the kinfolk consider it their duty to choose a partner for their children. There is not much

ground for having great expectations or companionship feeling from a partner who has married a particular person only in obedience to her parents or because there was nothing else to do.

It is evident from our data that the traditional rule of marriage can carry decisive weight in the type of relationships it establishes between the couple. The consanguineous kin in the Pasi family dominate over the young couple and closeness and friction that is expected in marriage is partly shared with the kinfolk.

The socialization of girls also helps to eliminate some of the causes of marital tension. A girl tends to view marriage as an act of fate, the consequences of which are inevitable. She is taught to accept the situation as such. Cruelty and brutality are a part of married life among the Pasi of Lucknow, therefore the level of endurance among females is amazingly high in this respect. Violence and cruelty are attributes of manliness, so is independence of spirit and an appetite for a variety of women, and girls, as potential brides, are taught to tolerate these for as long as possible. Since marriages are not based on romantic attachments, adultery by men is not usually taken very seriously, only when it is an economic strain on the family does it become a reasonable ground for separation. The other reasons for separation among the Pasi were infertility, inability to get along with a mother-in-law or inability to cope with household chores.

The Problem of Marital Dissolution in its Social Context

Once formed, Pasi marriages dissolve only through widowhood or separation. Since there are no socio-economic differentials in widowhood, and no taboo on the second unions of Pasi widows, for the present analysis widowhood and separation are treated together under marital dissolution.

Although separation is not considered ideal in any society, the stigma attached to separated people varies among communities and to a

great extent influences separation decisions. Pasi marriage is based on practical necessities of life such as food, shelter, clothing and children and if these basic needs are not met, separation becomes a necessity, not a choice. Whenever there is dissension between husband and wife, the husband does not find it difficult to enforce separation. This he does merely by denying her the basic essentials of life. There is a limit to this and sooner or later she returns to her parents to exist. Since separation is a necessity in such circumstances, society does not condemn the idea of separation. In fact individuals in such situations receive every help from their kinfolk to dissolve the marriage. The parents of the woman consider it their duty to support and maintain their daughter until she goes with another man and some female relative of the separated man is always willing to move in to look after him. In the following paragraphs I shall discuss the role of the family and kinfolk in marital break-ups and how and why Pasi individuals surrender their autonomy to the wishes of the kinfolk and abide by their decisions.

To some extent in all societies the interpersonal decisions are influenced by kin but among the Pasi, the in-laws hold a dominance over the married girl which takes no regard for her life with her husband. If the in-laws are not satisfied with the work contribution made by her they will decide she must leave. This can well be done without any reference to the girl's husband and because both husband and wife are dependent upon the boy's parents they must accept the total judgment of the success or failure of the union.

The position of a young widow is no better. Although all Pasi agree that a widow's place is ideally with her husband's family, in reality it is very seldom true. The majority of the widows eventually decide to form another union. Here again, personal interests of the family members dominate and influence her decision regarding second union.

Young widows who wish to continue the family name are encouraged or sometimes compelled by their in-laws to form another union. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, the shortage of money does not allow anyone to feed an extra mouth. Secondly, it is difficult for the family to impose the restrictions that are prescribed for young widows, for example, staying at home, not talking to men, not taking part in festivities, etc. Thirdly, a young widow is a constant temptation for other male members of the family, therefore to avoid the possibilities of illicit sexual relations the family tries its best to encourage the widow to leave their home. Lastly, but most important, is to retrieve her share in the family property, which a widow must forfeit if she decides to have another union.

The in-laws try by all means to persuade her to live with another man. The constant fault-finding, foul language, cruelty, starvation and gossip contrive to drive out all but the most determined ones.

Separated women invariably stay with their parents until another union is arranged. Consensual union is essential particularly for the young and childless women because parents are unable to provide security forever. Besides, they too are afraid of gossip and slander. In these circumstances finding another suitable match for the girl seems the most sensible and practical solution.

The foregoing description of the situation stresses the fact that in a small organized community, large and extended kinship and family group, the individual is under great pressure from outside to conform to the wishes of his relatives. Whenever personal interests clash with group interests, pressure from kinfolk mounts up against the individual and personal interests are always sacrificed for the kin.

In a caste community coercion is great on the individual because of economic, social, religious and moral dependence over other members.

Since the majority of Pasis live on subsistence level, borrowing and lending grain, money, agricultural equipment and labour is unavoidable. On religious and social occasions participation of all kin members is required. Therefore, if a person is to survive, cordial relations with all members of the community must be maintained.

Pasi society not only allows separation it also takes care of separation adjustments should that be necessary. Firstly, it saves them the heartbreak that usually follows separation by providing family organization and pattern of arranged marriages in which emotional ties between husband and wife are not emphasized. Secondly, since separation is granted only if a partner fails to fulfil his obligations, i.e. provide the essentials of life, the grounds for separation are mostly unequivocal, the procedure followed by Caste Panchayat is simple and the decision is obvious to both parties. It saves them the anxiety that is bound to result prior to any decision.

Second Union among the Pasis of Lucknow

The second union among Pasis is termed locally as 'Odhari Ana', meaning 'brought under cover'. The term discloses the difference between proper marriage and the second union. Agarwal (1972) when discussing the ceremony among the Hindus of Malwa came to the conclusion that " 'natra' (second union) is not a remarriage, rather it is a social alliance without breaking the Hindu religious code which prohibits remarriage of Hindu women." However, he overlooked the fact that in certain circumstances a proper remarriage can actually take place among all lower caste Hindus.

The term 'Odhari ana' represents an occasion of indifference, secrecy or substitution in contrast to marriage which represents joy, pomp and show and public recognition. Mathur (1967) and Mayer (1960) have discussed this ceremony among other rural Indians and Leach (1961) has

described this kind of alliance among Pul Eliya villagers. Among Pasi... the distinction between remarriage and second union is quite clear. A man always and a woman in certain circumstances can get remarried with full religious ceremonies. In other circumstances she is not allowed to remarry but she is free to have a consensual union.

Marriage versus Consensual Union

This study reveals the advantageous position of a man in the matrimonial market. A separated man can draw a partner from the unmarried group and wed her with full religious ceremony, whereas a woman whose marriage has been consummated is never allowed again to have a religious wedding. In a Hindu marriage ceremony, husband and wife take seven vows of union in front of the sacred fire but if a Pasi bachelor is marrying a woman who already has had a previous consummated marriage, only one vow will be taken. This signifies a comparatively lower status of the woman. However, in the case of unconsummated marriages, both sexes are entitled to have a full religious wedding.

There are no rituals to mark the consensual unions. The suitor arrives at the girl's village with his close relatives, where after taking a simple verbal consent from the suitor a feast is given to the fraternity and the bride departs with her partner. After returning to his village the man also gives a feast to all members of his caste to declare the union.

The difference between the status of women with regard to religious marriage and consensual union is not at all obvious in day-to-day relationships. Although it is more respectable to be married, interpersonal relationship between the couple is not affected by the type of union. In fact according to some informants there is more affectionate relationship between the two partners in consensual union.

However, there is a clear distinction in the legal status of the two

women. If a consensual union breaks, a woman cannot claim maintenance for herself. There is no formal declaration of the break-up and no reason for the separation is required by law. It is the decision of the two partners and society takes no action to mediate and salvage the union. In the case of a legally wedded wife, formal procedure for separation is followed which must be done through the Caste Panchayat. Every effort is made by the Caste Panchayat for reconciliation and only when it fails is the separation granted. But the interests of the family are safeguarded after separation. Customary Pasi law does not differentiate between separation and divorce. Divorce can only be obtained through the courts.

The procedure of the Caste Panchayat is quite clear. In separation cases, the Caste Panchayat issues an injunction against the husband to maintain his wife after separation. If he does not, the Caste Panchayat has no power to take action against him. The wife has recourse to the court where an order can be made against the husband to support his separated wife. But this is very seldom effective because the man earns too little for this to be done. Pasi society does not make any distinction between the legal status of children born in consensual union and those born in matrimony. The unilineal descent structure of the Pasi endows the father with certain culturally defined rights over his children. If a marriage or consensual union breaks up, the custody of the children is always offered to the father and the children, whether they stay with the father or not, have a share in his property.

It is important to note here that Pasi society considers marriage as an ideal form of union, but at the same time it accepts consensual union as a practical answer to a broken marriage. When a man brings a woman to live with him, he has to give a feast to the community to get a social approval of their relationship. In short it can be said that

consensual unions have social recognition but they are not legally binding. Religious marriage, on the other hand, has social and legal sanctions and is considered by the community as ideal.

Consensual unions are nevertheless a recognized form of the institution of marriage among the Pasi. Unlike the lower class in Jamaica (Stycas and Back, 1964) where unmarried women can also live in consensual unions, virgin Pasi girls are invariably married in infancy or late childhood and resort to consensual union only after the first marriage breaks up. Jamaicans in consensual unions have a right and choice of a religious wedding, whereas no such choice exists for Pasi women who have had a previous consummated marriage.

Demographic Consequences of Family Disorganization

Family disorganization has a significant effect upon the birth rate. Nag (1962) has summarized the ways in which separation affects fertility especially in non-industrial societies. The basic factor is the complete absence of coitus among partners who are otherwise fecund. An estimate of the loss of the reproductive period in a society can be made by -

- (a) frequency of separation, (b) age of partners at the time of separation,
- (c) frequency of remarriage, and (d) the time interval between separation and remarriage.

Moni Nag (1962) assumes that "the average rate of remarriage and average interval between separation and remarriage do not vary considerably among the societies, therefore, the proportion of married females and males who are separated at a particular time can be used as indices of the frequency of separation." The societies that have 20% or more of their members of all ages separated at least once are classified high on his scale. The corresponding figure from present data is 22.8%. But 29.82% of the total women of our sample were in a consensual union at the time of data collection.

All separated women of the fertile age-group go into sexual union again. For only 29% of the total separated women the partners were drawn from the unmarried group. The rest had a different combination from the 'separated group'. Only in 12 cases separated or widowed women went into union with an unmarried man and in 18 cases it was the reverse. Only one widower had his younger sister-in-law for his marital partner.

Since in the Pasi sample, there were only seven separated women without a partner, and negotiations for the second union for all of them were in progress, we can safely assume that almost all women who are separated get into another union. Therefore, for the present purposes, I have calculated 'consensual union rate' to study the influence of marital break-up upon the birth rate. The term 'remarriage' is avoided throughout the study because none of the separated women actually 'married' again in religious terms. Similarly, the term 'second union' is misleading because all unions were not second unions, some were third or fourth unions.

Socio-Economic Differentials in Consensual Union Rate Class and Consensual Union Rate

W. J. Goode (1967) in his cross-cultural analysis of divorce rates has concluded that an inverse relationship between class and divorce rate exists in all societies and the Indian pattern supports his hypothesis. Divorce has been practically impossible for Brahmins until 1955. On the other hand the lower castes had a long history of divorce practice.

The socio-economic status of a family in rural areas roughly corresponds with the amount of their land holding and the greater the land holding, the greater is the binding force in marital union and stability in marriage. As the grounds for separation are mainly economic, the agricultural families rule out at least one possible ground for separation. Also, women from agricultural families would lose the

security and prestige that is associated with agriculture and the chances of finding another match in an equally well-off agricultural family are very remote due to an early entry into marriage and low separation rate among farming families. Both of these factors restrict the possibility of getting a 'separated' partner. On the other hand manual or agricultural labourers have very little to lose because separated partners are easily available and also they stand a chance of gaining economic security by entering into another union. The following table shows the relationship between family occupation and consensual union rate.

Occupational Category	Consensual Union Rate (per thousand)
1. Owner Cultivator	142.8
2. Unskilled Labourer	323.5
3. Owner Cultivator and Unskilled Labourer (SO)	304.3
4. Unskilled Labourer and Owner Cultivator (SO)	341.3
5. Clerical/Manual Grade Worker and Unskilled Labourer (SO) or Owner Cultivator (SO)	337.1
For All Occupational Categories	285.7/1000

Table 9: Consensual Union Rate by Family Occupation

The table shows that socio-economic conditions associated with agriculture create greater stability in marriage and the consensual union rate is higher among the unskilled labourers. An unexpectedly high consensual rate shown by the fifth category is mainly due to the discrepancy in the couple's outlook and expectations from each other. Although working in the city widened the man's horizon, his wife was still backward, which made the gap between the couple too wide to sustain the marital tension and preserve the marital unit.

A comparatively high consensual union rate for this category can also be explained by the fact that many families of this occupational

group relied upon unskilled labour to supplement their income, therefore the factors such as poverty, low age at marriage, illiteracy, etc. that contributed to a high consensual union rate of the second occupational group have also influenced this occupational category.

Literacy and Consensual Union Rate

Educational Status	Total no. of cases	No. of Consensual Unions	Consensual Union Rate/1000
Both illiterate	223	76	340.8
At least one literate	113	26	230.1
Total	336	102	285.7/1000

Table 10: Consensual Union Rate by Literacy/Illiteracy of the Couple

Table 10 shows a positive relationship between illiteracy and consensual union rate. Various writers have established relationship between educational level and marital instability. Since in our sample there are only four graduates and six men of High School or equivalent standard, the insufficiency of data does not allow us to develop this relationship any further.

Consensual Union Rate according to Rural/Urban Residence

Area of Residence	Consensual Union Rate/1000
1. Rural Communities	324.0
2. Semi-rural	255.3
3. Sub-urban	250.0

Table 11: Consensual Union Rate by Area of Residence

The distinction between rural and urban subculture is one of the most familiar conceptual frameworks in Anthropology and is dealt with under various labels. Emile Durkheim's (1893) mechanical versus organic

solidarity, McIver's (1937) culture versus civilization, Robert Redfield's (1956) folk versus urban society, Weber's (1954) traditional versus rational authority - all are variations of the same theme and illustrate these two polar types. The three villages of Barauli, Mawaiya and Kalli Pachim are classified under rural community because they are small, isolated, mostly non-literate communities and are predominantly ruled by norms that arise from within and are least impressed by outside influence. Therefore modern attitudes and changes filter through at a much slower rate and face many obstacles. Life-style is conventionalized and centred around and dominated by family and kinship group. Individuality is discouraged. The economy is of subsistence level and depends upon manual labour and primitive technology.

The term semi-rural is used for Kharika because it is partly agricultural and partly depends upon the city for its livelihood. Its proximity to Telibagh makes communication with the city very easy. Corporation and private buses and other transport are freely available. Educational facilities up to university level are within a daily travelling distance. There is an Intermediate College at Telibagh and a University in Lucknow. Direct contacts with the city bring better agricultural facilities and techniques. Agriculture is not purely a status symbol but also a means to acquire cash for other necessities of life. Self-identity with the caste-group is strong. The inhabitants of this village are actively engaged in social reform movements.

The suburban community shows the effect of face-to-face contact with the city. All inhabitants of Martinpurva working in Lucknow are employed either in white collar jobs or in manual occupations. Almost all houses are made of brick and there is an electric supply to the village. The bonds of kinship and folk-tradition are much weaker, the individual is under lesser coercion from society and personal interests take precedence over group interests. The signs of rationalization and

an effort to meet practical ends by non-mythical means are evident. Segregation between the castes is not as rigid as in semi-rural or rural areas. Pasi can often be seen going to work with high caste men but food restrictions between the castes are still strictly maintained.

The unmistakable difference in the consensual union rate between the three types of communities is due to the factors that are associated with their particular way of life. Most of the social factors considered unfavourable to marital stability are found in the rural communities under study. Therefore they show the highest consensual union rate.

Consensual Union Rate according to Age at First Marriage

The figures show that the largest proportion of second union females (31.4%) were first married between 5-7 years of age and the maximum number of once-marrieds went into marital union between 8-11 years of age, i.e. 3-4 years later than the separated females. The average age at first marriage for women who stayed in their first union is 9.46 years and for women who broke off later was 6.47 years. Glick's data (1957) from the American population shows a difference of two years between the ages at first marriage of those with and without broken marriage. Our result is consistent with the hypothesis that marriages contracted at younger ages have a greater chance of dissolution than those at mature ages.

Marital Status	Age at First Marriage				
	under 5	5-7 years	8-11 yrs.	12-15 yrs.	16 and over
Consensual Union	28.6%	35.7%	26.2%	9.09%	-
Once Married	12.8%	25.4%	30.5%	18.5%	12.7%

Table 12: Consensual Union Rate according to Age at First Marriage

A study of interquartile range for once marrieds and separated women

bears further testimony to the greater instability of marriages that are performed at younger ages. In the case of separated women the age range at first marriage for the central half of the cases was 4-8 years whereas that for once marrieds was 6-13 years, proving once again that for the majority of second unions, entry in matrimony was at a younger age and within a shorter span of time than those whose marriages were intact.

Another impressive finding is that 444/1000 of all marriages that were contracted below 5 years of age resulted in dissolution. Second union rate for 5-7 years age group was 333, for 8-11 years age group it was 234 and for 12-15 it was 154/1000.

The reasons for the higher dissolution rate for marriages contracted under 5 years of age are obviously found outside the realm of husband-wife relationship. A great proportion of these marriages in fact dissolve even before Gauna. They dissolve because of two main reasons:-

- (a) Because of the high child mortality and morbidity rate.
- (b) Because of the disparity in the status of the two families.

Since child mortality rate is highest in this age group, the proportion of marriages that are dissolved by the death of one partner is also high. The number of marriages which broke up because of physical deformities and abnormalities due to contact with diseases such as polio, smallpox, etc., also contribute to the high separation rate.

As the decisions regarding the marriages of children are based more upon the family situation of the other party and less upon the marriage partner, if, in the intervening years, the socio-economic status of either party changes, parents also reconsider their decision regarding the consummation of the marriage. They may refuse to send their daughter to her husband. Similarly, the groom's parents may decide not to 'invite' the bride to join her husband and inform her parents that they wish to

dissolve the marriage. Economic insecurity is the most frequently mentioned reason for separation among the Pasi of Lucknow. Others include alcoholism, drug addiction, cruelty, impotency and the inability to cope with family responsibilities.

Consensual Union Rate according to Age at Consummation

Age at consummation also has important bearing on separation or second union rate. Although age range for consummation is comparatively narrower, it influences the separation rate in the same pattern as age at marriage.

In the present sample of 336 women, 102 were in a union in which both partners had at least one previous marriage. In 34 cases only one partner had another union. Out of these 34 cases, 18 were females and 16 were males. If we restrict our analysis only to women with consensual union, we are left with 84 cases. The calculations for our present purpose are based on 70 cases because 14 marriages out of the original 84 broke even without consummation.

Marital Status	Age at First Consummation		
	under 15 yrs.	15-16 yrs.	16+ yrs.
Once Marrieds	25.0%	60.0%	15.0%
Consensual Unions	42.9%	54.3%	2.8%

Table 13: Consensual Union Rate according to Age at First Consummation

Table 13 shows the frequency distribution for once-marrieds and for those who had more than one union according to age at consummation. It follows a definite pattern. In the central 15-16 years age group the difference between the two categories is minimum but for the other two age groups the difference is striking. Successful marriages were consummated five times more in the 16+ age group than the marriages that dissolved later on. Unsuccessful marriages were consummated 1.72 times

more in the under 15 years age group than were stable marriages.

The influence of early marriage on fertility can be seen at two levels:

- (1) The socio-economic forces of the society that practice child marriage are as a rule 'family oriented' and give little importance to individual pursuits, education, career and freedom that goes with the small family norms and provide great motivation for large families.
- (2) The figures show that other factors being equal early marriages have a greater possibility of early consummation and such marriages are potentially at greater risk of being dissolved either by widowhood or separation. Dissolution affects fertility of individuals and society in two directions - (a) Dissolution on grounds of infertility, constant absence from home and physical illness that may impede normal sexual activity would remove all infertile elements from the population and remarriage would allow such persons to find other partners and reproduce. Consequently the fertility of society would be higher. It is difficult to estimate precisely the loss in reproduction due to infertile unions because the social stigma attached to infertility among Pasi does not allow people to talk about it, therefore the information available on this subject is unreliable and quantitatively insufficient for any detailed analysis. (b) Marital dissolution results in direct loss of the reproductive period and it depends upon the age at dissolution, chances of remarriage and the gap between two permanent unions. Among the Pasi of Lucknow the chances of second union after separation are almost certain. Therefore only two factors remain for calculating the loss due to dissolution - the age at dissolution and the gap between two unions. These two factors were found to be related. Average age gap between two marital unions for those whose marriages dissolved before they were 14 years of age was 2.0 years, between 14-18 it was

3.5 years, between 19-25 it was 3.00 years, and over 26 years it was 2.5 years.

The time lost due to separation was calculated for all 70 cases individually and as a group the loss amounted to 19.5% of their total reproductive time since their first consummation until the time of the interview. If we include once married females also the reproductive time loss for the Pasi community as a whole was only 4.79%.

Of the separated females about one-third (34.3%) lost between 10-20% of their reproductive time between two marriages, nearly one-fourth (22.9%) lost over 40% and one-fourth (22.8%) lost between 20-40% of their reproductive time since first consummation without a mate. The remaining one-fourth lost less than 10%.

Judith Blake's (1961) method for calculating reproductive loss was followed for the present calculations with some modifications to suit the sample. Instead of using potential pregnancy to equate fertility loss, the potential number of live births lost were used. In other words Blake based her calculations on the number of pregnancies that would have happened if the women had a permanent union whereas for the present study the number of living children that would have been born was calculated. This modification was essential because of the unreliability of data on pregnancies and child mortality. Results based on this would have shown a great disparity between actual fertility and calculated fertility of the Pasi. Child mortality, as reported by the respondents is either exaggerated intentionally since child bearing exalts womanhood or it was not deemed important because of the time lapse since the children's death.

The calculations show that in 19.5% of their lost time the separated women would have produced another 24.4% of their present living children. For the entire group, i.e. including once marrieds, the expected number of live children born would have been 7.1% more than the present number.

The above calculations are only intended to provide a very rough estimate of the effect of marital disorganization on fertility. They do not provide an accurate picture because - (a) Fecundity of a woman varies according to age. They are more fecund at younger ages and less at later years of their reproductive time. This disparity in fecundity was not considered in calculating the time loss. Since only 5.7% of the total women were over 26 years of age at the time of the first marital dissolution, the time lost without a mate was more fecund than their actual fertility behaviour in later life, upon which the calculations are based. (b) The data regarding the age at successive unions is only reliable in years. A few months difference in a short span of time between non-unions can fluctuate the result to a considerable extent.

FAMILY AND FERTILITY

The amount of literature and diverse approaches used to study the family in fertility research give a fair idea of its significance, scope and complexity. The importance of family as a determinant of fertility lies in the fact that the family forms the basic instrumental foundation of the larger social structure. The importance of the family is increased manifold in the rural societies because it overlaps the economic unit, takes over the educational system and maintains ethic and moral order. Their judicial system, i.e. the Caste Panchayat holds the family responsible for the digressive behaviour of any of its members. Therefore the family is the basic institution and the other institutions like marriage, kinship, and the economic and judicial systems seek power and support from it.

The importance of family in fertility research lies in the fact that (a) the family is the reproductive unit and the decisions regarding reproduction are made within the unit. (b) It provides educational services including the services regarding family planning. (c) Through socialization within the family one learns role relations, expectations, ideals, values and norms for different sexes which are relevant to fertility behaviour. (d) Through the family, religion and other institutions reinforce ideas regarding family size, continuity of lineage, etc. which have important bearing on the fertility behaviour of the people.

Since the family is the decision-making unit, it influences decisions regarding family planning too. It influences such decisions by providing conditions and motivations for or against making such decisions. Perceived in terms of fertility behaviour, unless a decision is taken to prevent the birth it would ordinarily result from physical union. As decision-making in the field of fertility control requires a deliberate

and conscious action, unless the motivation is there to plan the family, and power and means are available to the couple to take decisions, uncontrolled fertility would result.

Knowing that only 1.7% of Pasi women are using or have used in the past any scientific means of birth control, I will now consider why they fail to take a decision to limit the family, whether they consider the issue of family planning salient, or whether they would like to take a decision, but due to certain reasons fail to do so, or whether they do not definitely want to limit their family.

Although the family as a decision-making unit is responsible for acceptance or rejection of family planning and other related issues, there are structural features, functional aspects, interpersonal relations, intra-familial patterns of authority, etc. that are responsible for cultivating the attitudes and desire for children. The decision regarding the acceptance or rejection of family planning is actually governed by these attitudes and desires.

There seem to be three ways in which the family system can affect decision-making regarding the fertility of its members:

- (1) By facilitating or producing obstacles to conditions for effective fertility control.
- (2) By creating grounds for favouring or discouraging the desire for many children.
- (3) By cultivating religious and cultural ideals regarding fertility and family continuity norms which may motivate early and universal marriage and reproduction.

The Family and Fertility Control

While there are several ways in which social organizational characteristics can facilitate or impede adoption of family planning, I discuss here only the extent to which the family system implements



The Family Planning Poster in Lucknow. The same poster is also displayed in Hindi.

the development and sharing of goals and knowledge which its members may possess individually. Transmission of family planning knowledge depends upon the degree to which sexes are segregated both outside and within the family, the pattern of dominance in the household, the norms concerning cross-sex discussion of intimate topics and the articulation of the family with other institutions.

There is evidence to believe that the lag between facilities available and the effective adoption of birth control practices, may be to a large extent due to the absence of a family organization conducive to effective family planning. The facilities are present and at least some women (19.3%) show favourable attitudes to family planning, i.e. they would not like to have any more children and have no genuine objection to contraception, only 1.7% have ever used it. The failure to use contraception in these cases suggests that there are either social and institutional obstacles or lack of knowledge and encouragement to use such methods.

Any type of birth control requires information regarding family planning methods. Although the Government has produced unlimited literature, posters, radio talks, slogans painted on the walls, propaganda through film shows and personal contacts, tracing the sources of contraceptive information reveals the significance of the family system in promoting or retarding the transmission of family planning information.

The possible gain from published literature regarding family planning can be estimated when only 5.7% of the total adult population is literate and 4.8% of the total Pasi women are literate. Knowing the limited nature and extent of communication between the couple, even if we assume that contraceptive information is available to all literate adults, it is most unlikely that it will be discussed between the couple.

Broadcasting could have been the solution to the problem of illiteracy if only people could have afforded to have a radio. Unfortunately none of the Pasi families in rural areas under study had a radio. I was told that a Chamar in the village of Barauli had a radio, but due to the geographical and social distance Pasi could not avail themselves of it. In semi-rural Kharika a graduate Pasi had a radio which he used for his own pleasure but the women knew neither the timing nor the channel on which such programmes were transmitted nor did they have any idea how to locate the station.

Transmission of information through private, personal communication between relatives, friends and neighbours is usually biased and there is also a taboo on the cross-sex discussion of intimate topics. This is especially maintained between husband and wife and of the couples in our sample 91.1% did not communicate with their partners regarding birth control. The consequences of this lack of communication are at least two-fold. Firstly, in the absence of effective communication each partner expects from the other stereotyped behaviour. Secondly, due to the lack of communication, knowledge does not reach the potential users so its adoption is impossible. Much of the information and positive attitude possessed by the Pasi individually fail to affect behaviour because it is not discussed jointly. Moreover, open discussion could provide an opportunity to learn each others reaction towards family planning and favourable attitudes of some members may motivate and remove the fear of birth control.

In extended and joint families young wives are confined to the household and are not permitted to talk to strangers. The head of the household is usually the spokesman for the whole family and in his absence his son or wife may talk to outsiders. In such circumstances any information regarding birth control would only be passed on after being

censored by the elders and since traditional values favour large families, young women are kept ignorant about it. This also explains partly why many women heard wrong information about family planning. The beliefs that birth control devices lead to excessive menstrual discharge, swelling of the joints and dizziness, caution women against family planning. A first hand account of correct information could minimize the unfavourable comments about family planning. It seems to me that unless the pattern of authority and communication in an extended family changes there is little hope that first hand information will reach the potential users of family planning.

The nuclearization of the joint families usually takes place after the young couple have had two or three children. However, once a nuclear household is established and, if it is not in the same parental house, the wife is in charge of everyday affairs concerning her family, she therefore comes in contact with outsiders and through them she may learn about contraception. But by this time it is usually too late to see any substantial reduction in fertility.

My data suggest that the joint family system involving the presence of the mother-in-law or other older relatives of the husband in the household is an unfavourable factor in free acceptance of the family planning information. Although the study did not include any data on the practical difficulties in using family planning methods, there are indications that extended families also interfere with it because of lack of privacy, cooperation and assistance from all members.

Family Structure	% of women having some knowledge of any method of modern contraception
Nuclear	31.1
Supplemented Nuclear	28.5
Joint	6.7

Table 14: Family Structure and the dissipation of information regarding Family Planning

In Pasi households the male is a very strong figure of authority. Wives are well aware of the consequences of going against the wishes of their husbands. Therefore women never discuss anything with their husbands if they have doubt about his reaction. Thus women, even if they succeed in gaining correct information regarding contraception, have to convince or interest their husbands before they decide to practice it. The comparatively high success of vasectomy among the rural population also reflects the male superiority in decision making. To overcome this obstacle, it is essential for any programme to succeed, that all information should be passed through, appeal to and endorsed by the male members of the family. My data shows that of the 19.3% of the women who expressed the desire to have no more children, almost half would not go to the clinics because of the fear of reprimand from their husbands.

The taboo on communication regarding intimate matters between sexes demands that any discussion or propaganda for family planning should have separate sessions for men and women. Theoretically this should greatly improve the situation regarding information dissemination, but the problem of the lack of cooperation at the time of active adoption of the planning technique is further aggravated. Due to male dominance in Pasi families, men will not discuss or allow their wives to influence their traditional role and considers freedom in the matter of family limitation as a challenge to their authority.

Family Interaction and Decision-making regarding Fertility

Family interaction reveals not only the level of power assigned to each member of the family but also decides to what extent the individual is equipped with the power to take decisions about planning the family or financial resources.

The characteristic pattern of decision-making varies greatly between

traditional and modern societies. In traditional societies decisions are closely bound to a system of norms that direct the behaviour of the individual. The traditions and values of Pasi society serve, among other functions, that of conflict resolution. Most disagreements in a social group result from conflict of interest or conflicting preference patterns. The customs and norms among the Pasi restrain conflicts that may arise from contradictory preference patterns in the matter of desires or attitudes regarding children.

In traditional communities, husbands and wives have, more or less, similar preference patterns over a wide range of choice domain which means that a large number of decisions are made with few problems and in such circumstances it does not matter who makes the choice.

Generally there is very little difference between the husband's and wife's desire and motivation to have children. Pasi men and women both favour a large family. However, when disagreements arise, as a decision-making-unit the Pasi family has some limitations. Institutional characteristics such as avoidance of the other sex, sexual division of labour and segregation of roles interfere with the joint-decision-making between husband and wife. In matters where there is disagreement in preference patterns between the couple, the Pasi men unilaterally make the choice and impose their decision on the rest of the family. This is because men have authority, personality and intellectual traits to determine and enforce their decisions upon others. It is also because men are more aggressive and therefore more effective in causing the outcome to be favourable to themselves.

However traditional a community may be, it allows its members some variation in the stereotyped pattern of interaction. The limits on these variations are imposed by the individual's personal attainment such as education, and outside variables such as the economic, social and technological level of the community. The role of the personal factors in personality formation and its influence on family interaction and fertility is discussed later. Here, only the influence of other institutions on family interaction and its consequences on decisions regarding family growth are discussed.

The family unit is a part of the wider social organization and is interlinked with other institutions and has a functional relationship with them. As a result of this relationship family interaction and decisions are also not entirely governed by individual choice but respond to changes in other institutions. Freedman (1959, 1961), Freedman, Whelpton and Campbell (1959), Hoffman and Wyatt (1960), Rainwater (1965), Goldberg (1960), Westolff (1961), Hill Stycos and Back (1959), have proved the significance of these factors in decision-making regarding fertility and other matters.

Rosen and Simmons (1971) support the hypothesis that the pattern of family interaction and family structure changes with a change in the technological level and industrialization and influences fertility through shifts in the social status of women - both in their work and home. New education and work opportunities facilitate the emergence of modern conception of the role of women in society and egalitarian decision-making in the family.

The power and influence of social factors on fertility decisions can be judged by taking a closer look at the kinship network among the Pasi - whether being in an organized kin group and involved in meaningful interactions consisting of reciprocal pattern of goods, services and social obligations has any important bearing on fertility behaviour.

The two relevant questions to be discussed here are, first, why in a small scale society the 'encapsulating' groups have a great deal of control over the family, why young Pasi married couples do not form an autonomous unit and, secondly, how this interdependence between two generations affects fertility behaviour of the young couples. The rural and suburban communities under study depend primarily upon agriculture and/or farm work for their livelihood. Kinship plays an important part in employment. The larger kin group usually is also the occupational group, i.e. supplemented or joint family itself employs all its members in agriculture or through their recommendations they are employed elsewhere. In the absence of any written qualifications good family references play a very important part and this is especially true for services that are based on the Jajmani system.* Kinship is important in the inheritance of land and the primitive equipment connected with the cultivation of land. The majority of the Pasi, especially in their early married life, do not possess enough land to require the services of a pair of bullocks. Therefore, bullocks and farm equipment are either shared or borrowed from relatives. Mutual help is required at the time of harvesting and sowing. Relatives also provide accommodation if and when a young couple decide to live separately, either in the same house or they provide help to build them a separate house. In this way all relatives either live together or very close to each other. The physical proximity of kin further reduces the chance of a young couple leading an independent life. Palmore, Klein and bin Morzul (1970) have also discussed the importance of the availability of kin. They believe that even in an extended family system, mortality and migration may force a family to be a single unit. My data proves the other half of the argument

*Wiser (1959) defines the term as 'interrelation of services which carries with it certain responsibilities and rights. These responsibilities and rights constitute the structure of the Hindu Jajmani system.'

that geographical proximity of kin helps to maintain the extended family system.

As the above account shows, the young married couples cannot make an autonomous unit in rural areas and are dependent upon kin they are under a great deal of parental control. The young couple's behaviour and choice in all matters, including fertility matters is governed by these pressures.

Family Structure and Fertility

There is abundant literature in Anthropology and Sociology that indicates a relationship between family structure and fertility although quantitative estimates of its effects have failed to prove any conclusive results. The reason for this discrepancy could be two-fold -

- (1) Family structure cannot be treated as one variable because several factors such as economic conditions, education social and religion determine the structure and have independent effect on fertility.
- (2) If the structure of the family changes several times within the life span of an individual, the conclusions reached may not portray the true role of family structure in deciding fertility.

Our data shows that supplemented and joint families are more related to agricultural and the economically well-off class and to rural areas more than suburban. The secondary analysis of Murdock's world ethnographic sample by Nimkoff and Middleton (1968) also suggests the association of a different mode of subsistence to different types of family structure. They conclude that "relatively ample and regular food supply, high use of family as labour unit, low necessity for geographical mobility with respect to subsistence and strongly developed concept of property are associated with the maximum probability of extended familism."

Family Occupation	Type of Family			
	Nuclear	Supplemented Nuclear	Joint	Total
Owner Cultivator	44.46%	33.21%	22.32%	99.99%
Unskilled Labour	71.69%	17.97%	10.34%	100.00%
Owner Cultivators and Unskilled Labourers	50.10%	24.90%	25.00%	100.00%
Clerical/Manual and Owner Cultivator or Unskilled Labour	55.39%	22.81%	21.80%	100.00%

Table 15: Relationship between the Family Structure and Occupation among the Pasi

Place of Residence	Type of Family			
	Nuclear	Supplemented Nuclear	Joint	Total
Rural	60.58%	22.11%	17.30%	99.99%
Semi-rural	54.00%	28.00%	18.00%	100.00%
Suburban	94.12%	5.88%	-	100.00%

Table 16: Relationship between the Family Structure and Rural/Urban Residence

There are many studies that have attempted to discover the relationship between family and fertility which include the classical works of Lorimer (1954), Davis (1955), Davis and Blake (1956), Stycos (1962), Freedman (1963), and the more recent works of Nag (1962, 1967), Pakrasi and Malekar (1967), Bebarta (1964), Chidambaram (1967), Driver (1962, 1963), Mathen (1962), Poti and Dutta (1960), Rele (1963) and Surendranathan (1965). They have all attempted to find a causal relationship between family and fertility though their approach is widely different and their stress on the various aspects of family differ completely. The definition of the key variables employed also differs widely, thus making a comparison impossible.

Some studies classify the family unit on the basis of the residential group (Basu, 1962; Gould, 1959; Lewis, 1954). Whether these residential

units coincide with common hearth or not is not specified. Joint ownership is taken as a basis for defining joint families by Madan (1962) and Bailey (1960). Commensality is also used as the defining criteria for family unit. Although there are no studies which show the occurrence of a common hearth but separate dwellings, there are studies that show the contrary, i.e. more than one commensal unit may live in one dwelling (Madan, 1962; Kapoor, 1965). More than one criteria is also used by many scholars (Cohn, 1961; Mayer, 1960; Shah, 1965).

The present analysis of family structure is based on the definition by Pauline M. Kolenda (1968). 206 families of my sample belonged to the nuclear type, i.e. couples with their unmarried children, 76 constituted the supplemented nuclear type, i.e. couples with their unmarried children and one or more relatives, 4 belonged to the collateral joint type, i.e. two or more married brothers and their unmarried children, 4 constituted supplementary collateral joint family, i.e. collateral joint family with the unmarried, divorced or widowed relatives, 34 constituted lineal joint family, i.e. two or more couples with lineal links such as parents and married sons, and 12 families belonged to the lineal collateral joint type, i.e. parents with two or more married sons and their children.

Due to insufficient data in certain groups, the categories for further calculations have been narrowed down to nuclear, supplemented and joint family types. Joint family included linear, collateral, supplemented collateral and lineal collateral type.

Davis (1967) and Lorimer (1954) both agree that the extended family system is conducive to high fertility, but Lorimer does not assign high fertility to extended family itself but to the kinship group that is associated with such family system. He believes that actual extended structure of the family may restrict fertility. Like Lorimer and Stycos, (1958, 1962) Mamdani (1972) has also cited cases from a Punjab village

where extended family actually restricts fertility.

Statistical data from the Indian population reveals a rather mixed picture regarding the relation between family structure and fertility. This is because of the differences in magnitude and direction of various structural and functional forces which affect the fertility level. Also some factors may have opposite effects for different age groups or status. Our data also does not reveal a consistent relationship between family structure and fertility.

Age Group	Type of Family		
	Nuclear	Supplemented Nuclear	Joint
Under 25	1.37	1.37	1.00
25 - 34	2.94	3.05	2.33
35 and over	3.20	4.17	4.90

Table 17: Average number of Living Children in various Age Groups by Family Type

The variation in coital frequency in nuclear and joint households certainly accounts for some differences in fertility. Lack of privacy and a shortage of sleeping accommodation in joint households is partly responsible for this. Mothers-in-law, especially in early married life dictate to some extent the coital frequency of the couple. The taboos regarding intercourse during and just after menstruation, child birth and on religious days are more rigorously followed in supplemented households than in the nuclear. A marked reduction or total abstinence from sexual intercourse is expected in late married life to avoid the shame of a woman becoming pregnant while her own children are expecting their children. Women living in joint households are especially subjected to ridicule and therefore are under greater pressure to avoid such situations.

Another consequence of a joint family is the nature of the relationship

between the couple. It results in the lessened intensity of the emotional tie. Simply because there are more individuals in the family one cannot spend as much time with any one person as he might in a small conjugal family. Stycos (1962, 1958) and Rainwater (1965) have emphasized the role of communication and intimacy between the couple in family planning decisions and the desired size of the family.

A further important motive for high fertility in the joint families is that parents do not have to bear the entire additional expense of another child. The joint family system provides for all its members equally, irrespective of their contribution to the family budget. This removes the economic constraint from decision-making regarding fertility.

Apart from the extended familism, Pasi families are characterized by some other features that have important fertility consequences. The consanguineous family system among the Pasi: not only interferes with the successful use of fertility control, it also encourages high fertility by providing favourable conditions for a younger age at marriage, universality of marriage and even second, third or fourth unions. In recent years, the evidence shows an increase in the age at marriage, but there is hardly any change in the age at consummation. As a consequence of increasing age at marriage, the incidence of widowhood and separation is also decreasing. If this trend continues the greater stability in marriage would check the loss of fertile time due to non-unions. Therefore with the greater stability in marriage, if no planning methods are used, a substantial rise in fertility would be expected.

Consanguineous kin-system encourages marriage even for those who are considered unfit by their own standards. There is no shortage of incidents when the family as a unit has tried to conceal major defects of its young members and arranged their weddings. Such marriages very often are dissolved later on but if the family of procreation provides

security for the future, there are instances when they have lasted for life. Mediators in such marriages are very often members of the extended kin-group and through them parents manage to secure a match for their sons whether they are frail and unfit to compete in the labour market, epileptic, stutter, or are drug addicts. An incident was related to me by a woman whose sister fell victim to one such trap. The boy she married had a severely deformed face, including eyes, through smallpox. At the time of the wedding when the bride's parents realized the situation, they refused to marry off their daughter. Since the bridegroom's party anticipated this, they came armed with Lathi (sticks) and guns for confrontation. The other party, being outsiders and unprepared, gave in and the wedding ceremony was performed. The bride's in-laws had a much higher status and treated her well. The parents, in this case, never would have entered knowingly into such a relationship but once the ceremony was performed they blamed her fate and accepted the situation in a very defeatist manner, lamenting, 'how can any one be sure that she would get even this with her next union'.

Another feature of the Pasi family structure, i.e. the mode of residence is also conducive to early reproduction and lacks the motivation to control fertility. Pasi have a system of patrilocal joint residence which does not require the self-sufficiency, stable occupation or economic independence which are necessary to own a separate house. As a result of this, entry into marital life is early and a greater span of reproductive life is spent in marital union.

Apart from the economic necessity to control the family in a nuclear household, individual residence as compared to joint is also more likely to be associated with joint planning and decision-making, sharing of goals, etc. which are favourable to the idea of family planning.

DESIRED FAMILY SIZE AND FERTILITY

There is a close relation between family size desires and completed fertility. The term 'desired family size' is defined here as the total number of children the women would like to have under their actual and anticipated circumstances. Family size desires form over the course of marriage in response to economic and social contingencies as well as in adjustment to fecundity and mortality problems. Although they may change over time, the predictive value of these desires for future contraceptive performance is impressive. Women will not resort to family planning before they achieve their desired number of children. The use of contraceptive regularity, how it is emphasized and the method selected are all related to a couple's motivation to prevent a pregnancy. Princeton Fertility Study (Westoff et al. 1961) proves that effectiveness with which contraception is practiced improves as a couple achieves their desired family size.

The number of children desired by a couple is governed by two major factors. First, the socio-economic system and second, the value system. With little variation, the value system is given a variety of terms by social scientists, e.g. 'configuration' (C. Kluckhohn, 1951), 'culture-theme' (Opler, 1958), 'unconscious system of meanings' (Sapir, 1956), 'unconscious canon of choice' (Benedict, 1935). The socio-economic system decides the desirability of children. In some social systems children are indispensable and each additional child brings some form of reward to the parents, whereas at the other end of the scale children represent little value to parents except emotional fulfilment, and many children may even become a handicap in career aspirations or achieving other goals in life. Hence, in the former social milieu children would be desired more than in the latter.

Although theoretically the structure of a society can be distinguished

from its value-orientation system, in reality they are interdependent. The fundamental values are derived from and shaped by the socio-economic system. This explains why with technological advancement the value system also changes and also, why variation in the value system exists even in different castes living in a multi-caste village. A change in a society's value system may be a result as well as a cause of demographic change. For demographic change in general can not only reinforce or weaken particular values, differential fertility can change the proportions in which particular values and sets of values pass from parents to children and thus modify a population's value composition.

There are two possible approaches to alter the family size desired by the Pasi - either to modify their value system regarding fertility, or, to provide social and economic milieu in which small families would be advantageous. The suitability of the first approach has been criticized by many scholars (Mamdani, 1972), especially in the context of Indian Population Policy. The present analysis has used both normative and socio-economic variables to explain the desired family size among the Pasi of Lucknow.

How Values affect Fertility

Values are generally regarded as the basis of personality - they govern human behaviour. Therefore it is essential that if behaviour is to be altered the values must be changed first. A list of psychological prerequisites, such as value of education, desire to rise in the social scale, motivation for women to work, have been suggested and the conclusion is drawn that only if the attitudes and values are changed, can behaviour patterns conducive to low fertility come into being.

Although reproduction is primarily the responsibility of the couple concerned, there are social constraints which prevail upon their decisions. Sexual and moral norms are maintained by society through explicit and

implicit rewards and punishments. Through its value system and customs society indoctrinates its members to conform to behaviour which is neither selfishly appealing to the individual nor completely overlooks an individual's interests for the benefits of the group. These values are coherent from the standpoint of the individual and mandatory for society. Among Pasi, the high fertility rate is not only because they are essential for survival in the Pasi society, but also because the group to which they belong expects them to have many children and enforces its wishes through high fertility norms.

The Value System, Personality Development and its Consequences on Fertility

Kluckhohn and Stodtbeck (1961) have discussed in detail how value systems vary among societies. The Pasi value system reveals the significance of personality factors in fertility behaviour. Since Hindu Social Order has assigned the Pasi the lowest position, i.e. that of outcasts, they generally believed and accepted that they are incapable of developing virtues that lead to a respectable life. Caste hierarchy denoted grades of respectability, but Untouchables were only an object of contempt. This humility has been a part of their life for centuries and despite all laws regarding the abolition of Untouchability the upper castes could not accept them as equals nor, on the other hand, have Untouchables been able to shake off their past image and claim equality in society. Even ten years after the Anti Disability Act, the cases registered under it were very few. The 1964 figure for U.P. was 1.2 cases per million of ex-Untouchable population.

The inability to ascend the social ladder has been associated with high fertility. The caste system restricts upward mobility. Occupation is regarded to be a sensitive indicator of status and a change in occupation results in a change in status. Although inter-caste mobility is restricted in the villages, a rise in status within the caste could

be achieved by a change in occupation and income. The Pasi are mostly unskilled labourers. Both service and agriculture are assigned a higher status than manual work, but as education and land both require capital, they are beyond their reach.

Need for achievement is also considered to be favourable to family planning. Any society with a generally high level of aspiration to achieve status or money, is expected to have a high motivation to control fertility. Pasi society does not provide social prerequisites for high aspirations and neither is striving behaviour encouraged among them. Although various formerly untouchable groups in contemporary society have begun the process of self-evaluation and self-reformation to gain respectability and status in the caste system, radical changes in individual members not only create a 'crisis of self-identification' for the individual but are also openly criticized and dissuaded by the higher castes.

Fatalism, passivity and hopelessness among the Pasi originate from the belief that human life is governed by natural forces, that mortality, morbidity and fertility are decided by these forces. They do not believe that medicine can keep a person alive for longer than he is destined. Therefore, that medicine can prevent a child being born is beyond their comprehension.

This faith in invisible forces affects their fertility behaviour on two levels -

- (a) The belief that children are a gift of God and sterility is a result of His wrath can increase the desire for more children.
- (b) Resistance towards family planning.

This subjugation to nature conviction has led the Pasi to a lax attitude regarding such events as reproduction. The idea that God is the Creator and God is the Destroyer makes Man only a pawn in the game.

The comments of the women interviewed illustrate this feeling - 'God giveth, God taketh, who am I to interfere?' and 'Man must stay in his position in the System. God is the creator and Man the recipient'.

Poffenberger (1969) also believes that fatalism is related to the socio-economic position of the couple. Since the Pasi caste in general and women in particular were exploited in the traditional system, they were in a weaker position to manipulate various aspects of their daily lives. As a result, they were very apprehensive of the possible methods of family limitation that were available to them.

Active pursuits, demonstrations to remedy injustice or to claim privileges do not agree with the Hindu religion and belief. Evidence obtained from Indian history, religion and politics give ample proof that goals are achieved not by revolt, violence or destruction but by means such as non-cooperation, self-immolation or fasting. All these means suit a passive nature. Interpretation of Karma and the philosophy of renunciation also consider any type of planning as a challenge against God. If striving is considered a negative virtue and endurance, resignation or quiescence of personal activity as a means of reaching a goal, it is not to be expected that the Pasi women will have a motivation to limit the size of their families. Comments like 'Till God is pleased to give, I shall be pleased to receive' or, 'When the Giver is not satisfied with the number of children he has granted, why should I be satisfied with the number I have received?' illustrate the point that passivity presents obstacles to the successful implementation of the population policy.

Lack of physical energy may also lead to mental lethargy and to the development of a passive nature. The Indian School of Political Economy, Poona, conducted a study of poverty in India and concluded that 40% of

rural Indians cannot afford an average diet of 2250 calories a day which is taken as minimal under Indian conditions. Since the Pasi under study appear to be the poorest among the rural population, starvation is estimated to be much higher among them.

Another value associated with passive outlook is disregard or helplessness about the future. Since the future is obscure, unpredictable and uncontrollable, it is considered useless to worry or make plans. When there is no reasonable security of life how can anyone decide about the future? Acceptance of birth control depends upon long-term planning and unless this is undertaken, a couple are unlikely to limit their family. An illustration of this view can be found in the following statement - 'Today God is kind to me, what happens tomorrow, who knows?'

Some values which are considered essential to maintain the social system are included in institutions. They become 'norms' a part of the institutions and are thus reinforced on the individual. This institutionalization of values not only helps to justify and rationalize one's actions, but it also helps the individual to develop these attitudes with minimum mental conflict.

Norms are prescriptions and are defined according to situation as ego's obligation, society's expectation or mere custom and individuals are expected to show behaviour related to them. This 'expectation' is termed 'oughtness' by Heider (1958, p.228) and it is this atmosphere of oughtness which is a very strong factor in determining the fertility behaviour of the Pasi community.

Basic values of reference group, i.e. caste and community are very important since they determine the range of permissible behaviour for the individual. The domination of stereotypes is a common feature of all village life and fertility behaviour is no exception. References such as 'Why is Rajjo happy in her old age? Because she has five sons',

are mentioned to justify one's own behaviour and to measure one's fertility against a standard. Statements like 'X is begging not because she did not have land, but because she did not have sons to dig the land', caution young couples against family limitations.

The Desired Family Size among the Pasi of Lucknow

The following tables show the family size preference of the Pasi respondents. Table 17 shows that 47.91% of the total respondents desire 4 children, 26.19% desire 3 children, 18.16% desire 5 or more children and only 7.73% desired one or two children in their family. Table 18 shows that one-third of the total respondents have achieved their desired number and Table 19 shows that 7.84% have exceeded their desired size.

Desired Family Size	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
1 child	2	0.59
2 children	24	7.14
3 children	88	26.19
4 children	161	47.91
5 children	35	10.42
6 children	22	6.55
7 or more children	4	1.19
Total	336	99.99

Table 17: Distribution of Respondents by their Desired Family Size

Desired Family Size	No. of Respondents with corresponding no. of children	No. of Respondents who have their desired no. of children	% of Total
1 child	92	2	2.39
2 children	84	11	13.12
3 children	64	33	51.72
4 children	48	41	86.38
5 children	22	10	44.00
6 children	24	13	54.50
7 and over	2	2	100.00
Total	336	112	33.33

Table 18: Respondents who reached Desired Size of Family

Desired Family Size	No. of Respondents	No. of Respondents who exceeded their desired family size	% of Total
1 child	2	0	0.0
2 children	24	7	27.27
3 children	88	7	7.50
4 children	161	10	6.16
5 children	35	2	6.20
6 children	22	0	0.00
7 and over	4	0	0.00
Total	336	26	7.84

Table 19: Respondents who exceeded their Desired Family Size

The above tables point out two important facts:-

- (a) The Pasi women desire large families.
- (b) There is a difference between the expressed desires and the actual number of children born.

I will now discuss what motivates Pasi women to desire large families and what the reasons are for not using contraceptives, even after the desired number of children are born.

The fertility of a population can be viewed as a result of many individual acts and decisions made within the framework of cultural and environmental constraints. Questions of human motivations have an important bearing on the success of the efforts to control population growth. As motivations regarding family size vary among societies, it becomes imperative to find out the factors that motivate Pasi parents to desire a particular number of children, and how in the Indian context it could be used to change the desired size of the family from large to small. However, the desire to have a small family is not sufficient and the motivation to use effective family planning methods is necessary if the actual size of the family is to coincide with the desired family size. The Pasi have no religious objection to the idea of family planning but

their desire to have a large family is based upon high infant mortality, sex preference and socio-economic necessity.

Child Mortality and its effect on the Desired Family Size

The child mortality rate is probably the most important criterion in affecting the desired family size. The Pasi infant death rate (69.4 per thousand) is far higher than the adult death rate and therefore the survival of children is less guaranteed than the survival of adults. As a consequence, many children need to be born to assure the survival of one or two to adulthood. May and Heer (1968) conclude that to have a 95% guarantee of the survival of at least one son until the father's 65th birthday, at 20 per thousand mortality, he must produce 5.2 sons, at 40 per thousand mortality and 40 life expectancy, he must produce 3.27 sons, at 45 per thousand mortality and 42.5 life expectancy 3.04 sons, at 50 per thousand mortality and 45 life expectancy 2.73 sons, at 55 per thousand mortality and 47.5 life expectancy 2.53 sons. At the present level of national mortality and life expectancy only 2.53 children are required to assure the survival of one son.

These figures actually underestimate the effect of the infant mortality rate upon fertility because,

(a) In actual life, survival of one son is never sufficient. Only in two cases did the Pasi respondents desire one son. The presence of one son is minimally required by the religion to assure the spiritual salvation of parents after death but it does not necessarily provide economic and social security in old age. Repeatedly it was mentioned during the collection of the data that in the present conditions of economic adversity, parents cannot stake all their hopes in one son. They realize that due to the unstable employment situation and unfavourable labour market, it is not always easy for a son to fulfil his obligations towards his parents. The parent and daughter-in-law relationship is also crucial in this respect because parents depend upon their daughter-in-law for

household services. If there is more than one daughter-in-law, parents can move in with the other if the relationship with one is dissenting.

(b) The survival of one ideal son may provide the bare essentials of life for parents in old age but economic, social and physical security, status, power and name all increase proportionately with the number of grown-up sons.

The following tables give only an estimate of the child loss among the Pasi of Lucknow. The mortality data are not reliable.

Age Group	% of Respondents without any child loss
Under 25 years	75.0
25 - 35 years	25.1
36 and over	7.1

Table 20: Distribution of Respondents without any Child Loss

Age Group of Mother	Average No. of children born	Average No. of children alive	% Loss
Under 25 years	1.62	1.31	19.2
25 - 35 years	4.44	2.85	36.02
36 and over	6.38	3.76	41.04

Table 21: Proportion of Child-Loss to Total Number of Children Born

The statistics for infant mortality derived from successive rounds of the National Sample Survey give high rates. In the round of 1964-65 they were 127.29 infant deaths / 1000 live births for the rural area and 79.39 for the urban (National Sample Survey 186, 1970:9). Selected villages, however, show much higher rates. Agarwala (1970) reports 36% of total child loss in one year. Similarly Marshall (1972) reports nearly one-third of the total child loss in some Uttar Pradesh villages and Wyon and Gordon (1971) in the Punjab. My data reveals an even higher

child mortality rate for higher parity women.

Apart from son-survivorship motivation, desired family size is affected by child mortality rate in several other ways. High death rate would be a deterrent to family planning, especially in early reproductive years and only after a 'required' number of children are born to guarantee the survival of the 'desired number of children', would contraception be practised. A Pasi saying which reflects the uncertainty of the future due to high child mortality is worth quoting here. It says, 'Even those who grow Arhar (a superior and hardy variety of pulse) should not be contented; even those who have twelve sons should not think they have enough.'

There is a psychological association between the level of child mortality and the desired size of the family. High child mortality affects the parent-child relationship too. The bond of affection that develops between parents and children just after birth in Western countries is never seen in high mortality societies. This intention to avoid attachment to new-born babies is manifested in their customs. The practice of putting on old clothes for forty days, postponing celebrations till a later date and never naming a child properly until he is at least six months old, all reflect fear of losing the child. How this control of emotional involvement is related to the number of children desired requires study in much greater depth. It may restrict the desire to have many children because emotional energy invested in children is wasted if they die. Statements like, 'What is the point in bearing many children when I know that their death would leave me bankrupt and heartbroken' or 'I am not greedy to bear many children, I am greedy to see them survive' explain this point. A logical and practical answer to this problem of emotional investment is to divert one's attention from quantity to quality. Many Pasi respondents said that it is better to feed and provide education of

a better standard to a few children rather than bearing many children and not being able to provide for them according to one's desire. Whether high mortality is the cause of this change in attitude or the effect of education and general awakening, is not known. If change in attitude can totally be attributed to high mortality, its implications for future population growth, especially in the light of a general rise in economic standards and decrease in the mortality rate have to be studied in greater detail.

There is a physiological association between the level of infant mortality and the level of fertility. Breast-feeding is one of nature's ways of postponing pregnancy. Among the Pasi where breast-feeding is the normal pattern and prolonged lactation and feeding infants up to 2 to 3 years or until it is physiologically possible, is common, conception is deferred due to lactation amenorrhea. In such circumstances it is common to see a gap of 2 - 3 years between each pregnancy. However, when normal lactation is interrupted due to the death of the child, ovulation is resumed sooner and the mother is exposed to the risk of pregnancy much earlier than she would have been had the child survived. Therefore in societies where contraception is not practised, high infant mortality would be a definite factor contributing to high fertility.

Economic Value of Children

A study of the decline in family size in the West reveals the fact that a complex of factors such as urbanization, increased opportunity for social mobility, separation of work from residence, compulsory education and child labour laws, all diminished the economic utility of offspring as income producers and security in old age. This change not only stopped children being an asset, but made them a liability for a much longer period. Although in India the Employment of Children's Act of 1938 and the Factories Act of 1948 prohibit employment of children

below fourteen years of age and their employment at night and in dangerous occupations, its scope is limited only to urban areas and does not apply to rural agriculture and labour communities like the Pasi. To understand the economic value of children I will discuss the material conditions of the Pasi existence and the importance of the size of the work force in their occupation and the influence of these two factors on the desired size of their family.

Running a household in economic terms requires not only provisions, but the services of its members. The amount of service required by a family varies considerably according to the level of technology and the type of economy. In agrarian societies based on man-power where the household is the unit of production and consumption, purchased market goods and services play a very limited role, and in such circumstances the services of each member of the household become indispensable. A great majority of the Pasi have a patch of land to grow or supplement their food requirements, and from sowing the seeds to the prepared food stage, the entire work is carried out by the family without any outside help. Even those families who depend upon wages and hence upon 'market goods' cannot afford 'market services' like milled flour, prepared cereals or ready-made clothes due to the shortage of money. Instead, they utilize the maximum of services from their members. Viewing in this light, the amount of time and type of work a member of the family can contribute to the household economy decides the economic value of that member.

In all pre-industrial agrarian and cattle herding societies the value of human resources is well known. Certain African tribes expand their human resources through polygamy. In Asia, manpower is increased by having many children. It is a well known fact that the farmer who does not have much land requires most labour, because they are the ones least likely to have a tube well, a tractor or even a pair of bullocks.

In our sample not a single Pasi family had any power driven farm machinery and only 12% of the cultivators had a pair of bullocks of their own. The rest either shared or borrowed from others. Even those who have big land holdings benefit by having another son. Mamdani (1972, p.116) in this connection quotes, 'Why pay 2500 Rs. for an extra hand? Why not have a son?'

The present sample shows that the maximum number of children (mean 4.93) was desired by the owner cultivators and the minimum (3.32) by those who are engaged in clerical/manual work in the city.

A large family is essential for big land holders to expand, but for small farmers it is essential for survival. The system of mutual exchange of labour during the sowing, harvesting and weeding seasons saves small farmers from the expenditure of money and/or grain to employ help. Unless a family has enough members to supply labour, it cannot enter into such agreements.

The value of children in the labour economy has changed dramatically in recent years and is adding to their desirability. The declining Brahmin aristocracy, the introduction of new methods in agriculture, the abolition of Untouchability and preferential treatment of the Scheduled Castes - all are contributing in creating a new pattern of farm labour. The old Jajmani system that was based on the traditional barter-system of exchange of goods and services does not fit in to the present day economy. The lower castes are no longer dependent on one or more high caste families for their livelihood. They are free today to bargain in the open labour market and every individual of the family can earn according to his capacity for work. The demand for female labour is also high in agriculture, which makes the Pasi girls as indispensable as boys. Seasonality of employment has further added to the economic value of children. Since seasonality and bad weather condemn the farm labourers

to long spells of idleness, a family relying entirely upon labour for livelihood must earn as much as possible during the agricultural season to last the whole year. In such circumstances, the larger the number of earning members, the better will be the chances of accumulating provisions for the period of unemployment. A young child of seven or eight years may not earn directly but he can relieve another adult female from child-minding or household chores to enable her to take up outside employment. A child can tend cattle or collect fodder and firewood for others or for his own family which would otherwise have to be bought. Unlike the adult farmworker seasonality of employment does not affect child labour. Their stable employment brings not only a steady income but their personal contacts with large land holders can be used to advantage in times of hardship.

The child services represent the economic value of children. Every household has only limited money which can be spent on goods or services, and limited time depending upon the number of members. If there are many children in the family more household or farm services can be obtained. But the time which many children can contribute, can also improve the quality of the services as well because labour can be exchanged for goods (tools, tractors, fertilizers) or money for consumption in the home farm. In fact working temporarily for others to earn money is the only means of acquiring essential farm items. Similarly in poor economic and technological conditions many sons on the farm can work as efficiently as one tractor and since farm machinery is expensive to buy and maintain, and there is a long waiting period, most farmers settle for many children who not only have economic value but also provide essential physical and social security and status in society.

Among wage-earning Pasi families living in the suburban area of Martinpurva, where children can neither be employed gainfully nor do

they contribute very much to the 'household services', the economic value of children is diminished, therefore the number of children desired is considerably less (3.02) than in the families living in rural and semi-rural areas.

Apart from economic gain in the form of child labour, children also provide economic security to parents in old age. No amount of outside pressure or propaganda for family planning would appeal to the rural population unless there is reasonable economic security in old age. The family obligations constitute the basic core of the Hindu Social Order which gives parents a socially approved claim on the resources of their children and makes children duty bound to support parents. Although children of either sex are economically useful, in their old age parents can only depend upon sons. Because, firstly, Hinduism does not allow parents to have any economic gain from daughters and, secondly, the rules of village exogamy results in geographical separation between parents and daughters.

High mortality rates among the Pasi leave many older people without companions and incapable of leading an independent life. Such people always take refuge with their son's family. The Pasi sample shows that 39.5% of the people over 45 years are widowed, divorced or separated and are dependent upon sons for economic support.

The Non-economic Utility of Children

The foregoing account proves that children are valued for the economic contributions they make to the household. However it is the socio-psychological rewards which they bring to their parents that make them indispensable among Pasi society.

Children as a means of rising in Socio-Economic Status

The experiences of the West emphasize the association between the desired size of the family and class mobility and it was suggested that

societies which allow greater opportunity to people to ascend in the economic and social scale also provide greater motivation to control fertility.

Although in the past caste groups were strictly occupational groups, modern changes, coupled with the Protective Discrimination Policy of the government of India, have disturbed the equilibrium and as a consequence in the contemporary village community we find the same occupation pursued by different castes. The traditionally menial jobs (such as scavenger and leather worker) and skilled jobs (such as potter and oil presser) of course are still hereditary. Although theoretically these modern changes have opened opportunities for every one to ascend in the economic and social scale, in actual practice it is still only limited to those who are exceptionally privileged in some way. My evidence suggests that motivation to have a small family to rise in social status in this socio-economic structure would be strongest for landless Pasi labourers rather than for land-owners who can increase their output through having many children. The data also indicate, like those of Majid Khan, M. Choldin (1965) and Prachuabmoh (1967) that under present day rural conditions, the poorest and least educated may have a stronger motivation to adopt fertility control.

Children as a means of securing Adult Female Status

There are stages in the physical growth of individuals and each stage of physical growth corresponds to a different set of expectations. In modern societies adulthood and physical maturity generally coincide, whereas in Pasi society physical maturity does not necessarily lead to adult status, nor does marriage.

Modern Western societies provide men and women with the same opportunity to develop skills and assume adult responsibilities. Pasi men are accorded adult status as soon as they earn a living and support

their wives. Women on the other hand, are not granted the status, prestige or power until they reach motherhood.

The timing of the first pregnancy is significant to the manner in which parental responsibilities are joined to the marital relationship. The urgency to augment conjugal relationship with parental responsibilities results from the fact that marriage in itself does not provide authority, but the first pregnancy proves womanhood and confers adult status to girls.

Children as a means of achieving Salvation

The role of religion in decision-making regarding family size of its followers is not well defined in India. The Hindu religion is not antagonistic to the practice of birth control but at the same time it does not provide explicit and clear support to the idea of family size regulation. In the hymns of the wedding ceremony, blessings to have many sons are showered on the young couple. Religion demands the presence of a son at the time of his father's death to perform the Kriya ceremony and thereafter every year at the Shraddha ceremony, failure to perform this would prevent the soul being united with God. The 'giving away' of a daughter in marriage is also an act of great religious merit. Since the presence of a son and a daughter is considered essential, unless a child of each sex is born the question of family planning does not arise. Several studies (Morrison, 1956) of family planning in India reveal the fact that couples with children of both sexes are more likely to use contraceptive methods than couples with children of only one sex. In the present study although religion was not stated as an obstacle to family planning, begetting children, at least one of each sex, was justified on religious grounds.

Children as a means of Escape from Freedom

Work is considered a virtue among the Pasi. Therefore a busy woman

is always respected. Housework or farmwork is considered demanding, therefore it is rewarding and satisfying. Similarly, having a child is highly rewarding and satisfying and failure to bear children causes dissatisfaction and leads to boredom. The present data supplies evidence that children could be a means of escape from freedom. Independence is neither encouraged among women, nor can it be utilized because there are no other means of self-fulfilment available in the Pasi society. In local dialect the word 'bari' means freedom, boredom, emptiness, aimlessness and childlessness and connotes lack of respect for women. Pasi society considers 'mother' and 'good woman' as synonymous and one way of ensuring this respect is to have a house full of children. The logic is that a woman having not much to do will turn to 'evil' because she is irrational and impulsive. Single Pasi women are considered unable to live a virtuous life and become an easy target for gossip. Suspicious eyes follow such women. My study, like Hoffman and Wyatt's (1960) contradicts Mishler and Westoff's (1955) hypothesis that excessive dependency needs are incompatible with the desire for pregnancy.

Children as a means of avoiding Loneliness and Alienation

Classical sociologists like Durkheim and Fromm (1941) and more recent ones like Riesman (1953) have discussed the problem of alienation and loneliness in society and its causes and consequences. Hoffman and Wyatt (1960) suggest that as more and more individuals in modern society are facing loneliness and alienation, one counter balancing mechanism has been that of having larger families.

The effect of loneliness on human behaviour depends upon the alternative means of involvement provided in the society. In westernized societies career aspirations, gainful employment, voluntary social work or leisure activities may provide the answer to alienation. Pasi society does not allow women to have any such ambitions nor does it provide any opportunity

for gainful employment, therefore, alienation becomes a serious problem and the answer must be sought within the household.

Loneliness in early married life is to be expected to some extent in all arranged marriages governed by the rules of exogamy and extended family living but the practice of 'avoidance' and dominant-subserviant relationship among the Pasi further add to the problem. The young bride is not only an outsider in the close-knit Pasi community and has yet to learn norms and customs of the family but she is under a constant vigilance and has yet to gain approbation of her in-laws.

This situation generates distrust and apprehension in the heart of the young wife. Pregnancy and subsequently children in such circumstances provide the answer to the problem of alienation and loneliness.

Pregnancy removes loneliness in two ways:-

- (a) The unborn child is a physical and emotional ally.
- (b) Since pregnancy is greatly desired, women are treated favourably during this period. The fuss made over the pregnant woman and the interest shown in the pregnancy at least removes some boredom and loneliness.

Once children are born women develop friendship ties with neighbours by sharing a common status with similar role prescriptions, and therefore get more chance of meeting other women with similar routines and problems. The desire and motivation for the first pregnancy is considered to be similar in all societies, but the motivation to have successive children among the Pasi is stronger because satisfaction, self-fulfilment and gratification of needs, status and prestige all increase proportionately with other children.

Continuation of the Family Name

The motive most frequently mentioned among the Pasi to have many children, next to economic and social security, is a couple's concern

for the continuation of the family name. In customary Pasi law, vertical inheritance is associated with the passing of property to male children only. Therefore heirs are deliberately sought after. They are essential because of the security they provide in old age by taking care of the family property, however large or small. Men consider it is their duty to perpetuate the family name. Caldwell (1967) has mentioned this desire for 'national good' in Ghana and Dow (1967) reports the same for Kenya. Almost all studies conducted in this field in India mention 'carrying on the family name' or 'continuation of the family' as an important motive for wanting children. The importance of this value is indicated in the study by Poffenberger (1973) where Indian men were asked to state the benefits of having a wife. Though the question did not mention children, the benefit cited more frequently than sex or companionship, was the continuation of the family and second only to performing services for the husband and looking after his needs. Some scholars have explained this as a 'need to anchor oneself beyond their own life-time'. Comments of Pasi women like, 'who would cry when I will die' or, 'To light the candles in the house after I am gone' explain the desire of leaving behind one's own flesh and blood.

Children as a means of Expanding and Extending Oneself

Related to the desire of immortality is the desire of self-expansion and self-extension. By ensuring the continuation of the lineage one guarantees survival of his name after his death. But with many grown-up sons a man 'extends' himself in his own lifetime too. He does so by moulding his children either in his own shape or according to his desire.

The extension of one's ego requires a great amount of power over children which is vested in the Pasi father by religion in the form of filial obligation; by the economic system in the form of inheritance of land, occupation and occupational skills; by the social system in the form

of status and prestige and in the form of duty towards one's children. I believe that societies that do not idealize family solidarity usually do not provide a father with this absolute authority over his children and do not give him self-extension as a motivation for desiring a large family. Recent trends suggest a decline in parental power because schools are expected to diminish the role of father as an educator; opportunities in industries will decrease the value of traditional skills and make children less dependent upon the father. Access to courts and knowledge of court procedure will decrease the autonomy of the Panchayats in the matter of disputes. It will alter the authority pattern in the Pasi family in two ways - firstly, it will make children more responsible for their own actions and hence more independent, and secondly, it will make parents less authoritative because the need to enforce their views upon children to conform to tradition will also decrease.

As power and authority in domestic matters is vested in the mother or mother-in-law, not in a wife without children, the importance of children as a source of authority becomes clear. Since every child brings power to the mother, the motive to have many children as a means of increasing power and expanding oneself becomes strong. Through their children's marriages new relationships are formed, status and prestige raised, grandchildren are born. Therefore families with a large kinship network are regarded as being more stable from both the standpoint of filial protection and economic security. Nevertheless, it was obvious that a considerable number of respondents were aware of the threats a large family makes to the unity of the group. The reasons of the joint family break-up, as reported by the Pasi respondents in my study, show that as the size of the family increases the chances of dissatisfaction and friction between the members also increase. The most frequently reported reasons for partition of the joint family were dissatisfaction

due to unfair distribution of money, work-load and the problem of enforcing authority over the members. These practical problems will defeat the very purpose of having many children, thus eliminating the motive itself.

Physical Security through Children

In almost all villages under study which are not situated close to or with frequent transport links to Lucknow, there is no locally organized legal authority to protect or mediate in cases of disputes. Parties involved in such conflicts can go to the Panchayat for arbitration but the Panchayat cannot implement sanctions unless it calls in law enforcement authorities from Lucknow.

Conflicts and fights in the villages are common, especially among the Pasi who were in the past classed as a 'criminal tribe'. These disputes are mainly over land, money or women. They are usually settled with the help of weapons (knife, staff or gun) or by physical strength (wrestling) or by means of threats. When such conflicts start the families and lineage come together to support their member. On such occasions the number of able-bodied men present in the family is of utmost importance. Everyone knows that the fewer the number of men and boys in the family the easier it is to be the target of grievance and intimidation. Their importance increases upon confrontation with emergencies which take the form of flood and storm, the need for medical treatment, and attendance at court cases, the latter two necessitating a constant shuttle between Lucknow and the village. Journeys on the son's part may well have to go further afield in the quest of grooms for the daughters of the family. The sons are also valuable at harvest time to guard the crop from enemies.

Price of Children among the Pasi

The desire to have children is not only governed by what parents can achieve from having children, but also the price they have to pay for

having each child. The term 'price' here includes the actual cost in monetary terms of child-birth and child-rearing and opportunity costs in the form of loss of earning power, sacrifice by the mother in the form of career, opportunity to raise living standard, recreation, self-fulfilment and interests, etc.

It is believed that the greater the price a couple has to pay in the form of money and in the form of loss of satisfaction and freedom, the greater would be the attraction to limit the family.

Recent years have seen a dramatic increase in food prices, unemployment and the necessity of education in a competitive job market. This has made children a costly affair for everyone. The Pasi couple's basic desire to have many children appears to be still high, but the price they have to pay for each child has slightly increased. It means that poorer parents cannot afford to have many children if they have to provide adequately for them.

To estimate the opportunity cost of children in Pasi society, I will consider the opportunities for female employment, wage structure, child care facilities and opinion regarding work, working conditions, working mothers and work satisfaction.

Opportunities for Employment - All rural societies utilize female labour. A clear demarcation in agricultural activities exists between the two sexes among the Pasi. Men prepare the ground, i.e. dig, plough, level and irrigate the fields and sow the seeds. Women are responsible for weeding, transplanting rice, harvesting the crop, thrashing, winnowing and preparing grain. Separation of tasks by sexes is based not only upon physical ability but it also conforms with their role requirements. Women are given jobs of lesser specialization which are either the same or very similar in nature to their household chores. Women from the farming families work on their own land and landless lower caste women

supply labour to big landowners.

Another part-time employment for women, although of very nominal economic return, is collecting and making cow dung cakes for use with firewood in the hearth. Since most lower caste women make cow dung cakes (locally called Upla) for their own use, there is only a very small cash market for it. Besides, the monsoon season is not suitable for drying Upla which further reduces its importance as a regular means of earning money. Weaving baskets or mats has always been a most popular passtime of many tribal and backward people in India. Although in our sample only four women reported basket or mat weaving as a means of earning cash, a much greater proportion of women weave for their own use. As compared with agricultural labour the economic return from weaving is also nominal. Only one woman in our sample, living in suburban area of Martinpurva was working outside the geographical boundary of the community. She was working as a midwife and masseur, massaging the new-born babies and mothers of high caste women of Lucknow city.

Wage Structure - All types of economic activities mentioned above do not necessarily involve cash transactions. Women working on farms prefer to be paid partly in cash and partly in grain and rice. Payment to a midwife is almost always made partly with cash and partly with kind (i.e. with food and clothing). Baskets and mats could be sold for cash in weekly markets, but since the turn out is so slow, it is not worth taking them to the market. Instead they are bartered within the village for grain or for mud pots from the Potter or are occasionally sold to the families celebrating weddings etc. who require extra containers for sending the dowry and gifts to the bridegroom's family. Apart from the above mentioned mode of payment, a great majority of the women work on the basis of 'mutual exchange of labour' which is paid neither in cash nor kind.

This lack of cash transactions in female employment has an important bearing on the labour force participation. It totally and automatically

excludes from employment that category of women who have sufficient to eat at home. The inability to buy other articles of necessity such as clothing, medicine, spices and oil weakens the incentive to work, especially when employment serves no other purpose but economic gain. Pasi women consider paid employment as an economic necessity and if basic needs of life can be met without any outside employment, there is no need to work. The chance of socio-economic mobility or possession of material things that provide incentive to work and possibly to limit family are restricted because of this lack of cash transactions.

Conditions of Employment - The timing, nature of work and working conditions in agriculture of self-employed jobs are quite flexible and can be adopted to personal circumstances. There are usually two shifts for female agricultural labourers. The work in the morning starts after the men have gone to work and women have eaten the left-overs from the previous night. The second shift starts after lunch and continues till dusk. Only women with no household responsibilities, such as older women with daughters-in-law or grown-up daughters at home, or young wives with no children work full-time and regularly during the season. The rest, which forms the bulk, only work part-time. The full-time workers get two hours lunch break during summer and one hour during winter to compensate the smaller daylight hours. Although women with very young children do not usually go to work, if they have to work to earn a living, they are given time off to feed the children on the premises.

The nature of the work for women on farms is so unspecialized that any person can be substituted without any effect on the output. When work is expected to last for a couple of weeks, and due to unavoidable circumstances a woman cannot go to work, she usually sends her daughter-in-law or sister-in-law as a replacement until she is fit to resume her work. Although Pasi women do not consider menstrual blood as polluting, they do

not go to work at this period primarily because of the long and uncomfortable squatting or crouching position required for the work and the lack of privacy. Men and women work independently in separate groups on the same farm. Although segregation of sexes is essential to ensure a supply of female labour, frequent contacts between men and women are unavoidable especially during harvesting time when crop, husk and grain etc., has to be shifted from one place to another.

The conditions of employment of women are such that the entire order of the family living is imitated at the farm - the beliefs, norms and values of everyday life are extended to their working life. Therefore working on the farm or in the private backyard does not contradict with the role requirements of a wife and mother. In fact by working on the farm she proves her abilities as a housewife. Those women who do not have their own land and hence have no opportunity to train their daughters in farmwork, consider paid employment as a means of developing the necessary skills of a 'clever woman'. Everyone agrees that hard work and ability to cope with the farmwork, are the two basic requirements for a stable and happy marriage in the village. Also female employment in agriculture occurs in the social organization of an extended family or kinship group in which children are valued for labour and security and, secondly, the availability of mother substitutes eases a mother's tasks. Federici (1968) from Italian data and Stycos and Weller (1967) from Turkish data support my conclusion that fertility depends not only upon the work force participation of women but also upon the type of work. Where maternal role and work role is compatible, there would be very little effect on the desired size of the family.

Child Care - De Tray (1972) believes that the amount of child services parents can receive depends upon their ability to invest in the children. He measures this ability by the level of parent's education and the time

they invest in their children. He concludes that the education of the mother and the time she spends with her children decide her choice between a larger or a smaller family. The educated women give up their jobs to raise a family because they can improve the quality of their children and hence achieve greater satisfaction and make a better contribution to the family. My data provides the other half of the picture. It suggests that since uneducated Pasi women in today's education oriented world cannot improve the quality of their children they settle for the larger number of children to increase the output of the family.

There are obviously no child care facilities like nurseries, or pre-school play-groups in the villages studied. Bringing up children is considered strictly a family matter and no outsider is entrusted with it. A belief in supernatural or evil spirits and high mortality rate probably has made the Pasi suspicious of all outsiders, including doctors, health visitors and social workers, especially where young children are concerned.

Neither the lay-out of the house nor the facilities available for playing or amusement encourage young children to stay within the four walls of the house. As a result, children after three or four years of age play outside from morning till dusk, coming in only when they require food or attention from adults. At the same time the young women observing Purdah from men do not leave the house without any important reason. This situation takes infants away from the mother and into the care of other family members who can move in and out of the house without any restrictions and who are otherwise not engaged in jobs requiring constant attention. Such persons invariably are grandparents, older siblings or or cousins and aunts. Infants and toddlers too young to leave the courtyard stay inside and play by themselves while their mothers are

busy. In joint households where there is more than one daughter-in-law, the responsibility of doing the cooking is assigned to each daughter-in-law by the mother-in-law on a rota basis. Cooking in villages is a tedious, time-consuming job and requires constant attention because of the open fire that needs frequent 'blowing' or 'dampening'. Hence the woman in charge of cooking cannot leave the hearth to attend to her children. The responsibility therefore has to be transferred to others who may be free at that moment. Feeding and bathing young children are the two jobs that are completely the responsibility of the mother, the rest can be shared with other members of the family.

The role of father in the care and upbringing of the infants is negligible. A Pasi man, so long as he remains under his own father's roof is expected to deny his authority and independence. Not to do so is considered disrespectful. Consequently he must not show affection for his wife or children in public and surrender all responsibilities to his elders. Hence the sacrifice fathers have to make in order to raise the family is very nominal. Smith (1971) reports that American men take up extra jobs to supplement their income if they have more children. The Pasi men work to their full capacity and the village does not provide any possibilities of other paid employment to support additional children.

The role of the members of the neighbourhood group in the care of infants is important among the Pasi. They also have the right to reprimand, love or spoil the child. Each member of the neighbourhood group is addressed by a kinship term like Kaka (brother), Chacha (uncle), Dada (grandfather), Bhauji (sister-in-law), Bahen (sister), Chachi (aunt) etc. and are accorded the appropriate right over the child. Socialization and child care in the joint households is not the responsibility of the young mother. In fact it is expected from a 'good woman' to delegate these responsibilities to other older members

of the family.

I believe that societies that fail to provide some kind of child care facilities put obstacles to the gainful employment of women and in such circumstances women have to sacrifice a lot to raise a family. On the other hand, if mothers are free to take up employment, because their children are looked after by others, they will have very little to sacrifice in the form of job satisfaction, foregone income or freedom. My data suggest that the greater a woman has to sacrifice, i.e. the greater the price she has to pay to bear and rear children, the stronger would be the motivation to check fertility and since Pasi women do not necessarily have to give up employment to rear their children, there is no motivation to restrict fertility on this ground.

Cost of bearing and rearing Children among the Pasi and its effect on the Desirability of Children

Pregnancy and childbirth are considered natural and normal functions of adult women and hence they do not require medical check-ups or other elaborate preparations for the event. During gestation, if circumstances allow, the woman is favourably treated, her work-load is decreased and her diet supplemented. Although adequate diet and rest three weeks prior to childbirth is recommended, most of the people realize that these cannot be rigorously followed. Financial difficulties and great demand for labour makes complete rest usually impossible during harvest time. Similarly diet recommendations cannot be followed just before the harvesting when food is usually in short supply. Unlike higher castes, Pasi do not have any rituals or ceremonies during pregnancy.

Since childbirth is considered a natural event it does not require any modern medicines, disinfectants or pain relievers. Instead, indigenous medicines, easily available herbs and spices are used. The mother-in-law or some other experienced woman usually assists in childbirth. Although

there is a trained midwife attached to every village, they are very rarely called. It is mainly to avoid extra payment and expenses on articles such as disinfectants, cotton wood, clean clothes, etc., which are not necessarily available in all households. The leaves of Nim (Margosa) which are considered to have disinfectant properties, are boiled in water to clean the body of the mother and child. Ashes are used to clean the room afterwards. An ordinary curved kitchen knife, mounted on a board (Hansia) is used for cutting the placenta. The babies are wrapped in discarded clothes or rags. They sleep in a cot or on a hammock made with strong cloth or a sari. All children are breast fed as long as is physically possible or until they can share ordinary family meals. There is no food specially prepared for babies or young children. Families who have cows, buffaloes or goats do not have to buy milk, but if parents cannot afford to buy milk the children have to do without it. It is said that sometimes mothers dissolve a little bit of chalk in water to satisfy the demands of milk, but none of the mothers in our sample admitted doing this.

Children are scantily clothed in the villages, partly because of the hot climate and partly because parents cannot afford to purchase them. Shoes are not considered a necessity but as an article of fashion, therefore neither the women nor children have shoes or slippers. Only women with husbands working in the city and some children had 'flip-flops', i.e. loose sandals.

Purchases of children's sweets and toys are non-existent in the villages because there are no shops that sell sweets or toys. Only lumps of unpurified sugar can be bought from the local shops which serves the purpose of sweets for children. Only in the weekly market or during festivals do children demand money for fun-fairs, balloons, candies and toys. Children are not seen playing with toys or models but rather with

either the actual things or make-believe games. Occasionally Manihars (peddlers) come to villages to sell glass bangles, cheap earrings or strings of pearls and mothers take great pride to see their daughters wearing bangles and trinkets.

Through intensive government programmes education has assumed new importance for the Pasi. It is partly because of greater and more frequent contacts and interference of the government in the private lives of the villagers, such as having to fill in forms for hospitalization, or for borrowing money from the Co-op. society; attend court cases; receive information concerning improved methods of agriculture, and to claim grants from the government. In addition, the government provides an avenue to job opportunities in the lower grade of the government bureaucracy. Despite the fact that education is free for all Scheduled Castes and facilities for primary education are provided in every village, the number of children under 15 years attending school was only 3% in rural areas, 14% in semi-rural areas and 53% in suburban areas. Only 12% of the total girls under 15 years were attending school. There are several reasons for such low registration in the schools but the one most frequently mentioned was the inability to afford clean clothes, slippers, books, stationery, ink, pens and pencils - without which the child will be humiliated in school.

The heaviest expenses which Pasi parents have to meet are those in connection with the weddings of their children. These expenses are obligatory not only to maintain the status in society, but also to avoid the indignation of the bridegroom's family, which could have repercussions on the quality and stability of their daughter's marriage. A wedding is a main event in the family cycle and the only occasion for demonstrating and validating social ties. The wedding expenses serve as a public statement of a family's financial position. The Pasi believe that economic

capital is not worth anything unless it can be converted to social capital. Since show and grandeur are such an important part of weddings, parents who cannot indulge in this extravagance either due to poverty or too many children, consider themselves extremely unfortunate not to be able to realize their greatest ambition in life. My data shows ample evidence that this inability to achieve and realize dreams in itself could become a motivation to check the number of children and space between them so as to have sufficient time to accumulate enough resources to marry off their children with show and style.

Inability to cope with the financial problems that rearing a large number of children present was repeatedly mentioned by the respondents, especially those belonging to the 'unskilled labour' class. 81.8% of women expressed their desire for four or less children because they believed they could not afford to raise more children with a desirable standard. It included their inability to educate, to clothe and feed properly, inability to find a good match and provide a good wedding and professional medical care.

The lack of medical facilities available in the villages coupled with the lack of knowledge about how to procure them has always been a threat to the health of the mother and children. Although the State Health Service hospitals provide free treatment for poor people they always have a long waiting list and no appointment system for out-patients, which means considerable inconvenience to the villagers who travel from a long distance. Therefore people from the rural areas rarely go to the hospitals. In case of desperate need they consult private practitioners who are ill-equipped to provide special care and treatment and charge exorbitant rates.

Parents, especially with ailing children or children who contracted fatal illnesses, consider a large number of children a hindrance to obtaining better medical facilities. They agree that with the death of

the child not only economic investment in the child in the form of child care and cost of treatment is wasted, but the emotional investment in the child leaves them heartbroken for life.

The above findings from my sample, that poverty and inability to provide a satisfactory standard of child care and upbringing may force villagers to resort to family planning, although basically the desire to have a large family still exists, have important bearing especially in the context of the government efforts to raise the standard and living conditions of the villagers in general, and Scheduled Castes in particular. Whether, with a successful implementation of fertility control, the villagers will develop the desire for small families, or whether the actual family size will increase when the necessity of limiting the family is lifted, is yet to be seen.

THE STATUS OF WOMEN AND FERTILITY

Stratification variables have provided a great deal of information regarding fertility differentials in any society and have been widely used by demographers. This is not only because they provide comparison and variation between different strata of society, but because they provide the basis for the development of economic and social theory. Although life-styles associated with any status or class do influence normative behaviour as regards the fertility of its members, it also influences fertility through variables such as educational attainment, employment pattern, ambition, type of interaction in the family, division of labour, etc.

Since status itself embraces many variables, different demographers have found the association between women's status and fertility by using different components. Stys (1965), Becker (1957), Russet (1964) and Adelman (1963) measured fertility with regard to the economic achievements of women, while Adelman and Russet have found a relationship between birth rate and a society's level of education. Others have used employment of women as a status variable and McLelland (1961) has correlated achievement motivation with fertility. Sociologists explain differences in fertility in different societies by differences in the roles assigned to women. Economists measure the status of women in terms of wage discrimination in employment, suggesting that, all things being equal, the greater the extent of market discrimination, the higher is the fertility of that society. In other words, the greater the money motivation in the job, the greater is the desire to control the family size.

To evaluate the position of women in Pasi society, I prefer the term 'status' to 'role', because it encompasses wider aspects of human activity. While social role is defined as a kind of behaviour associated with a

particular social position, status refers not only to this position but also 'to a placing in a graded order of power and rank or esteem' (Ward 1963). Although role, rank and esteem combine to define an individual's status in a hierarchically organised society and influence fertility behaviour, I regard role as the key factor with respect to fertility intentions and fertility control.

Status is assigned by two factors - legislation and norms. Indian women are granted equal rights in all spheres by legislation but only a small minority of urban women are taking advantage of these opportunities. The reason for this discrepancy lies not in the enforcement or administration of these laws but the inability of women to contravene tradition, custom or conventions of the society. The present chapter is focussed on the aspects of norms, customary laws and the social context within which they develop and shape the personality and social status of women. Fertility performance is seen here as an outcome of personality characteristics that develop in a particular social system.

Norms define the status of men and women by assigning different roles to them. Among the Pasi a man stands for strength, power, virtue and rationality hence he has to protect, support, govern and administer law in order to prove his masculinity. A woman on the other hand is believed to be impulsive, affectionate and tolerant therefore she assumes the supportive roles (Strauss 1964) within the family.

Basis of the Sexual Division of Labour and Role Assignment

What are the basis of sexual division of labour among the Pasi, why women are allotted only home-making roles and how this division of labour affects their fertility intentions and performance are some of the relevant questions to be discussed here.

The roots of asymmetrical distribution of roles between men and

women lies in the fact that they are biologically and endocrinally different. Since a woman's freedom is limited due to menstruation, pregnancy and lactation, and her hormone system makes her more creative, impulsive and less aggressive than man, she is better suited for child care and home-making roles. Biological differences, especially due to uncontrolled fertility, attribute some degree of inescapability among the Pasi. Usually they bear many children and devote a large part of their adult life to bringing up children. This prolonged restriction due to children emphasizes the biological differences and is considered the basic factor in assigning social roles and socializing to patterns of behaviour etc. Also, since all jobs in the village are carried out manually, without any mechanical power, they are essentially strenuous in nature. Therefore in the division of labour, the weaker sex are assigned lighter jobs and men are responsible for strenuous jobs.

Stereotype images are also based upon biological differences. Women are expected to show behaviour related to their physiological characteristics. All cultures acknowledge biological differences between sexes and develop ideas, beliefs and values regarding the male and female image. There are certain roles that emphasize female sexuality whereas others 'unsex' women. Ruderman cites cases in Russia and Israeli kibbutz where it is commonly thought that division of labour is not rigidly based on sex and predicts that 'no matter how revolutionary the society, no matter what its attitudes toward the family, it will sooner or later revert to cultural differentiation and some degree of social aspiration on the basis of sex'. For a proper functioning of a social system, certain roles have to be fulfilled and the natural pattern is to assign expressive-integrative (Parsons, 1955) roles to women and instrumental to men. Ruderman believes that where there is a virtually complete reversal of roles there is almost always a high level of tension and

conflict. (Ruderman, 1970).

So far as a woman's place is concerned, Pasi society is unanimous in the belief that ideally she belongs in the home. Economic need is the only acceptable reason to drive a Pasi woman to paid employment. On the other hand, any worthy man is expected to provide economic, social and moral security for his family. This responsibility provides him with power and a man who fails to exercise his authority over his family is considered less than a man. If respect comes to a man from authority and power, it comes to a woman from submission and obedience. An ideal woman is compared to a cow which is obedient, provides services and demands very little in return. Women accept men as intellectually superior but there is no physiological explanation for this. It is due to differences arising from particular social circumstances, code of ethics, the inequality of recognized rights and due to differences in roles which give men greater opportunities to learn from the political, occupational and social system than women.

Conforming to a stereotype image is important for the Pasi because any contrary behaviour would not only expose them to criticism but their entire family would face the consequences for such deviation. Any variance from the norm is accepted only if it is unavoidable and is brought upon by factors beyond one's control.

Women's Roles - Their Compatibility and Hierarchy

All women assume more than one role each day - such as mothers, wives, daughters-in-law and wage earners. But the most significant point to note among the Pasi is that not only are all roles compatible, they are actually inclusive of others. A Pasi woman must prove her wifely duty through motherhood and a capacity to work hard. A study of the cases of marital disruption among Pasi also confirms that motherhood is essential to maintain the conjugal bond.

Since marital stability depends upon motherhood, and a cordial relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law rests upon her ability to produce children, the role of mother becomes more important than others because it permits continuation or acquisition of other statuses. Merton (1957) termed the more important status as dominant and the latter salient. When such hierarchy in statuses derived from the roles exists, it becomes clear that obligations attached to motherhood are given priority over all others.

Male and Female Identity

Pasi society gives social significance to physical and physiological changes that take place during life time. Each stage of physical growth is accompanied by a change in social expectations and behaviour. A girl is expected to be married before the development of any physical sign of maturity, and preparations for the Gauna ceremony usually start just after menarche. Since transition from one stage to another is more distinct among females, the accompanying social imperatives and interdicts are also clearly defined for women. Their status and identity also change with every stage of physical growth.

Men's identity is not so closely related to their physical development. They derive their identity from their social responsibilities and their work. A man holding a high position in his occupation is considered a 'big' man and if his contribution to the business world is little, he too is 'small'. A Pasi man can improve his status by increasing his land-holding or by taking up a government job, but a woman's identity in traditional society depends upon her status in the family, hence it is static.

One important manifestation of this derivation of status can be seen on women's decisions regarding fertility. If women can elevate their status in the kinship order only by producing children and

eventually becoming mothers-in-law, the desire to have a large family and the early entry into marriage is inherent in their social system.

The Pasi Social System and Equality between Sexes

It has been established that equality between sexes not only encourages joint decision-making, future planning and hence affecting the success of a birth control programme, but it also opens up other roles to women, thus diminishing the importance of the mother role and satisfaction derived from children. Social systems which provide women with equal opportunities to compete with men in occupational, religious, social and political spheres also give women a chance to claim equality with men, and conversely, social systems that do not permit women to participate in such activities, deny her this chance. Although women in Pasi society take up paid work, due to rigid sex-typing of occupation, there is no direct competition between men and women.

Some organizational and institutional characteristics also perpetuate inequality between sexes. Since women depend upon the male members of the family for their status classification, society takes maximum care to maintain this male superiority by excluding women from all religious, political and legal systems. The paramount significance of Hindu religion on this issue should not be overlooked. Ramayana, the holy book of the Hindus classes women with the animals and suggests that they should be treated without mercy.* The Dharmasastras define a good wife as one 'who is distressed when her husband is distressed, who is delighted when he is delighted, who is emaciated and wears dirty clothes when her husband has gone on a journey and who dies on the death of her husband' (Kane, 1930). Women in the Dharmasastra are considered a shadow of their husbands and the development of individual personality traits are discouraged in

*Dhol, ganvar, shudra, pashu, nari, ye sab taran ke adhikari, (a drum, a yokel, a lower caste person and a woman - they only deserve beating.

females. The above quotation cannot be taken as a portrayal of ideal love between a couple because nowhere in the Dharmasastra are such rules of conduct recommended for men. Women are also expected to observe fast (Karva Chawth) for the prosperity and long life of their husbands, but no similar observance is prescribed for men. The two religious ceremonies in which women occupy the focal point are 'Rakhi' and 'Guria' - but both indirectly glorify man's status as a guardian of the womenfolk.

The significance of family structure and kinship in determining status of women has always been an issue with pioneers of social change. The sexual division of labour among the Pasi shows that the traditionally extended families narrow the scope of roles available to women, decrease authority in domestic and personal matters, allow greater segregation of sexes and usually in such circumstances the economic contribution of women to the family is less. Nuclear families on the other hand, provide women greater flexibility of roles because rigid division of labour is difficult to maintain in nuclear families. They also provide greater authority in decision-making and management, and women enjoy greater freedom because they are not under the control of any other women. Also, in subsistence level economy, where the family is, at least partly, the unit of production, their contribution to the family budget is also significant.

The male line in kin reckoning is also of great importance when kin-linked matters such as property rights and the custody of children at times of marital dissolution are considered. The data indicate that customary laws of guardianship of children and inheritance recognize the importance of patrilineally, therefore they favour men and place women in an inferior position within the kinship group. In patrilineal society men are accorded higher status and greater authority than women. Their roles and rights are rigidly defined and demarcated. Customary rules of

inheritance are bound up with the interest of the joint family, in which brothers are coparceners and women have only right of maintenance, although legally a testamentary will of self-earned property is possible and inheritance legislation (1955-56) gives equal rights to sons and daughters. The customary law also does not allow a childless widow to receive a share of family property but only to keep property or jewellery acquired as gifts, legally known as 'stridhana'. In such cases she only has a right of maintenance by her husband's family.

There is much evidence in the form of tradition or customary behaviour which also reflects the inferior status of women. Practices like standing up and keeping out of sight while a man is in the house, serving dinner to men first, walking not with the husband but following him are manifestations of the same idea. Inequality between sexes is nowhere more apparent and emphasized than in the marriage ceremony. Negotiations for marriage must start from the side of the girl, all gifts and payments are made by the girl's family to please the bridegroom and his relations. During the wedding ceremony, the girl's father has to put his cap or turban, a sign of his status and prestige, on the bridegroom's feet as an acknowledgement of the older man's lower status.

Feminine Socialization

Goode (1961) believes that one of the roadblocks that stand in the way of full equality for women is different socialization for girls and boys. The Pasi, like any other traditional Hindu society have laid down different rules of conduct for girls and boys. This dual morality applies not only to education, employment and matters of authority, but it also affects freedom of expression and aspirations. I shall discuss, briefly, how socialization helps in the development of attitude and behaviour consistent with the roles expected from women and men.

One of the most striking features of village life is the complete

absence of any visible association or interaction between the members of the opposite sex. The polarization of sex roles is so much stressed that certain geographical areas and locations in the village are associated with men and others with women. The centre square of the village, the market square - especially the grain market area, and even the front room or verandah of a private house are considered exclusively male quarters and women are not expected to be seen there. Similarly, the backyard, inner rooms and the washing area around the well are considered women's domain and respectable men are not expected to stay inside the house without doing any work, nor to come back from the fields without prior warning during the mid-morning when women are taking baths near the well.

The polarization of sex role is so important that society not only prescribes appropriate behaviour for each sex but also takes particular care to ensure that sex roles are not neutered by imposing different sets of rules and styles of dress, adornment, pattern of recreation, work, ideas, beliefs and different life styles and pace of life for men and women.

The polarization of sex in the manner of clothing is visible as soon as one enters the village. The garments worn by men and women have different styles, i.e. women wear long skirts, blouses and scarves or saris, men wear shirts, trousers, pyjamas or dhotis. Women are not expected to be seen without being completely dressed from head to toe, but men in long hot summers hardly wear anything except shorts. Most colours are gender linked too. All shades of grey, brown or black are masculine while pink, green, yellow and red are strictly feminine. Although the costumes of the villages of Punjab and Rajasthan are renowned for their gaiety and detail, in Uttar Pradesh men always have simple, straight-cut trousers or dhotis, but women show great contrast in the

design and pattern of skirts. Even from very early infancy the families that can afford to be extravagant dress their girls in frills, but the difference in the everyday clothes of boys and girls is hardly perceptible among poorer families. However, on special occasions such as weddings, festivals and fairs, such distinction in the clothing of girls and boys can be seen even among the poor.

A similar contrast in hair styles is also apparent. Pasi men never wear their hair long. Long hair among men is usually associated with homosexuality. Women under no circumstances have their hair cut. The greatest insult that can be inflicted on a woman is to have her hair cut in public. No means of adornment are used by men. Young married women, on the other hand, use a lot of jewellery and cosmetics. Indigenous products available in local shops or even made at home are used for colouring lips, whitening teeth and lining eyes. Kajal (home made eye-liner) also has the power to repel evil spirits, therefore it is used for young boys too. The only exception is the use of perfume which is worn by both sexes on special occasions. Married women must wear Bindi (a red spot between the eyebrows) and colour the parting of their hair.

Polarization of the sex role among the Pasi is also maintained in the manner of recreation and leisure activities. Traditionally the two sexes never had a common pastime as in the Punjab and Rajasthan where dancing and singing - two of the most recreative of arts - involve both sexes. Pasi women enjoy singing on the occasion of weddings, childbirth and during the monsoon and harvest seasons. But on none of these occasions does it involve men. Men's singing is restricted to religious festivals when they chant epic stories or enact the episodes. On such events they play the female parts too, because women are not allowed to sing or dance in mixed company. Men and women participate together only, if ever,

when they go to the cinema or theatre. With the importance of the cinema as a means of recreation and its popularity in India, it is surprising to learn that only 12% of the respondents had ever been to one. Participation in fairs and festivals is a family activity but since it requires a lot of money, very rarely can the entire family afford to go. Men usually pass their evenings together in front of their houses, smoking, drinking, gambling or exchanging stories and jokes about the treachery of the weaker sex or glorifying virility and the power of men. Women have no other leisure activities except weaving mats or baskets and only a few can knit or crochet.

Preparation for Maternal Role and its Fertility Consequences

Traditionally the Pasi women are assigned nurturing roles and motherhood is important in order to justify a woman's position in her husband's home, her marriage and to guarantee support in her old age. Therefore there is considerable pressure upon young girls to consider marriage and maternity essential for a woman's fulfilment as an individual and to secure her status as an adult. Young girls see the anxiety of parents over an expected pregnancy and how joyously it is received. The consequences of barrenness are also publicly known. In order to understand the fertility consequences of the sex role socialization I will discuss two points: (a) What is considered essential in the form of socio-economic status and psychological maturity before transition to motherhood can be considered and how socialization helps to achieve it? (b) What sacrifice a woman has to make in order to attain the status of mother.

I hypothesize that: (a) If motherhood requires much socio-psychological preparation and role adjustment, there are greater chances that the first pregnancy would be postponed and the subsequent pregnancies would be planned and spaced. (b) The higher the price a woman has to pay in terms of money or employment for motherhood, the higher would be the

chance that poorer women will plan their families. But in the upper strata, the effect of this motivation may be reversed, i.e. the number of children in the economically well-off families would become a status symbol.

Preparation and training for motherhood is given special attention during the early years of socialization of young girls. Instead of playing with dolls or dolls' houses simulating adult role in a play situation, young girls play with real babies and act as a mother-substitute in real life situations. This pragmatic approach to learning gives young girls training in the areas of child psychology and child care, and a sense of responsibility. Although young girls usually go about their own activities with young siblings on their hips, without actually interacting with the child, but when the baby cries they know how to comfort the child back to quiescence. When the child is two to three years old and family meals supplement his diet, he sits with his brothers and sisters and they in turn put bits of food in his mouth. Young girls teach them new activities through play and smack them if they do not obey. The consequences of such training are two-fold. Firstly, motherhood does not negatively influence personality. Cohen and Gurin's (1966) study suggests deterioration of mental health and happiness and a feeling of inadequacy as parents. The Pasi women develop confidence and skill as a result of their training and can face the care of a child much more easily and confidently. Secondly, as a result of this training, motherhood provides satisfaction, not a depressed sense of self-worth.

Even if there are no socio-psychological or economic deterrents to motherhood, there could still be factors that make motherhood less attractive because of the high price a woman has to pay for it. The 'price' here does not include cost of bearing and rearing children or

'opportunity cost' measured in terms of time lost from paid employment. This has already been discussed in a previous chapter. The term here is limited to non-economic sacrifices a woman has to make in order to have children. In this connection I will discuss how Pasi social system helps women to minimize role strain which usually develops with the birth of a child and how it avoids the 'crisis of parenthood'.

As a result of the extended family and close kinship ties, young women constantly come in contact with expectant mothers and learn to accept pregnancy as a natural event rather than a catastrophe. Consultations, assurance and advice of friends and family is always available during the period of pregnancy and early motherhood. Responsibility of the new born child is not suddenly thrust upon a woman. The village midwife or the mother-in-law usually bathes and cleans the baby for a week or so and responsibilities are gradually transferred to the mother. However, adjustments to her work load are made immediately. This is possible only in village communities where either mother-surrogates or domestic help are available. These structural contributions, i.e. the availability of a sister-in-law or mother-in-law in an extended family to take up the domestic burden or young girls in the home to share child minding duties in a nuclear family, make additional responsibilities less straining for the young mother.

Shared interests and mutual dependence between a couple in an egalitarian family structure also have an important bearing on the role-strain developed after childbirth. Women in such a family structure are more emotionally dependent upon husbands and the responsibility of a new born child does not fit in with the emotional needs of the mother. The Pasi family structure, since it is based on segregated role-relationship, discourages intimacy, dependency and communication between husband and wife and minimizes personal conflicts and strain which could develop

where the wife is emotionally attached to the husband. In this situation the birth of a child does not disrupt or require adjustment in the role relationship between the couple. Hence the question of the barrier that Gavron (1966) mentioned as 'marital defense against the institution of parenthood' does not arise.

Motherhood usually means loss of freedom for a woman. It not only means geographical confinement but it also deprives her of involvement in non-family interests and participation in extra familial activities. Other things being equal, the greater the alternative roles and interests outside the family open to women, the greater would be the sacrifice a woman has to make in order to have children and the higher would be the probability of dissatisfaction and depression after childbirth.

Benedek (1951) attributes it to the fact that the child's need for mothering is absolute while the need of an adult woman to mother is relative. In simpler terms, a child needs full-time attention of the mother while the mother cannot be confined to a child's crib because she has other interests too. This problem arising from the discrepancy in the needs of mother and child is solved remarkably well among the Pasi in three ways:

- (1) By providing mother surrogates to relieve women from mothering duties.
- (2) By established norms which provide socialization in which extra familial activities and other roles are not encouraged.
- (3) By providing an economic and cultural milieu in which the desire to participate, or take interest in extra familial roles cannot always be fulfilled.

Female Education and Fertility

Of all modern social factors that influence fertility, education of women is considered to be of the utmost importance because of its lasting

effect on fertility and the comparative ease and minimum of resistance with which it can be introduced to any society. This is why education of women was incorporated in the Population Policy of India in 1971.

Education opens new roles for women and provides chances for re-evaluation of traditional roles. Pasi women are aware of the fact that illiteracy is a handicap in accepting and performing other roles in life. The inescapability from household drudgery because of illiteracy is apparent in their comments, such as; 'Would I be cutting grass (work which requires no intelligence) if I was educated?' Or, 'What else am I able to do except cooking and cleaning?' The absence of a stereotype of an educated woman among the Pasi creates a condition that perpetuates itself. It makes the role of an educated woman in rural society beyond the imagination for most of the respondents. Literacy to the extent that a woman can write, read letters and signs on the roads, and understand the simple arithmetic of everyday transactions, is considered valuable for every woman, but education to a higher level for a married woman in rural areas is not only considered a sheer waste of time but is also believed to lead to friction in the family and maladjustment in the society. To put it simply, the roles open to women as a result of education (not mere literacy), although prestige giving, are not compatible with the contemporary rural lifestyle. Suburban respondents, however, show greater compromise between a married woman's role and her career derived from education.

Another change that education brings to women can be seen in the family planning decisions. It influences both their attitude towards family planning and the spread of contraceptive knowledge. Studies undertaken all over the world have shown a significant inverse relationship between education and fertility. The same trend can be seen in India, in the Mysore Population Study and in the Sixteenth Round of the

National Sample Survey of 1960-61. Both studies revealed an inverse association between knowledge of contraception and level of education, although a minimum of 7-8 years of schooling was found essential before any measurable effect on fertility was noticed (Mysore Population Study).

Education not only brings a new outlook, freedom from tradition, maturity and rationalism essential for acceptance of family planning, it opens the door to knowledge and ideas of family planning which are more scientific, rational and effective. Even among traditional Pasi society, means of birth control and abortion are known and practised - although only secretly for preventing pre-marital or extra-marital pregnancies - they are less effective, difficult to administer and are more injurious to health. Educated women would not have to rely on such means or upon the verbal communication of knowledge, which is usually biased, but upon factual knowledge as is given in family planning literature. Almost everywhere in India older village folk, being less educated subscribe to the Gandhian philosophy of abstinence more than modern means of birth control and younger people show greater acceptability of modern methods of family planning. Kale (1969) and many others have attributed this to modern schooling. Beshar (1967) deduced from Driver (1960) and Sinha (1961) studies that successful implementation of family planning is due to better communication between the couple on matters of sex as a result of better education. Egyptian studies by El Badry (1956) and Abu Luhog (1965) also support Bank's (1954) argument that use of birth control methods decrease as we go down the educational ladder.

A better knowledge of family planning gives women confidence in themselves and makes them more responsible for their own actions. It makes Karma (deeds) more important than fate, therefore generates a responsible attitude. Education repels fatalistic orientation towards life and brings goals and ambitions within reach of the individual.

Education widens the horizon of information from family and neighbourhood to a greater circle of friends, work-mates and beyond them to the world through newspapers and books. Education makes women more independent and less submissive to traditional demands imposed upon them.

Education also brings secure employment and a steady income, which means that in adverse circumstances they will be more able to tap the varied resources and would be in a better position to save for the future than an uneducated poor couple who would be totally dependent upon their children for economic security. The value of children as a means of ensuring future welfare decreases as couples become educated and thus more economically stable. At the same time children have no 'labour value' in occupations outside farming. They are no asset to father's skilled occupation in the city. Hence, educated parents are more likely to limit their family than uneducated parents.

The foregoing paragraphs summarize the importance of education as a factor in reducing fertility. This leads to the most important question of all: why, despite free and compulsory education for children there is only a fraction (8%) of all school age girls actually attending school? What are the structural and institutional impediments to female education, and how do cultural beliefs regarding sexual differences make education for women less attractive than men?

In the tradition of Indian culture sexual differences are enforced and rigorously maintained in all aspects of human activity. In the field of education it operates on two levels. Firstly, it exists in the educational outlook and is reflected in the type of subjects they are encouraged to study. Secondly, it accounts for the discrepancy in the educational level between men and women.

Only in Primary Schools are both sexes taught similar subjects, and since girls are expected to get married and bear children, domestic science

is made compulsory for girls in Middle and High School. In order to maintain the focality of the home-base role, women's education is emphasized and encouraged only in the spheres where it may help her perform her traditional role more efficiently and it also puts a limit on the level to which it should be acquired. Our respondents categorically maintained that education in the academic subjects for women is a sheer waste of time. And this trend is not only confined to rural areas. In all Asian countries, even in higher educational institutions enrolment of women in Domestic Science subjects, Fine Art, Sociology, Social Work, Literature and Languages is many times higher because they are complementary to the roles traditionally assigned to women.

Our sample shows a wide discrepancy in the enrolment of boys and girls in schools and the gap increases with the educational level. 68% of the total children enrolled in the primary schools were boys as compared to 73% in the middle schools and 74.5% in the High Schools. No Pasi girls of my sample were enrolled in the College or the University. There are structural mechanisms in Pasi society that widen this gap. The first and foremost is the stratification system. Since women derive their status from their father or husband, a woman who might achieve higher education than men would disturb this hierarchy. Therefore to maintain this system, society discourages women competing with men in the field of education. This discrepancy in educational status is also significant in selective process in marriage. Since a man must choose a wife with a lower level of education than his, the choice of boys for girls decreases as the level of girls' education increases, so much so that highly qualified lower caste women would either have to remain single or marry outside the caste. In my sample, Shambhoo Dayal - a graduate has taken an illiterate wife without overtly disturbing the stratification system, but I do not know of any case when a woman with a higher educational standard has married a man

of a lower educational status.

The discrepancy in educational levels between men and women is inherent in the contemporary Pasi social system. The chances of economic mobility in the village are restricted. Hence the Pasi men with ambition to raise their status must leave the village. Migration to the city requires training and skill for occupation, which makes education for boys not only important but its continuation to a higher level also is essential. The same motive is operative for non-agricultural higher castes. They must send their sons to College in order to maintain their 'superiority' in the caste system which equates a low social status with menial labour. The Brahmin consider menial labour degrading, therefore they are under greater pressure to send their sons to college than parents of lower caste children. Even for those engaged in agriculture, modern education can prove to be of immense help in increasing output and keeping pace with modern changes. Illiteracy restricts the use of the modern credit system, makes it difficult or even impossible to maintain contact with the commercial world or utilize scientific techniques in agriculture and to obtain information regarding grants or loans from the government. To enjoy the benefits of 'the new ways' in agriculture, commerce or business, ideally every family must have at least one educated son. Since all girls eventually get married and their interests are looked after by their husbands, their education is considered to be of secondary importance.

The role of socio-cultural and interpersonal factors that impede or discourage girls' education require examination. In our sample area only 8% of the school age girls were regularly attending school at the time of data collection. The level at which they were studying were as follows:

Primary School	-	63.6%
Middle School	-	26.3%
High School	-	9.2%
College or over	-	Nil

Apart from the above mentioned 8%, there were a further 26.9% of total school age girls who were at one time enrolled in a school but left soon after. Briefly the reasons for leaving school were grouped in the following categories:

- (1) Personal Inability.
- (2) Societal and Cultural Obstacles.
- (3) Disagreement on matters concerning discipline, administration and policies.

Personal Inability - Although 13% of the parents doubted the ability of their daughters, we do not have any evidence that these girls were more backward in learning than the others. No written record was kept in any of the village schools regarding the children's educational performance. Their assessment of their children's aptitude cannot be taken as reliable, especially since the children stayed in school for only three or four months. Only 4% left school because of physical deformity such as squint-eyes, short-sight or illness which directly affected their performance in school or for personal reasons such as stuttering or limping that caused embarrassment or harassment.

Social and Cultural Obstacles - Financial inability to support a girl in school was the reason most frequently mentioned. Not only extra money is needed, there is also indirect loss of income too, if a girl goes to school. Mother's part-time farmwork depends upon young girls to mind the children. A girl's attendance in school also means, at least partly, loss of child labour which actually helps in the production of household goods or services. Family circumstances which needed extra help, such as the birth of another child, illness or death of parents were also mentioned as a reason for discontinuation of girls' education.

The institution of marriage is also unfavourable to a girl's educational chances. When child marriages are customary and a daughter's

age at marriage is taken as an index of parent's status, most parents try to marry their daughters at the first opportunity available to them. As rich boys from agricultural families marry early, young girls have a wider and better choice than older girls, and, once a girl is married, it is against the mother-in-law's status and authority to let the girl continue with her education. The chances of continuation of education after marriage also depend upon her husband's educational achievements. If he does not continue his education, the girl will also have to terminate in order to maintain the hierarchy in marriage. Also, since discrepancy in educational statuses is to be maintained in marriage, the girls with higher education stand smaller chance of finding a suitable match than girls with little or no education.

Religious beliefs like merits earned through marrying a young daughter or the shame of keeping an adolescent girl at home also restrict the chances of a girl's education. The fact that the education of girls can neither be used in getting employment in the villages nor produce monetary gains further diminishes the possibility that parents would sacrifice anything to send their daughters to school. 13.80% of girls left school because of lack of discipline, physical punishment, lack of attention from the teacher, etc. Some parents believed that in mixed caste schools children from the lower castes are discriminated against by the teacher and are not given any attention.

The recent wave of social and economic changes that have just started to permeate Pasi society would no doubt remove some of the above mentioned obstacles from decision-making regarding girls' education, and, at the same time it would bring favourable changes in which not only education would be of help in performing the traditional roles of housewife and mother but it would also be a means of finding a worthy husband in the city and could be used in gaining respectable, status-giving paid employment.

Female Employment and Fertility

For more than half a century the population trends of Western Europe, Socialist countries of Eastern Europe and America indicate that economic development and technological advancement are positively related to the level of female employment and that in such conditions working women have greater motivation and success in controlling the size of their families.

How female employment affects the intervening variables such as family dynamics, aspirations, ambitions and desires, chances of education, age at marriage and how it affects the family size and utilization of birth control means, are important issues not only for Sociologists but also for economic and population planners. Davis and Blake (1955, 1956) emphasize that encouraging couples to limit their families to their expressed desires is not enough for developing countries. The desires themselves are high. Blake maintains that one way of lowering the desire is to demonstrate the advantage of paid employment to women. She asserts that the 'association between married women working and family size is generally acknowledged to be one of the strongest, more persistent over time and space and most theoretically reasonable in the field of social determinants of fertility.' Economic planners are also optimistic. Colver and Langlois (1962) in this connection recommend that 'if recruitment of women in the labour-force will help to induce a decline in fertility by changing the character of the family and reproductive behaviour, it is worthy of high priority in developing strategy.'

Although statistical data from most studies suggest a relationship between the female labour-force participation and family size or contraceptive success, there is a controversy over the direction or significance of this relationship. Data from the Western countries and Russia generally suggest a clear-cut positive relationship between these two factors (Gendell, 1967, 1964), but in developing countries where

women are usually employed in agriculture no relationship can be established (Frederici, 1968; Mazur, 1968).

The data available from India is very limited, therefore no firm conclusions can be drawn. However, from what is available (Mysore Population Study, 1961), it can safely be deducted that gainfully employed women in the cities had given birth to fewer children than women occupied with household duties. The present study also shows no consistent relationship between family size and employment of the Pasi women.

Age Group	Average Number of Living Children	
	Employed Women	Unemployed Women
Under 25	1.74	1.52
26 - 35	2.99	3.05
36 and over	4.34	4.33

Table 22: Relationship between Work Experience and Family Size

Variation in the female employment rate in different societies has brought to attention the motivations behind the decision to take paid employment, and socio-economic conditions that make it easy or difficult for a woman to be engaged in a paid job. Any decision regarding employment, whether free or forced upon due to extreme poverty, loneliness or other reasons, requires some kind of need to make the employment attractive. However, need in itself does not guarantee employment. Even if women succeed in getting a job, lack of child care facilities, uncooperative husbands and the critical attitude of neighbours and friends, would only dampen the enthusiasm to work or would make it difficult or impossible to continue. The decision to enter into paid employment depends not only upon desire but also upon the circumstances that make it feasible for women to work outside. Nye and Hoffman (1963) call the former 'Motivators' and the latter 'Facilitators'.

The need or motivation that encourages women to take paid employment varies in different societies. Variation in economic and technological standards and other social factors account to some extent for these variations.

Motivations for Employment among Pasi Women

Pasi women in rural or semi-rural areas show a high employment rate (59.9%) but in all cases it is either part-time or seasonal work. If a woman was engaged in any kind of paid employment either full or part-time or was available for employment she is classed as a 'working woman' for the present purpose. The reasons for employment, as given by the Pasi respondents are summarized in the following table:

Motivation for Employment	% of total Working Women
1. Economic need	89.1
2. Companionship	10.0
3. Freedom/Change	1.0

Table 23: Motivations for Employment among the Pasi Women

The motivations to work among the Pasi are obvious. Dire poverty and other exigencies drive not only active men and women to work but also draw young children and old people into employment. The need for a paid job is so real and compelling for women that there is never a shortage of workers. Still the problem is not that of unemployment among the Pasi, but what Greep (1963) terms as 'underemployment'. He defines it as 'a lack of organization and of productive equipment to provide work that will produce a reasonable output per worker'. One consequence of this underemployment is that per capita income among the Pasi is very low. Hence all active members have to contribute to the family budget. The women who were not working at the time of interview were the ones who either due to family commitments could not work or those economically

well-off who did not need to work.

For most Pasi women economic need is the most compelling reason for seeking employment. My data suggest that women do not have a choice. They are forced out of the house into the labour market to feed themselves and their children. Women's earnings are usually supplementary but when the husband is unemployed, ill or absent, they are basic to the maintenance of the family. Obviously women in such circumstances are under greater pressure to take a job than women with husbands in stable service or with enough land.

My questions to working women about how they spent their money revealed some important information. 83% of women contributed all their money to the household budget (i.e. food and clothing), 8% saved a part of it. 3% said they spent some of it on children's education, and the other 6% spent some on items such as soap, hair oil, cosmetics or occasionally on fairs and festivals.

Small patches of land are unprofitable in agricultural economy. Small cultivators have minimum yield from their land because their input to the land in the form of fertilizers and good quality seeds is non-existent. They usually have no irrigation facilities and farm equipment. Moreover, where large farmers can claim government loans and subsidies for almost everything, small cultivators fail to obtain these because they cannot offer surety or collateral to the government. Not only do small cultivators have less yield due to less input to the land; their crop is at greater risk due to draught, flood and pests. Their land is most likely to be left half of the year uncultivated. Since small cultivators do not have the means to improve the yield from their land, they consider it as a secondary source of income and paid unskilled labour as a stable primary source. Hence small cultivators stay at home only during the sowing and harvesting seasons and are employed on building sites for the rest of

the year.

Continuous unskilled jobs on building sites also cannot be guaranteed because usually during the monsoon season the building industry shows a slump. Also, the Pasi are casual workers, i.e. they are employed on a day to day basis by a master craftsman and their employment depends upon the contracts obtained by him.

As we see from the brief description above, a man's earnings are not stable and neither is there any guarantee of a minimum wage. Because of this insecurity of employment for men, women must work to supplement the family budget or even provide for the family. The need of Pasi women to work is largely determined by their husband's earnings and the regularity of their employment. Therefore it is not surprising that all women spent some money on providing food for the family and 83% spent all their income on food.

A small proportion (8%) of the women who saved some of their earnings also considered working as a necessity rather than a matter of choice. Due to the irregularity of employment for men and seasonality of women's employment it is essential that some money must be saved to cover dormant periods if the family is to avoid starvation. Illness can make inroads into family savings. In an area with such poor sanitary conditions, insufficient food and poor health, the frequency of illness and infection is many times higher than in towns. Money must also be saved for the marriage of the daughters. The earlier the necessary amount is saved, the earlier the wedding and better the choice of boys. Savings are never sufficient for a wedding. Some of the money has to be borrowed and the repayments of such loans usually last a long time.

Money also operates as a motivation for employment in less concrete ways. Since the jobs in the farms are easily available and wages are at least partly paid in cash, more and more women are drawn to paid

employment. The availability of jobs, and the income of other working women have made housewives conscious of the value of their time. Time means money and women who can spare time consider it necessary to work, earn money and supplement the family budget. The possibility of receiving wages in cash has also resulted in a sense of competition in living standards. No doubt for the majority of women work is still a necessity to keep body and soul together, for at least 17% it also helps in raising the standard of living. The study suggests that as soon as pressure to work due to acute shortage is lifted women will prefer to give up their work and stay at home, because this provides respect and status to women. In a subsistence economy with a primitive technology, material acquisition hardly demarcates lower and upper strata of society. Therefore upper strata women refrain from paid work, making themselves different from the lower strata in this respect. Although farmwork provides poor Pasi women with a motivation for upward economic mobility, as soon as the higher status is achieved, it goes against the accepted pattern of the class and then working for others is considered degrading.

If participation in rewarding employment can alter the stereotype image of women, it can safely be assumed that in future when more job opportunities will be available and will have greater rewards, the attraction of home-base role will also diminish. The belief that 'children are wealth' is constantly under attack and with it is challenged the status and traditional role of women. When children were wealth, women had a very creative and productive role, when their role becomes less productive women have to contribute in a different way, possibly through employment.

Only in 11% of the cases examined, did women control and spend all their self-earned money themselves, in the rest of the cases, husband or mother-in-law exercised a right over it. Some Pasi men believe that the only way to keep a woman under control is 'to keep her half-starved'.

According to them, vices such as disobedience, insolence, carelessness and work-shyness in women develop only when they are well fed. The most frequently heard dictum to substantiate this point is, 'Have you ever seen a well fed donkey working?'

When men have attitudes like this, self-earned money no doubt comes in handy for women to feed themselves and their children. It is generally believed that self-earned money provides women with power and authority and gives them a better bargaining position in the family because they have third party support (i.e. friends and work mates etc.). My experience with the Pasi does not confirm the hypothesis that simple earning power is directly related to ultimate power. Pasi women work as hard as men sometimes, but still are placed in a subservient position.

I sought to answer the question whether working women put greater emphasis on equality with men in family decision-making than non-working women by asking my respondents questions about their attitude towards working, equality and the traditional role of women. The answers are summarized in the following tables:-

Women's Role attitude towards Employment	% of Women
Favourable to employment	11.8
Against employment	88.2

Table 24: Women's Role Attitude towards Employment

Employment Status	Economic Matters	Domestic Matters
Unemployed	30.0%	58.6%
Employed	56.0%	55.1%

Table 25: Joint Decision-Making in Family according to Employment Status

Although 59.9% of the total Pasi women are employed, 88.2% believed that ideally a woman's place is in the home. Only 11.8% of the total

respondents considered that it is a woman's responsibility to share the economic burden of the family. Table 25 shows that female work-force participation improves joint decision-making in the family on economic matters.

Some Structural and Organizational Characteristics which facilitate Female Employment

It was noted earlier that motherhood is the ultimate goal of every Pasi woman. The housewife-mother role demands not only physical strength but continuous alertness and competence and offers women opportunities for creativity and self expression. How can, then, the higher employment rate among the Pasi be explained? The answer lies in the fact that the decision to enter into paid employment is not free but forced upon by acute poverty and their social system provides conditions that facilitate farm employment.

The joint or extended family system provides the ideal conditions in which a married woman can continue in outside employment. The child care facilities are available at home, enabling the mother to take up paid employment. Although certain features of family-dynamics among the Pasi, such as lack of communication between couples, segregated role relationships, sexual division of labour, are considered unfavourable to maternal employment, in my experience either the obstacles posed by these unfavourable factors are overcome by the availability of kin and relatives to take care of the children and extra work load, or, the economic need is so pressing that these obstacles must be conquered.

Since a Pasi woman's work role is secondary to her maternal or home-maker's role, she must find a job where role conflict is minimum. In the previous chapter I discussed those structural characteristics which facilitate female employment and how farmwork provides ideal conditions for employment.

In a traditional society, norms, customs and attitudes are very

important forces that regulate the behaviour of people. Work is considered a virtue and laziness is frowned upon. Some women, especially from a joint family go to work to avoid criticism from neighbours or in-laws for not contributing to the family budget. In subsistence economy both men and women's work is an unpaid contribution to the family agriculture. If some women do not have their own land, they work for others. As working on the farms is a traditional occupation, there is no censure for working women.

Effect of Farm Employment on the Fertility of Pasi Women

Stycos and Weller (1967) have tackled the incongruity between the fertility of working women in developed and developing societies, explaining the relationship from Latin American and Turkish data. They produce a typology that where women's work and maternal roles are compatible there will be no reduction in fertility.

Where women are concerned it is probably not wage earning per se, but the necessity of working fixed hours which is more important in bringing about changes in the interpretation of the roles and patterns of family living. A woman working full-time and fixed hours must have help from the family and kin-group to cope with the over-demanding roles of housewife and wage earner. A full-time job requires understanding and adjustment between husband and wife and these factors have been proved to have a definite effect on both desired size of family and efficiency and success in contraceptive practice.

A rigid sex-typing of the daily chores among the Pasi makes changes and adjustments in the role-relation difficult. A man in the village cannot cook or do other domestic work without loss of dignity while his wife is working outside. Part-time farm work is not objectionable to Pasi men because it does not require adjustments which are incompatible with his traditional roles.

Another reason for the incongruity in fertility relationships between farm work and other paid skilled jobs is due to the fact that other jobs require training and hence have more chances of work commitment. This work commitment requires not only postponement of marriage until the training is complete, but even after marriage the time for the first conception and number of children are more likely to be planned in families where women are working in more incompatible jobs than agriculture and cottage industries. Data from the western countries also show a high percentage of unmarried women. The Pasi have no real education or career aspirations for girls, therefore entry into marriage is also early and universal. The work force consists mainly of women who have already either completed their families or have not yet started their reproductive life. Work in such circumstances neither encourages family planning nor the desire for small families.

Apart from the above mentioned factors that operate in all agricultural occupations, there are other challenges of the subsistence economy of the Pasi that make fertility limitations undesirable. The employment of women occurs in economic organization where there is a greater need for children and social organization of extended families removes the necessity of limiting the family in order to take up paid employment.

Present Socio-Economic Changes and their Influence on Women's Role

All Indian societies are undergoing social and technological changes. Although the results are more visible in urban communities, rural communities like the Pasi have just started showing the signs of change in economic and personal outlook. Since the effectiveness of a birth control programme depends on its universal acceptance and because small family norms are counter to the Pasi tradition, family planning too could be counted as a part of social change.

Availability of health and family planning services, D.D.T. spraying, inoculation, etc., have helped to postpone the age of death for women and young children among the Pasi. The declining mortality rate and increasing life expectancy will not only provide women with confidence and security in the future but will also provide them with free time, once the family has grown up, to utilize in other than family-based roles. It is believed that once women use contraception successfully, they will gain potential freedom from socio-economic and physiological effects of continuous periods of pregnancy and lactation which ties them down to family roles for almost 30 years. I believe that when motherhood no longer remains a life-long role, the satisfaction derived from it will also be transient and the number of children will also cease to be a measure of status. Such circumstances could be favourable for seeking and taking interest in alternative means of self-fulfilment. The contact of Pasi women with women research-interviewers and V.L.W. (village level workers) has made them aware of the existence of the possible alternative roles.

Like modern medical measures, new methods of communication are also expected to have a favourable influence on the Pasi women. Even in rural areas of Lucknow there is now a regular means of transport available to and from the city. Apart from bus and trains a rikshaw can easily be engaged from the main road. Although family travel by bullock cart is still popular for festivals or weddings, one hardly comes across these old modes of transport on the busy main roads. It is true that despite the availability of modern transport, village women are rarely seen alone on it, but it is not solely due to it being contrary to their ideals but is also due to lack of money, knowledge and confidence needed to travel by train or bus. There is no doubt that if such necessity arises women will make use of public transport. Travel by public transport also

requires that caste barriers, female modesty, shyness, avoidance of the other sex and purdah, etc., must be ignored. It would not only help to make new roles possible for women but would also require reinterpretation of the old ones. One important outcome of this freedom of movement would be that women will have access to schools, offices, shops and family planning clinics. Greater participation in extra-familial activities will diminish the importance of a large family as a means of self-fulfilment.

Apart from travel, other forms of communication are also becoming popular in villages. Although not available in any of the rural areas under study, radio, newspapers and magazines are other means of communication available in semi-rural and suburban areas of Lucknow. Ideas travel faster than goods. Mass meetings for family planning propaganda and film shows are arranged frequently in order to provide new information to people.

Frequent contact with cities has brought not only new ideas but also new material goods to villages. Although material acquisition in the villages is restricted due to lack of money, steel, brass and aluminium are slowly replacing earthenware, mill textiles are replacing home-weaving and grinding mills are substituting stone grinders. The effect of this flow of modern ideas and goods in the villages on domestic life and family-dynamics will determine the future status and roles available to women. The introduction of piped water has saved many women the tedious job of drawing water from the well. Now men and women both fetch water from the same pipe and, as a result, fetching water is no longer a sex-linked task. It has also altered role-relationship within the family. The avoidance of men also cannot be rigorously maintained when the pipe is in the middle of the village and fetching water is no longer exclusively a woman's job. The introduction of glass, brass and

aluminium into the kitchen has also reduced the indispensibility of the clay pots. Consequently the need to weave mats and baskets to exchange for clay pots has also diminished. It is clear that the introduction of ready made articles or services from cities disturbs the balance in the division of labour and power in the family, and requires reassessment and redefinition of roles. At the same time each ready made article or service requires money which compels women to work outside to supplement the family income.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The aim of the present study was to seek the answer to two basic questions: (a) In Pasi society how is the greater part of existence and particularly the attitudes and decisions concerning reproduction, governed by social and cultural factors? (b) How far can the current population programme of the government of India achieve its aims in this social and cultural setting?

The conclusions reached from the present study portray a pessimistic picture regarding the success of the present population programme without a further shift in emphasis from clinically oriented policy to an overall development policy. It also recommends modification in the contents and implementation of the policy to suit the rural social, economic and cultural system. The Scheduled Castes make up almost 15% of India's population and if the Pasi could be taken as a representative sample of this group, the urgency of the matter becomes evident. The efforts must be speeded up not only for the national development but also for the sake of human dignity and quality of life.

The family planning slogans 'two or three children, no more' or 'small family, happy family' are not consistent with the present day reality of the Pasi people. It presupposes that large family attitudes persist because of cultural inertia, social limbo and tradition and that such slogans would initiate favourable changes in the value system regarding fertility. The fact is that large families are a distinct advantage in low output agriculture and are essential for survival in the Pasi social system.

However urgently the government may declare the desire to curb fertility and provide means of birth control, it certainly cannot expect people to accept it if they wish to have large families. Pasi women favour large families not only for personal satisfaction or for role

requirement and cultural pressure but because in the present social complex of Pasi living large families are helpful. Also, their social system provides for and encourages women to bear and rear many children. The present study also reveals cultural and social circumstances which resist the successful implementation of the policy.

The following are the characteristics of the Pasi social system which defy the goal of a small family and motivate large families:-

- (a) In the absence of state assistance children provide economic, social and physical security, especially in old age.
- (b) They are the means by which one acquires status and power.
- (c) Children are essential for spiritual salvation and earning merits.
- (d) Material conditions of the Pasi existence require large work force, hence children are assets in agriculture and the means of economic advancement. Children provide a stable source of income, especially in families depending upon labour. Seasonality of employment requires maximum earning members to save for the months of unemployment and hardship. Acceptance of female labour in farm work makes girls also an economic asset.
- (e) Children are a source and a means of personal gratification creative satisfaction and of expanding and extending oneself.

Institutional Support or Facilitation to have Large Families

The following are the factors in the Pasi marital institution which favour early and universal marriage and hence encourage high fertility:-

- (a) Marriage is a religious, social and economic necessity.
- (b) Early marriages are socially rewarded and late marriages meet with social reproval.
- (c) The kin group has personal interest in getting all the children married as early as possible.
- (d) Motherhood is the only socially prescribed role for women and the

only means of acquiring adult status.

The Pasi family system is based on the principle 'from each according to his obligations to each according to his need', the consequences of which are manifold:-

- (a) It removes economic constraint from the decision-making regarding fertility control.
- (b) It makes the young couple economically and socially dependent and under obligation to parents and the kin group. Through procreation they discharge their religious duty to provide salvation to ancestors and their social duty to increase family name, status and power.
- (c) Since family is the problem solving unit, the problems associated with an additional child are also solved within the family which makes child bearing and rearing less straining, less time consuming, less disruptive, less demanding and requires the minimum of role adjustment in the family. Their task structure and extended family structure not only help to develop favourable norms emphasizing the mother role, they also absorb the extra work load and strain resulting from an additional child and thus remove the motivation to control fertility.

Pasi society considers the role of mother dominant over all other roles acted by women. Her other roles are complementary to her basic role and are mutually inclusive. It has three important implications:-

- (1) It makes motherhood the only criteria for status classification and also the only means of raising status in the kinship hierarchy, i.e. the earlier and larger the family grow, the greater would be the rise in status, power and prestige.
- (b) Education loses its importance as a means of acquiring a better job and raising one's socio-economic status. It makes society's approach to a girl's education different than that of a boy. Firstly, girls are expected to study only to a modest standard, and, secondly, the subjects they study are complementary to her traditional role, i.e. that of a

housewife and mother. Academic education to a high standard is not only considered a waste of time but due to inequality between the sexes, higher education becomes a handicap for girls at the time of seeking for a husband. Since the stratification system propagates the idea of male superiority, in marriage a woman must be of lower educational standard than the man. It restricts the choice of boys for educated girls.

(c) As motherhood is the only culturally prescribed role for women, the years of socialization of girls are completely devoted to developing the necessary norms and values for the preparation for this role. Therefore by the time girls have 'return marriage' they are well versed in housework and rearing of children. As motherhood does not require any specific socio-psychological preparation and role adjustment, there is no motive to postpone the first pregnancy.

Structural and Functional Obstacles to the Transmission of Family Planning Knowledge and Its Acceptance

(a) Due to the very low literacy rate among the adult Pasi population, the use of the press as a means of gaining family planning knowledge is very limited.

(b) Poverty and backwardness exclude the acquisition of family planning knowledge through the mass media (radio and T.V.).

(c) Social and family restrictions imposed on women are the cause of exceptionally low attendance at mass meetings, film shows and the family planning clinics.

(d) Presence of the mother or father-in-law, sexual division of labour and segregation of sexes is an unfavourable factor in receiving first hand, unbiased knowledge from family planning workers. Personal communications at present is the only means of gaining knowledge about family planning but it lacks accuracy because every individual explains it according to their ideological leanings, personal interests and circumstances.

(e) Overt discussion between a couple for joint decision-making regarding family size and successful contraceptive use is restricted due to male dominant family system, segregated conjugal role relationship, presence of consanguineous kin and taboo on cross-sex discussion regarding intimate matters.

The present study emphasizes the fact that the demographic situation among the Pasi of Lucknow is not similar to the rest of the population and that social and economic conditions under which demographic dynamics takes place is also different and it is misleading to believe that in India with such vast variation in socio-cultural and economic statuses, one population policy would obtain equally successful results from all communities. With city dwellers the policy has been a success but it hardly made any visible impact upon the attitude of the Pasi women.

Although India cannot become affluent and urban overnight, some features of urban life conducive to family limitation must be adopted by the villagers if any success of the voluntary programme is to be expected. No doubt, theoretically, the education of the masses, improvement in the general standard of living and status of women have been incorporated in Population Policy, but in action these matters have not been given importance in the villages studied. Adult education classes, women's associations, crafts and hygiene classes and the free Welfare Milk Scheme were discontinued after a very short time, while despite very little success mobile family planning clinics and family planning workers still visit all the villages.

This study therefore comes to the conclusion that the present policy will not have the desired effect among the Pasi because its assessment of the priorities is wrong. It failed to discern and measure the magnitude of the cultural values, age-sex norms and roles, extended familism, the conditions of their material existence and the effect these

may have on the desired size of the family and successful use of contraception.

The study suggests that an emphasis on the intermediate steps such as education, steady employment, improving the status of women and their labour force participation outside the farms will actuate a very favourable cycle of change in family-dynamics and the socio-economic system of the society. Therefore it must be given top priority and the birth control programme should follow not precede this social change.

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HOUSEHOLD SCHEDULE

(1)

Village—
 Hamlet—
 Name of Respondant
 Name of Head of the Family
 Total No. of Members
 Caste
 Subcaste
 Religion
 Type of House—Mud/Thatched/Brick
 Type of Lighting—Electric/Oil
 Type of W. C.— Ins'de/outside/Public
 Source of Drinking water
 Well/Pipe/River/Canal

S. No.	Name	Father's Name	Relation to Head of Household	Sex	Age	Marital Status	Number of Marriages	Age at first Marriage	Age at Gauna	Educatoion	Occupation		Cattle	Land		Income	Remarks
											M	S		O	H		

- | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| Education
1. Illiterate
2. Literate
3. High School
4. Graduate | Job
1. Unemployed
2. Domestic
3. Manual/Labour
4. Agriculture | Occupation
1. Agriculture
2. Trade/Business
3. Service
4. Artisan
5. Skilled Labour | 5. Clerical
6. Technical
7. Administrative | 6. Unskilled Labour
7. Professional
8. Traditional
9. Domestic
10. Others |
|---|--|---|--|---|

1. Total No. of marriages—
2. Age at 1st marriage—
3. Age at Consummation—
4. Effective age at 2nd, 3rd. 4th marriages—
5. Age at the birth of first child—
6. Total No. of children born (alive + dead)—
7. Number of children alive—
8. What in your opinion should be the fete of unmarried Mothers—

Should stay Single	Should not be allowed to marry	should be punished	Forgiven	
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9. Should widow-remarriage be allowed in your opinion ? Yes/No. Why ?
- (a) Can she not support herself financially ?
 - (b) Are widows looked down in your society ?
 - (c) Can she not maintain her chastity ?
 - (d) Can a woman not live without a man's protection ?
 - (e) Can she not live without a 'man' ?
 - (f) Any other ?

10. At what age should a girl be married ?

—10 yrs.	10—12	12 -15	15+
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Why ?

- (a) No disapproval of girl.
 - (b) More choice of boys.
 - (c) More education.
 - (d) Do not want to take responsibility.
 - (e) Financial circumstances.
 - (f) Any other
11. Why were your parents late/early in marrying you off ?

Reason—

12. Do you know that marriage of a girl under 15 is an offence and if any party wishes it can lodge protest in the Court ? Yes/No.

13. Is this law desirable ? Yes/No.

If no,

- (a) No security of future.
- (b) No financial security.
- (c) No mental peace—adultery.
- (a) To fulfil responsibility in his/her life time.

In case of Second/Third and fourth marriages only.

1. Why did you marry again—widowed, divorced, separated.
2. If separated/divorced—Did you leave your husband or did he leave you ?
3. How long did you stay with him after gauna—
4. History of all marriages—

Reason for separation/divorce—

S. No.	How long it lasted	Eco. Reasons	Crime	Drink/ Drug	Cruelty	Illness Barren/ Sterile	Incompatible nature	Adultery	Any other

5. Does your husband take your opinion regarding—

Financial matter	Domestic matter	Professional matter	Education of children
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6. How many children do you think is ideal ?
Why ?
7. Why did you have more/less than that ?
Reason—
8. Did you talk about this to your husband ? Yes/No .
Does he agree with you ? Yes/No.
Why ?
9. Do you know of any family planning methods ? Yes/No.
which ones ?
10. Do you want more children ? Yes/No.
If not, are you using F. P. Method ? Which one ?
If not why ?

FAMILY—

1. Type—Nuclear Joint Extended
2. Profession of the Head—
3. Total No. of members—

4. Reason for having Single/Extended/Joint Family

Single	Extended	Joint
No Relations	No other Relations	Joint Business
Job away from Home	Job away from Home	Status Symbol
Conflict	Financially Dependant	Economically Dependant
Better Housing/Standard	Widow/Separated	Housing Problem
Privacy	Conflict in Family	Domestic Reasons
	Mutual Help	Shared responsibility
Any other	Any other	Any other

5. In case of Joint / Extended family-

1. Who controls the purse —

Why ?

2. Who is the decision-making authority in —

1. Domestic matters—

Why ?

2. In General

3. Who does the domestic work— 1. Cooking —

Why

2. Cleaning—

Why

3.

4. Who looks after Children—

Why ?

6. Do you have a radio— Yes/No.

7. Do you go outside to listen— Yes/No.

8. Do you go to educational lectures on—

(a) Domestic subjects.

(b) Hygiene.

(c) Family Planing.

(d) Religion.

or would you like to go there ? Yes/No.

If you like to go there why do you not go ?

9. Do you take part in discussions ? Yes/No.

- (a) At home with your husband or relatives or friends.
- (b) Outside.

10. Does your youngest son or daughter go to school or did he go to school ? Yes/No.

If y's

If no

To earn more money
To have better status
Prestige value
Better Profession
More comfort

No value in your profession
Need help in farm/home
Financial circumstances
Incapable of studies
No facilities/No School

11. Do you ask him what he did at school ?

Yes/No.

12. Do you see or discuss his results ?

Yes/No.

13. Should girls study as much as boys ?

Yes/No.

Why ?

Yes

No

It helps in Domestic Work
Social Status/Prestige
Better Profession
More money at work
Better Living/No hard work
More Freedom

No need to work outside
No use
Incapable
Should not be given freedom

14. What did you do before you got married ?

Student	Domestic Worker		Farm Worker		Any other
	Paid	Unpaid	Paid	Unpaid	

15. (a) If paid casual/regular

How much did you earn per day

(b) What did you do with that money?

Save	Towards family income	SPENT			
		Clothes	Eductaion	Fashion & Jewellery	Leisure

(c) Who had right over this money?

16. What do you do now?

Domestic worker		Farm worker		Any other paid work	Unpaid
Paid	Unpaid	Paid	Unpaid		

(a) If paid casual or regular?

Who has right over this money?

How much do you earn per day

(b) What do you do with that money?

Save	Towards Family Income	SPENT			
		Clothes	Education	Fashion & Jewellery	Leisure

17. Do you think it is a woman's responsibility to share the economic burden or her position is inside home? Yes/No

18. Would you like your daughter to work outside?—If Yes—

Labour	Paid Dom.	At Farm	In Office	In School

If not why?