

WOMEN PRODUCERS OF KUMAON



BY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL STUDIES TRUST
FOR
MAHILA HAAT

(1988)

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(1988)

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CONTENTS

<u>PART I</u>	<u>RURAL HAAT SURVEY</u>	3
1	Introduction - The Origin of Mahila Haat	4
2	Rural Haat Survey	7
2.1	Main Aims and Objectives	7
2.2	Methodology	9
3	Kumaon - An Introductory Note	14
4	Home-based Cottage Industries of Kumaon	19
4.1	Wool Industry	21
4.2	Milk and Milk Products	31
4.3	Ringaal Industry	42
4.4	Chilli Cultivation	51
4.5	Collection of Herbs	54
4.6	Other Traditional Products	56
4.7	Mat Making	61
5	Marketing Systems in Kumaon	62
6	Kheerakot Village	74
7	Lakshmi Ashram	78
8	Summary and Conclusions	84
<u>PART II</u>	<u>RURAL HAAT WORKSHOP</u>	96
1	Participants	98
2	Objectives of the Rural Haat Project	99
3	Objectives of the Workshop and Methodology	99
4	Workshop Sessions	100
	Appendix 1	108
	Appendix 2	117
	Glossary	119

PART I

RURAL HAAT SURVEY

1. INTRODUCTION - THE ORIGIN OF MAHILA HAAT *

In most workshops and seminars dealing with women's development, the problem of marketing of products made by women producer groups (WPGs) from low income households, surfaces again and again. As a result of difficulties in marketing, production remains stagnant and the income of women producers remains low. The Institute of Social Studies Trust has been conducting studies on women's issues in various parts of the country over many years. The problems faced by women workers in different employment sectors in different parts of India, and in the production of various products have been revealed in the course of these studies.

In 1984, the Institute of Social Studies Trust (I.S.S.T) held an exhibition of woollen goods produced at Lakshmi Ashram, Kausani (a reputed organisation working with women of rural Kumaon), in Delhi, and assisted the Ashram in getting customers and orders. At the same time, discussions were held on the problems faced by women producers, and a consensus emerged that most WPGs had four major problems in common :

- lack of marketing outlets
- high cost and non-availability of raw materials
- lack of working capital
- lack of technical assistance

The Government and several other development agencies are trying to help WPGs in various ways. National programmes and organisations and many small agencies are assisting WPGs at the macro and micro levels. However, in spite of these governmental and non-governmental efforts, many WPGs are unable to fulfil their desired objectives because of lack of access to marketing, credit, training and other facilities.

In order to deal with these problems in a comprehensive manner, the Mahila Haat was conceived of in 1985, as a facilitation centre for women producers from low income households. The long term goal of Mahila Haat is to create a federation of women producers engaged in different activities across the country.

* Women's market

The objectives of Mahila Haat are :

- to strengthen women's income-generating activities in order to provide them with durable employment and a source of livelihood, through the provision of all necessary facilities and assistance;
- to create awareness and solidarity among the women producers, help them organise themselves against exploitation by middlemen; help them articulate their needs; and help influence policy in their favour.

The first year of the project was spent in identifying new groups, surveying and collecting data, visiting the WPGs, and understanding their difficulties. We found that the women producers and their families depend on these activities for their livelihood, and that they produce a wide range of products including articles of daily use, handicrafts and garments.

In April 1986, a Mahila Haat workshop was held in Delhi in which 43 WPGs from all over the country took part. In this workshop, future strategies were discussed. One important decision was that both kinds of facilitation are necessary, in Delhi, and in rural areas where the WPGs are situated. It was also decided that local markets should be developed rather than focussing on city and export markets, in order to encourage self-reliance. At present, the focus is on city and export markets, and this causes a lot of problems for the WPGs because :

- rural women cannot travel alone to cities; they need the assistance of men or they have to depend on middlemen who exploit them;
- the city is frightening and alien to the women, they have transport problems and costs;
- they do not know city consumers' tastes in design, colour, size, etc;
- the city market is not a secure market for them.

For all these reasons, it was decided to survey rural haats (markets) and the processes and systems operating in these haats. The survey would be carried out in several areas with the help of local developmental organisations in association with Mahila Haat. It was

decided that Lakshmi Ashram (Kasturba Mahila Uttan Mandal) would provide us with guidance and help in conducting a rural haat survey in Almora district of Uttar Pradesh. This survey would help us in identifying WPGs and studying their problems and needs.

It was also felt that it would be useful for Mahila Haat to develop linkages with existing government programmes and agencies in the field such as the Central Social Welfare Board's socio - economic programme and the DWCRA (Development of Women & Children in Rural Areas) scheme.

2. RURAL HAAT SURVEY

2.1 MAIN AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Traditional cottage industries in rural Kumaon have been carried on for many generations. As a result, villages remained self-sufficient for a very long period of time. But now, due to changes in life-styles and conditions, the patterns of traditional cottage industry have also changed, and some new problems have arisen. We wanted to survey these cottage industries in which women play a major role, in order to find out the impact of these changes on women. We wanted to understand the problems and needs of these women so that we can help strengthen them and make them more self-reliant. In order to achieve this we needed to find out what kind of assistance and facilities we could provide to help the women gain control of their production processes and not be dependent on others, so that they can earn a secure livelihood. In addition, we wanted to generate awareness and solidarity among the WPGs so that they can articulate their difficulties and needs and develop their collective strength.

The conditions in the hill areas are very different from the rest of the country. The difficult terrain and the relative isolation of villages make it difficult for the women of the region to avail of existing schemes and facilities and to make themselves heard by those in power.

Agriculture and animal husbandry are the main occupations of hill people; but these occupations do not provide enough to meet their basic needs. Cottage industries are, therefore, very important. Women do the major share of agriculture and animal husbandry operations. They carry a heavy burden and are bowed down by sheer drudgery. In spite of their unending labour, the fields are not producing enough to meet the needs of their families. Men leave the hill areas in search of cash incomes and migrate to the plains. Women live like beasts of burden, they labour under great stress because of the tremendous responsibility they carry on their shoulders. This is often physically draining, but being ill is a luxury they cannot afford.

As part of our Rural Haat Survey, we wanted to develop strategies to enable both men and women to share equally the work burden of agriculture, cottage industries and

other economic activities, and to get just compensation for their efforts.

In Kumaon and Garhwal, because of the work done by women's voluntary organisations in the past four decades, some of the women themselves understand that their work pattern is not contributing to the fulfilment of their basic needs. They wish to make their industries self-sufficient and viable, so that their burden of work and drudgery is reduced and a source of cash income for their families developed.

Social change is slowly coming into the lives of hill women and we hope that Mahila Haat will be a vehicle for this social change. With guidance from Lakshmi Ashram, we hope that Mahila Haat will be able to help the women producers of Kumaon to achieve greater economic and social self-reliance.

2.2 METHODOLOGY

The Rural Haat Survey was undertaken in order to identify and study WPGs engaged in producing a variety of goods. The aim and objectives of the survey have already been explained. Briefly, the aim is to understand the problems and constraints faced by the WPGs in order to help them become strong and self-reliant, by providing them with necessary assistance. The methodology adopted by us is given below :

We did a survey in collaboration with Lakshmi Ashram for the following reasons :

- Lakshmi Ashram has been involved with Mahila Haat from its inception and has helped develop Mahila Haat's philosophy.
- Lakshmi Ashram has worked with the women of Almora district for many years and is well-versed in local women's issues and women's problems in the region.
- Lakshmi Ashram has, itself wanted a detailed study done of the various cottage industries in the area, in which women play a major role, so that suitable action can be taken to develop and strengthen these industries.

The first meeting was held in Lakshmi Ashram's premises. Members present included :

Devaki Jain	
Krishna Bhatt	Institute of Social
Manju Mishra	Studies Trust
Amarjeet Kaur	

Radha Bhatt	Lakshmi Ashram
Anand Joshi	

L C Jain	Industrial Development
	Service

The following decisions were made at this meeting :

1. The survey should cover both production and marketing in the region.
2. The survey should study local production processes and the participation of women in these processes;

it should find out whether the product is made for self-consumption or sale, and if made only for self-consumption, why not also for sale.

3. It should also study the nature of goods coming in from outside the region, as well as those going out of the region.
4. The survey should cover the various cottage industries of Kumaon.
5. The study should look at the various marketing systems in the area. In this region, the system of weekly haats does not exist; however, several melas (fairs) are held in Kumaon, which are very important for the area's trade and commerce. Local permanent markets (haats) should also be studied.
6. The survey should take up questions such as :

During the last decade, what kinds of shops have been opened, selling what kind of goods ? How have these affected the local cottage industries ?
7. Finally, the study should find out what was the historical status of the various cottage industries of Kumaon.

Since we had only a limited period of four months in which to complete the field work, and given the problems of transport in the hill areas, it was decided that the person undertaking the survey should reside in the area itself. The survey was conducted during the period from July 15 to December 15, 1987, with the help of three local investigators.

a) Selection of Women Producer Groups (WPGs)

The wool industry is an important industry in Kumaon, predominantly carried out by women. For the survey of this industry, two groups of women were selected, one in Kausani, 52 km from Almora, and the other in Gwaldam, about 100 km from Almora. These two groups were selected because Lakshmi Ashram had direct contact with the Kausani group, as well as with Tulsi Devi in Gwaldam.

In the ringaal (reed) industry, we selected villages such as Chauda, Supi and Khalpatta, about 150 km away from the district head quarters in Almora. These

villages are situated in remote forests, ten to twelve thousand feet above sea level.

So far, only two or three cottage industries/ products, in which women play a major role, are 'visible'. Other economic activities of hill women have remained 'invisible', either, because they are on a small scale, or because they are considered to be part of agriculture and animal husbandry which, in the hill regions, is considered to be women's work. Some examples are the cultivation and marketing of chillies and potatoes, and the making and selling of khoya (milk cake).

For instance, during our study of the ringaal industry in Chauda, we found that the women in the village are also engaged in the cultivation and marketing of chillies and, therefore, included this in our study.

For our survey of the milk and khoya (milk cake) industry, we chose Sialidhar village, 6 km from Almora, and Deolikhan, 30 km away from Almora. Along with this, we also studied milk and khoya sellers coming to Almora from nearby villages.

While conducting this study, we tried to cover all cottage industries in which women participate extensively. We, therefore, also included as part of our survey, the pheena (mat) industry which is carried on by women who are not native to Kumaon, but originally came from Bengal to settle in Sitarganj in Nainital district.

The collection of medicinal herbs is also an industry in Kumaon. In order to study the role of women in this industry and their condition, we selected several villages such as Ladhauli, Kota, Thali, and Thela situated near Danya, 50 km east of Almora.

We also included in our study, those traditional products of Kumaon which are used in daily life, and are made largely for self-consumption, with only a small quantity being sold outside. These include brooms, ropes, halters and nets made from fibre and wild grasses, which are a symbol of the Kumaoni tradition of 'swadeshi' (self-reliance).

In addition, we also did a study of Kheerakot village. The women of this village are engaged in agriculture and have no other traditional skill or craft. Now, however, they want to do something to reduce the drudgery of their existence and improve their condition. For this purpose, they would like to take up some form of income-generating activity.

Apart from this, we also included Lakshmi Ashram, Kausani in our study. The Ashram has been working for the past four decades to improve the economic and social status of the women of Uttarakhand and to help strengthen and empower them. As part of its efforts, the Ashram has opened several khadi shops as well as an oil press and flour mill, all run by the women of the Ashram. We also studied various other organisations and institutions in Almora and nearby areas, which provide women with skill-training and employment, such as the Khadi Village Industries Board, Almora and the Gandhi Ashram in Channauda.

b) The Survey

Our first step was to get to know the various groups we had selected for our study, and gain some understanding of their work. We visited them and held group discussions in which some preliminary questions were put to them, regarding :

- working conditions in the past and present;
- problems and constraints faced;
- suggestions for improvement;
- kinds of intervention/action required to develop their cottage industries/products.

These issues were discussed together, after which questionnaires were developed. Some of the questions were common to all groups, while others were made specific to the activities carried on by each group. In addition, personal interviews were conducted.

A total of 203 questionnaires were filled out as follows :

<u>Industry / Product</u>	<u>No. of Questionnaires</u>
Wool	30
Ringaal	21
Milk and Khoya	56
Herbs	20
Grass mats	15
Chillie cultivation	15
Kheerakot village	20
Brooms, ropes, nets	18
Local melas	5
Lakshmi Ashram	3
<u>Total</u>	<u>203</u>

Apart from this, we also surveyed 6 local haats (permanent markets) in Bageshwar, Garud, Kausani, Channauda, Someshwar and Almora, in order to gain a better understanding of local marketing mechanisms. For instance, we were interested in finding out to what extent the products of local cottage industries were being displaced in these haats, by products coming from outside, and to what extent this had affected these industries.

We also visited the traditional melas of Kumaon in which the local people sell their wares. These included the Janmashtami, Nandashtami, Kot, Jauljibi and Makar Sankranti melas.

We gathered secondary data and additional information from various sources, including the district authorities, various journals and publications, and the like.

3. KUMAON - AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The hill region in the north of the state of Uttar Pradesh is known as Kumaon. It lies between latitude 28 51'N and 30 49'N, and between longitude 77 43'E and 83 21'E. Uttar Pradesh is divided into eleven administrative circles, out of which two, the Kumaon and Garhwal circles, fall in the mountainous region. Kumaon and Garhwal together comprise the region of Uttarakhand. At present the Kumaon circle comprises three districts, Pithoragarh, Almora and Nainital. The Kumaon circle also forms part of the international boundary of India; to the north the snow-clad mountains connect it to Tibet, while to the east the Kali River forms the dividing line between India and Nepal. To the west of Kumaon is Garhwal, while to the south is Ruhelkhand.

The major part of Kumaon is mountainous, but the southern part which is known as the 'Bhabar' and 'Terai' is flat. On one side, there are soaring snowcapped peaks, on the other, large rolling plains. The mountain ranges slope from north to south, and as one moves south the slope gradually reduces to give way to the plains. There are fast flowing rivers in these mountains, on both sides of which are terraced fields cut into the mountain side. Once these rivers flow into the valleys they are bordered by cliffs on both sides.

Based on geographical and climatic factors, Kumaon can be divided into three main parts :

- a) Mountainous Area- Four fifths of the Kumaon is mountainous, ranging from an altitude of about 560 m to a maximum of 7,817 m above sea level. Whereas Almora and Pithoragarh districts are totally mountainous, Nainital district is only partly so. The temperature and rainfall in this area vary according to altitude.
- b) Bhabar- In this area, the mountains gradually lose height and finally give way to the plains. The altitude varies from around 370 m to 560 m above sea level. This zone stretches from east to west in a belt some 10 to 20 km wide. It is covered by dense forests, wild grasses and shrubs, and is inhabited by tigers, elephants, bears and other wild animals. The weather in this part remains pleasant throughout the year.
- c) Terai- This region in the plains is the most productive area of the Kumaon and lies to the south of the Bhabar region. The climate here is similar to that in other areas in the plains.

Thus, out of the total area of Kumaon, the mountainous region covers 79%, the Bhabar 12%, and the Terai, 9%.

3.1 Climate

The climate in Kumaon, though changing according to altitude, is generally cold. The natural seasons of this region are as follows :

a)	Summer	-	(15 March - 15 June)
b)	Monsoon	-	(15 June - end August)
c)	Autumn	-	(September - October)
d)	Winter	-	(November - February)
e)	Spring	-	(March - April)

The seasons are known as Ruri, Chaumas and Hayoon in the local language, that is, the hot, rainy, and winter season, respectively. During April to June, when it is very hot in the plains, it is still very pleasant in the hills and people come from all over to escape the heat. In the Bhabar and Terai regions, however, it is very hot, with blustering winds and occasional dust storms. Soon after the commencement of the rains in June, the mountains, fields and valleys turn green. Springs gush forth and streams rush down the mountains to the valleys.

From September to November the sky remains cloudless and the beauty of nature is at its peak. From November onwards the mercury starts falling, nights become cold and the days are short and cloudy. Between December and February, there is snowfall at heights above 5,000 feet, with rain at lower altitudes. The mountains and vallies look barren, except for a few fields of wheat and barley and the evergreen trees, such as cedar, pine and oak. From March onwards, the weather gets warmer. Flowers bloom and fruit trees (plum, apple, apricot, peach) blossom.

Rainfall

Most of the rainfall in Kumaon is from the south-west monsoon (June-August), though it also rains in winter at lower altitudes. The area averages around 100-200 cm annually, as against 94 cm in other parts of the state. In the Bhabar and Terai regions, the average rainfall is above 100 cms. Rainfall is heaviest between July and September, and in the north-east part of the region.

3.2 Flora and Fauna

Nature has bestowed on Kumaon many valuable trees,

birds, and animals. The type of flora and fauna changes with altitude.

a) Vegetation

The monsoon jungle trees, of which sal, haldu, simal, khair, saintha, jamun, tun, gethi and sisham are the most common in the Terai and Bhabar, are found up to about an altitude of 3,000 feet. The chir forests range from 4,000 to 6,000 feet, and between 6,000 to 8,000 feet there are chir, deodar, oak, rhododendron, and aiyar. Above this are silver fir, spruce, larch, rhododendron, chestnut and walnut. Higher up still, are small shrubs and trees and then, there is only soft green grass. This area is snow-bound from November to April.

Herbs

In the high mountains and forests of Kumaon, there are also many invaluable herbs, such as ritha, harad, and peppermint.

b) Animals and Birds

These forests are inhabited by many kinds of birds. Most of these birds migrate to the south in the winter and return to the Himalayan forests in spring.

In the mountain region of Kumaon are found tigers, deer, leopards, bears, rabbits etc. As the forests have become less dense, the number of animals inhabiting them has decreased. Similarly, in the Bhabar and Terai areas, there were previously very dense forests in which elephants, tigers, leopards and wild bear roamed freely. With the forests having been cleared for agricultural use and settlement, their number has decreased considerably.

Domestic Animals

The main occupation in Kumaon is agriculture and animal husbandry. Agriculture is dependant on bullocks and, therefore, every family has a pair of bullocks. For milk they breed buffaloes and cows are kept largely to breed bullocks. Goats are raised for meat, and sheep for wool. Thus the number of animals is high, and there are around 124 animals per square kilometre. Generally, the animals here are weak and produce insufficient milk, the reasons being inadequate fodder and inferior breeds. In the last few years, attempts have been made to improve the breeds

without much success, the main reasons being, firstly, the long distances which prevent many villagers from bringing their animals to veterinary hospitals and, secondly, the reluctance on the part of many villagers to change their traditional ways. It is getting increasingly difficult to provide adequate fodder, for the forests are getting ever more distant from the villages. The responsibility for gathering fodder falls on the women and, in places, the forests are so far that the women have to leave early in the morning and return only at dusk.

3.3 Transport

Because of the difficult terrain in Kumaon, the main mode of transport is by road. Railways are found only in the Terai and Bhabar, terminating at railheads such as Tanakpur, Kathgodam and Ramnagar, from where the hilly region starts. Thus, in most of Kumaon, transport is by road, the main modes being buses, trucks, taxis, cars and jeeps. Even the use of these in Kumaon is relatively recent. Public transport facilities were introduced only after Independence in 1947, when the Uttar Pradesh Road Transport Corporation began plying their buses and trucks in the region.

Due to the geographical conditions, the people of Kumaon reside in small, far-flung villages, in the midst of forests and along mountain ridges, which are often very difficult to reach. Even today, there are areas which are completely deprived of road transport facilities and are accessible only on foot. Apart from the few motor roads, there are the fair-weather or 'kutcha' (untarred) roads along which it is extremely hazardous to travel, for land slides are common, and accidents frequent. Bus transport is very limited except for the main towns; in most places there are only one or two services in a day.

a) Animal Transport

In Kumaon, animals are still the main means of transport. Mules and donkeys are seen carting sacks of wheat, crates of fruit, tins of resin or bags of potatoes, up and down the narrow paths along the mountainside.

At higher altitudes, sheep, goats and jhibbu (cross between yak and cow) are used to carry loads, as they are extremely surefooted and can climb even where no path exists. In the past, the Bhotiya used these animals to carry their goods across the mountains to Tibet.

In the Bhabar and Terai regions, bullock carts are used

for transportation, and heavy loads can be carried at a time, but due to the topography of the mountains these are not useful in the hills.

b) Human Transport

In the mountainous areas of Kumaon the majority of the work of transporting goods is still carried on by man. The people of Kumaon are accustomed to carrying their own goods, although porters are available in towns such as Nainital, Pithoragraph, etc. These are mostly, Nepalese men who also work in the fruit orchards.

Since the major part of the population is engaged in agriculture, and their fields are often quite far from their homes, they have to carry heavy loads over long distances. This work is done almost entirely by women, as most of the men have migrated to towns and cities in search of employment. In addition to this, the women also carry big bundles of grass and firewood from far off forests.

3.4 Area and Population (Table 1)

The area of Kumaon is 21,035 sq.km., and its population according to the 1981 Census was 23.83 lakhs .

4. HOME - BASED COTTAGE INDUSTRIES OF KUMAON

The traditional handicraft and cottage industries of Kumaon are many and varied. Their products are both artistically beautiful as well as functional, and form a necessary part of daily life in the villages. Rural Kumaon is a remote, hilly area, isolated from cities and urban influences. The inhabitants have, thus, developed a self-sufficient life-style, in which almost all the products used in their daily lives are made by them in their homes. The development of small cottage industries has been based on the necessities of life in Uttarakhand. For instance, the making of wollen products is a well developed industry due to the coldness of the winter. Another example is the ringaal industry, the products of which are used in agriculture, which is the mainstay of the inhabitants of the region. Ringaal products such as daliya, doka (baskets), mosta (mats) and chatyur (umbrellas) are items of daily use in the fields.

Agriculture in the hill areas is not possible without animal husbandry. Dairy is also an important activity intinsically intertwined with agriculture. Products needed for animal husbandry and dairying such as ropes, halters, nets to collect fodder, and muzzles to put on the mouths of cattle, are all traditional fibre products of Kumaon. The copper industry is also a traditional industry; vessels needed for everyday use, and pots for carrying and storing water, are made by the Tamta community. The collection of medicinal herbs is another traditional activity. Diverse and valuable flora, useful for allopathic and ayurvedic medicines, are native to the forests of Kumaon.

In addition to these, there are lot of other activities which, although not formally regarded as industries, are nevertheless related to the market place. Some examples are : making and selling of khoya; growing and selling of vegetables; making wooden bowls for milk and curds, and wooden troughs for feeding animals.

The division of labour between men and women differs from industry to industry. In the woollen, dairy and khoya making industries, women produce, while men sell. Major production activity and selling in the ringaal and fibre industries is done by men, with women performing subsidiary activities. Whatever the specific division of labour, it is clear that the roots of the various cottage industries of rural Kumaon are deeply imbedded in history, and they have evolved over time in response

to the necessities of daily life in the region. With changing life-styles, these industries have also adapted and undergone change. In today's Kumaon, these industries continue to have the same importance for the economic well-being of the people.

4.1 THE WOOL INDUSTRY

This has been one of the most important cottage industries in Uttarakhand from ancient times. Wool has always played an important part in the life of the Bhotiyas and the wool industry is, thus, a traditional craft of this community. The Bhotiyas have traditionally lived in the snow-filled valleys of Jowhar Munsari, Darma, Beas and Chowdas. This region is called Bhotanchal.

"The land of Bhotanchal is hilly and rugged. It ranges from 5,000 to 20,000 feet above sea-level. Some of the tallest peaks are as much as 25,000 feet above sea-level. Only one-sixth of the land is suitable for agriculture, and this is found in deep and narrow valleys. Under these difficult conditions, the Bhotiya live at unusual heights. Lvan, in the Jowhar region, is the highest village of Bhotanchal, and at 19,000 feet above sea-level, must be one of the highest villages in the world." This description is taken from the book, "Kumaoni Culture", edited by Batrohi.

The Bhotiyas spent the summer months in villages such as Milam, located at great heights. Some cultivable land was available even here, on which they grew potatoes, bajra (millet) and fafer (leafy vegetable). At the onset of summer, the Bhotiyas would leave for these villages at high altitudes, on foot, carrying their goods on the backs of sheep, goats and jhibbu. In September-October, after the harvest, they would descend to the lower villages, again on foot. While women and children stayed behind and tilled the fields, the men would set off on their long journey to Tibet for trading. With their animals laden with goods, the men would cross the high peaks of the Himalayas on their way to Tibet.

While studying the Bhotiyas, I learnt a lot about their exciting experiences during such journeys. In the course of these journeys, they would buy vessels, clothes, sugar, sweets and gur (jaggery) from the terai (Haldwani, Tanakpur), and from cities like Kanpur and Delhi; they would also get wheat and rice from Kumaoni villages. Gyanimamandi and Taklakot were the two important trading and marketing centres, on the border between Uttarakhand and Tibet. Here they would meet the Hunia (Tibetan traders), who were old friends. Their trading was, therefore, a kind of get-together. Groups of Indians and Tibetans would go from tent to tent, welcoming each other and exchanging greetings. The Bhotiya traders would enjoy the food and drink provided by their hospitable Tibetan friends. These informal get-togethers would go on for several days without any specific negotiations. Then, one day, in the middle of

such conversations, a rate would be mentioned, and the process of bartering would begin. From the next day onwards, the sheep would be sheared in front of the buyers and bales of wool made. These would be loaded onto the backs of jhibbus, and one by one, the Bhotiya traders would leave on their long journey home. This entire trading process would be completed over a period of one to one and a half months. The Bhotiyas would take back wool, subaga (borax) and salt with them.

In this way, through trade, the Bhotiyas used to get as much wool as they wanted from Tibet. A large part of this wool was sold directly, while some of the wool was made into carpets, blankets, sweaters and shawls. In winter, men and women would take their wares on the backs of sheep and goats for sale in the various melas held in the valleys of Kumaon, such as Bageshwar and Makar Sankranti melas.

The life style of the Bhotiyas was different from that of other hill-dwellers. Men used to remain away from their families for long periods. As a result, women had a lot of time, in the absence of men, for arts and craft and cottage industries. They formed a women's 'club', where they would meet, spin wool and knit sweaters, etc. The women would compete against each other to produce the best products. In this way, they became skilled crafts persons and produced a lot of knitted goods.

Both men and women spin wool, but only women knit and weave. Girls learn this activity from childhood. In every house there is a place for women's shuttle looms, kargha (looms), charkha (spinning wheels) and khaddi (carpet looms). After finishing their household chores, the women sit down to knit and weave. Their pithiyachand (folding looms) are carried with them even on journeys, and they sit and weave in the camps.

In 1962, the life of the Bhotiyas changed forever, with the closure of the Tibetan border. The yearly pattern of going up to the Himalayan peaks in summer and descending to the vallies in winter, was broken. Gradually, the Bhotiya families settled in Kumaon, a region they once used to pass through on their way to Tibet. Along with the change in life style, their economic situation deteriorated considerably.

The government has declared the Bhotiyas to be a Scheduled Tribe; they get free education, and a quota is reserved for them in various sectors of employment. The new generation is educated and career-oriented. Although they have not forgotten their traditional craft, the younger Bhotiyas are, increasingly, moving away from it, and some men have opened shops. In spite of various

difficulties, however, many Bhotiyas continue to depend upon the wool industry for earning their living.

Having given up their old life style, Bhotiya families have now settled down in various villages. I visited two such villages, Kausani and Gwaldam, as part of the Rural Haat Survey, in order to study the wool industry.

4.1.1 Kausani

At a half kilometre's walk from Kausani bus stop lies a cluster of small cement houses. The local people call it Bhutanpura, which means Bhotiya basti (colony). In this basti, there are around 16 families. The Bhotiya used to pass through Kausani on their way to Tibet for many generations, but it is only in 1968 that they settled in the village; some had their own houses, others became tenants or moved in with their relatives. They worked hard to achieve prosperity for their families and, in this effort, women played a major role. In 1980, the government gave them land and a subsidy of Rs. 1,600/- each; and, adding to this their hard-earned saving, the Bhotiyas were able to build small houses of their own.

The land in this area is rocky and mountainous and difficult to cultivate. This has not deterred the hard working Bhotiyas from creating beauty out of barrenness. Each house is connected to its neighbour by neatly maintained paths going up and down the hillside. Every house has a courtyard bordered by flowers and small vegetable beds. Inside each house, simplicity is the key-note. There are one or two rooms and inside these rooms, one can find old fashioned carpet looms, as well as the most modern knitting machines. The members of the family, and women in particular, are never unoccupied. They are not to be found wasting their time in idle gossip. Even while talking, whether sitting or standing, their hands are busy spinning on the thakli (hand-spindle). There is an old saying of theirs, "Keep your spindle turning, and your money bags fillings."

When asked why they chose to settle in Kausani, the women said they liked the climate. "We come from snow-bound regions and we like the cold. Our families used to camp in Kausani on their way back to the terai after trading in the Bageshwar mela. The people around still call it 'camp'. When trading stopped, some of our community settled here, and the rest of us also moved here to be with them. Besides, our children can get a good education here. Our home in Jowhar Munsari is also not too far, so that we can go there once in a while and meet those who are still there. Leaving Jowhar was very painful. Our community has been split up. Our people are

now in Kausani, Gwaldam, Kapkot, Almora and even Haldwani."

In the course of discussions, the women said they would like to take up an income-generating activity. At present, because of various problems, they are unable to do as much work as they would like to, and are forced to depend on the wages they get from Gandhi Ashram in Channauda for their spinning and weaving work. The women feel that by forming a sanghatan (group) they may be able to tackle some of these problems and thus increase their earnings. They wanted us to discuss their problems and help them work towards a solution.

Group Meeting- Around twenty women participated in this meeting. All of them had their hands occupied with spinning or knitting. Rupa Devi said, "Our traditional craft has been destroyed; circumstances have changed everything. Now we are only wage labourers working for the Gandhi Ashram in Channauda." Twice a month, the women travel the distance of 7 km to get wool from the Ashram, which they spin and weave into kaleen (carpets), or knit into sweaters. "We have done this for the past twelve years", said Rupa Devi, "but it has not helped to strengthen us in any way. There is no security in this work. If it is stopped, or they are dissatisfied with us, we will lose our living."

Hira Devi said, "We would like to maintain good relations with the Ashram, since we depend on them for our daily earnings. But they think of us as wage labourers and not as workers with dignity. In spite of so many years of work, they have given us no benefits. Besides, we waste an entire day going to and from the Ashram, the bus ticket is expensive, and the wages are low." The rates for spinning and knitting are as follows :

Knitting charges full sleeved sweater - Rs. 10-12
 half sleeved sweater - Rs. 6

Spinning charges One kilo wool (3 ply) - Rs. 12
 One kilo wool (2 ply) - Rs. 13

One of the women said, "How can they pay us more ? They have to get some benefit. If we had control of our own work the profit would be in our hands. We know all about the wool industry, from beginning to end, but they do not listen to any of our suggestions. We are also afraid to assert ourselves for fear of losing our incomes."

When asked why they did not try to increase their earnings by doing more work independently, since they felt this would be more profitable, the women said that it was difficult to produce and sell on their own

because of the difficulty in getting raw wool. They said, "People selling wool come Garhwal, Bagheswar, Munsiadi and Jauljibi. In addition, if one of us goes to any of these places, she gets wool. At such times, however, we are unable to buy a year's supply of wool because we do not have enough working capital. This is why we cannot produce more. We can make all kinds of products - kaleen, sweaters, blankets and shawls - but we do not have the necessary equipment for weaving them. There are now new charkas on which one can spin faster, but we do not have them."

"We also have difficulty in getting good quality dyes locally, and have to get them from Almora and Delhi at considerable cost. The locally available dyes are not fast, and this lowers the quality of our products. We also know how to make natural dyes from the roots and bark of trees such as the walnut, kaphal and baj (oak), and the fungus on the bark of the oak tree (jhula). To strip the bark from these trees, however, is harmful for the environment. There are some things we can use without harming the environment, but these are available only in small quantity. If chemical dyes of good quality can be made available locally, at reasonable prices, it will be of great help to us. In addition, we need a dyeing shed and copper vats for dyeing, which all of us can use. To get all these facilities we would like to form a women's sanghatan."

"We women are strong", said Rupa Devi, "we give birth, bring up our children, do household work as well as other work. We will form a sanghatan and increase our earnings."

Another major problem is that of wool carding. In the whole area, there is only one carding machine, in the Gandhi Ashram at Channauda. There used to be a machine in Bageshwar but it is no longer working. The Gandhi Ashram uses the machine to card its own wool, and twice a month; on the 15th and 16th, they allow people to bring their own wool for carding. People come from far away villages like Chauda, Pharsali, Kamedi and Kapkot, which are 50-80 km away as well as from nearby Kausani, a distance of 7 km. The number of people bringing their wool, to be carded is very large and, very often, several visits are necessary, which is both time-consuming and costly. The women have, therefore requested Lakshmi Ashram in Kausani to set up facilities for carding.

"The designs we use for our kaleen (carpets) are both traditional and modern", said Leela Devi. Some are from memory, while others are copied from carpet to carpet. Many people like our traditional designs, especially foreigners. The Tanka design, for instance, is based on

an old Tibetan coin. Other designs are based on holy symbols such as 'om' and the 'swastika'. But we would also like to learn new designs."

"Apart from this, we have a marketing problem. Most of our sales are through Gandhi Ashram, and very little is made and sold independently. It is only during the winter when sales pick up, that we are able to make and sell sweaters, kaleen and other products on an independent basis. We find it difficult to build up stocks in advance because we have no storage facilities and, besides, we cannot afford to tie up our limited capital. There is no shop where we can sell our goods, so we must rely on contacts, or work to specific orders. When women from the surrounding areas come to us to buy sweaters, we very often do not have any, ready for sale. Nor can they afford to give us an order and wait for their sweaters, because whatever money comes into their hands is normally in the form of a gift from their in-laws or relatives, and if they do not spend it immediately, it is likely to be swallowed up in other household expenses."

"On such occasions, if we had sweaters in stock, we would be able to sell a lot, easily. If we have a shop of our own, we are willing to run it ourselves. Then only will we get the full price for our products, and be able to make a living on a durable basis."

4.1.2 Gwaldam - Bhotiya Basti

By road from Kausani to Gwaldam is a distance of around 56 km. Passing through Garud which lies in the valley, 14 km from Kausani, we reached the small market of Baijnath, only 2 km from Garud. This was the capital of the kings of the Katyuri dynasty. From here we took a road leading towards Chamoli, 40 km along which lies the village of Gwaldam. Our bus crept slowly upward on the long climb from 2,500 to 7,000 feet above sea-level.

The little village of Gwaldam, nestling in a screen of deodar trees, is perched on the mountainside. To the south-east one can see Almora, while Chamoli lies in the north-west. As the bus comes to a halt at the top, we are overcome by the beauty of the Himalayan peaks, Trishul and Nanda Devi, which are far away, and yet, appear so close. It is almost as if they are bending down to whisper in our ears. Walking down a narrow path 100 m below the road, we come upon a small house in the midst of the fields, in which lives Tulsi Devi. The rest of the Bhotiya houses are clustered around her house.

Our contact with Tulsi Devi is through Lakshmi Ashram. From the distance is visible a small gate, next to which

is affixed a board which says, 'Rani Shawl Industry', and 'Wool Cottage Industry Sahkari Samiti,* Gwaldam'. As we reach we feel refreshed. The very air around carries a breath of purity and simplicity. As we enter the gate, we find a small temple. Stepping inside the house, we meet a woman over fifty years of age, dressed in simple clothes. This is Tulsi Devi.

Tulsi Devi was a child widow; but after being widowed, instead of staying dependent on her parents or in-laws, she worked to become self-reliant. During the course of her life she has also helped many other helpless and economically weak people to improve their conditions. When asked how she had achieved all this alone, when from society's point of view she herself was widowed and, therefore, helpless, Tulsi Devi said with complete self-confidence. "I did all this with the help of the thakli; it helped me become strong, and gave me the courage to help others also."

In 1957, Tulsi Devi started the Wool Cottage Industry Sahkari Samiti with four, five members holding Rs. 150 worth of shares each, and the rest of the share holders, Rs. 11 each. The samiti was of considerable help to the Bhotiya families settled here. The samiti would provide them with wool which they would spin and knit, and market the finished products for them. At that time, the financial position of the Bhotiyas was very precarious. They had settled in Gwaldam when the wool trade collapsed because of the Chinese invasion of Tibet, and they had neither homes nor land. They did not have equipment for spinning and weaving wool. Tulsi Devi even gave some of them a place to stay. The men opened small shops in Gwaldam while the women made a living, spinning and knitting wool, with the help of the samiti. Out of their hard earned savings, the Bhotiyas bought tiny plots of land on which they set up tiny houses. The samiti helped them get wool and equipment to work with, under the HADA * programme. They were given carpet looms, looms for weaving pankhi and shawls, and Bagheswari charkas for spinning. Even now, however, there are some families who do not have their own house and equipment. It is only through their hard work and with the help of the samiti that these families have been able to earn a living. They, sometimes make

* Co-operative Society

* Hill Area Development Authority

products for the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, too. In the last couple of years Tulsi Devi has been making a special kind of shawl, a 'Rani shawl', woven from a combination of Angora and Nepali wool, for which she has won an award.

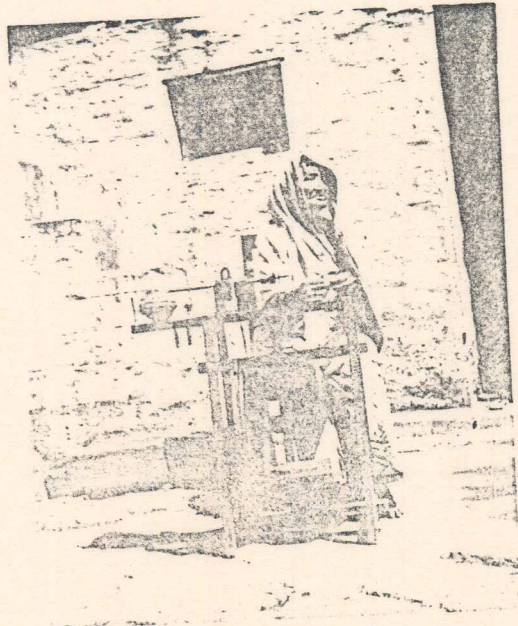
In the course of discussions with Tulsi Devi and the Bhotiya women they told us some of their problems :

- 1) Difficulty in getting wool carded - they have to go all the way to Gandhi Ashram, Channauda, 60 km away, and even then, because of the crowds, they are often unable to get their work done.
- 2) Problems with Dyeing - they would like better quality dyes, which are colour fast, and training in dyeing.
- 3) Marketing - this is not a major problem, as in the winter, they are able to sell sweaters and kaleen directly from their homes, and also in melas, such as the local Gauchar mela.

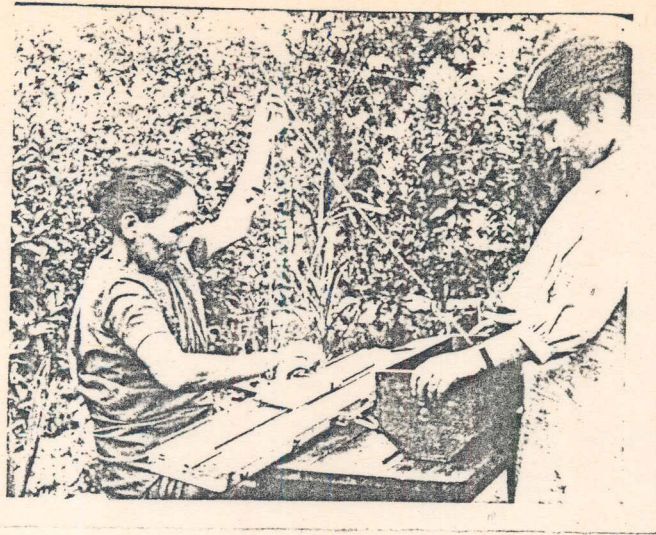
These problems are very similar to those of the Bhotiya women in Kausani which have already been described in detail above.



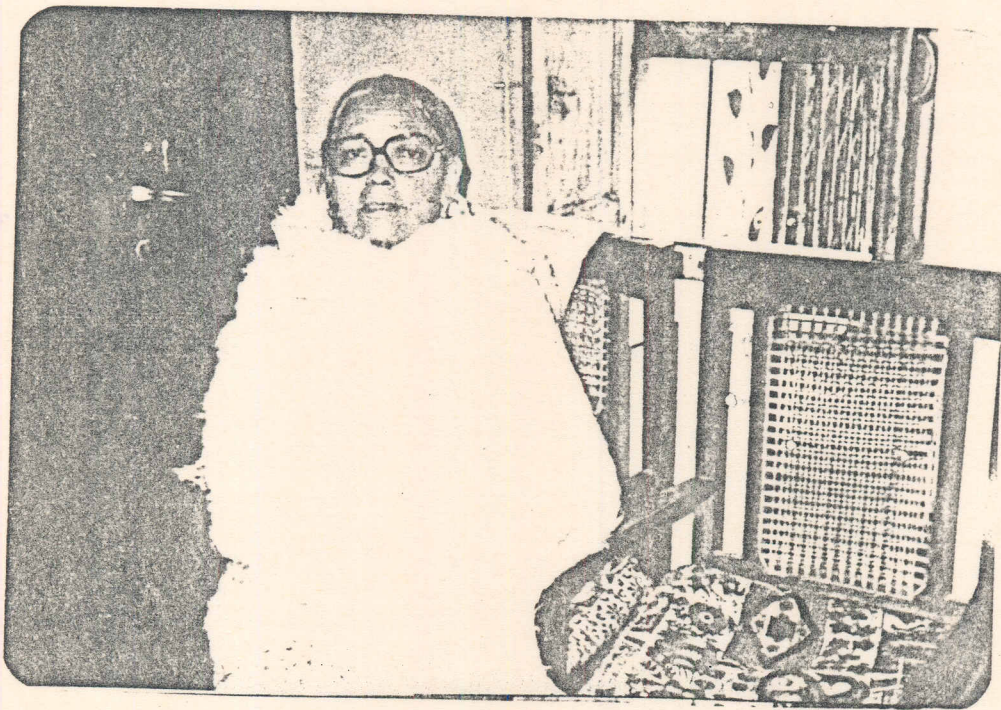
SPINNING ON THE THAKLI



SPINNING ON THE BAGESHWARI CHARKHA



RUPA DEVI USING A KNITTING MACHINE



TULSI DEVI WEARING A RANI SHAWL

4.2 MILK AND MILK PRODUCTS

The town of Almora in the hills of Kumaon has a unique character of its own. It is renowned for its beauty and its culture and, at the same time, it is famous for its bal-mittai and singoudi wrapped in green malu leaves (both milk sweets). As the bus reaches Almora, the first thing that catches one's eyes are the shops filled with red, blue and yellow boxes full of sweets, and platters laden with bal-mittai. Everyone who passes through Almora buys bal-mittai and in this way, it manages to reach even the remotest villages which are only accessible on foot. At the same time, by bus, train and plane, bal-mittai travels all over the country, and even abroad.

The bal-mittai trade has been carried on in Almora since 1865. The oldest shop in the famous Lala bazar belongs to Jogalal Shah. It was his great-grandfather who, in 1815, made the first bal-mittai out of khoya made from the finest of milk. It was so tasty that the British used to carry it with them to England.

Entering the narrow, slate paved streets of Lala bazar, I reached Shahji's shop with its low, ancient roof. I asked him to tell me the history of bal-mittai and how the trade had made it possible for sweet vendors in Almora and other towns to amass a fortune, so that today their big houses and cars attract others' envy. This was made possible largely because of the Britishers' fondness for the sweet.

A white-haired, toothless old mad said, "Sister, in his great-grandfather's time, even ghosts and spirits came to buy bal-mittai. "I looked at Shahji in amazement and disbelief. "It is true", he said and smiled, "My great-grandfather would prepare bal-mittai very late at night and arrange it on platters, and three-quarters of this would be sold the next day. However, the same amount of bal-mittai which was prepared during late afternoon of the same day, would get sold in the few hours before midnight. This made him wonder who could be buying so much bal-mittai so late at night, braving the cold and darkness. He decided to find out for himself, and the next night he kept a strict watch. The usual crowd entered and, while examining them closely, Shahji noticed that all their feet were turned the wrong way round, and realized at once, that these were no ordinary people but ghosts. The ghosts were angry with Shahji for subjecting them to such close scrutiny and reprimanded him. From then onwards, Shahji continued to serve his 'ghostly' customers and to take their money but, never again did he dare to look at them directly, keeping his gaze strictly averted."

The most famous among the bal-mittai vendors is Khim Singh Mohan Singh Rautela, whose name is familiar to everybody, including the children. Bal-mittai has made many people famous and given Almora its reputation. With the tremendous increase in the trade, what began as one bal-mittai and singoudi shop in 1865, has now expanded into rows of such shops situated near the bus depot. In Lodhiya, a small place nearby, during the last year a whole lot of bal-mittai shops have sprung up like the water hyacinth which covers the surface of pond in no time at all. The sweet is prepared and displayed on big platters and in boxes, and by evening it has all disappeared. In one day alone, thousands of rupees worth of bal-mittai is sold in Almora, mainly to tourists. In the course of a year, lakhs and crores of rupees flow into the coffers of Khim Singh & Mohan Singh in Almora and Nanak Sweet House in Haldwani, as well as into those of many small shops in Ranikhet, Garampani, Garud and Bageshwar. The bal-mittai and singoudi trade is a big and flourishing industry in the Kumaon region.

Nobody, however, spares a thought for those, whose hard labour forms the foundation on which this trade is built. These are the women of Kumaon who toil from 4 am to 10 pm tending to their livestock and fields. It is their back-breaking labour which provides the milk and khoya out of which bal-mittai is made.

Around 32 villages in the environs of Almora produce milk, which they sell directly, or in the form of khoya in the town. Every morning, thousand of milkmen (some of them women) from the surrounding villages come into town carrying large and small containers of milk on their shoulders. Similarly, twice a week, in Almora's Chowk Bazaar, men and women from the villages gather together, carrying baskets of khoya on their heads. The makers of bal-mittai and singoudi come to the bazaar to buy their requirement of khoya. There is no fixed price for the khoya, the rates rise and fall, and everyday the sellers must bargain to get a decent price. Those who have no time to bargain, because they must return to their homes without delay, must take whatever price they are offered, however low. The major losers are women, who must rush back to finish their chores and tend to their children and animals. I asked a woman who was rushing past with an empty basket, "Did you get a good price for your khoya?" She said, "Sister, my children are at home with no one to look after them. I just took what the shopkeeper offered for my khoya. Only those who have time can afford to wait and bargain for a good price."

The khoya sellers, both men and women, come from a distance of 2 to 15 km on foot, and by bus, spending from half a day to an entire day depending upon how far they have to travel. Men are able to spend time

bargaining and if unable to get a good price, they leave their unsold wares with local friends, returning the next day to continue bargaining. Women have neither the time nor the ability to bargain in this manner, and usually end up selling their goods at whatever price they can get.

The names of the villages in Havalbagh block which supply Almora with milk and khoya are given at the end of the chapter. According to information available at the Block Development Office in Havalbagh, 558 persons from the block have taken loans for purchase of buffaloes under the Government's IRDP Scheme. In spite of this, and in spite of the large number of people engaged in dairy and khoya production in the surrounding villages, the amount of milk produced is insufficient to meet the demand in Almora. This is because most, if not all, of the families engaged in milk production, are able to produce only 2 to 5 litres per day, in spite of their hard work, because of the low milk yield from their buffaloes. The resulting deficit in supply is, therefore, being met from outside. For the last few years, half Kg poly-packs of milk have been coming in to Almora from the Parag Milk Plant near Lalkuan. Every day, some 1,800 to 2,200 litres of milk are transported into the town from Parag and this goes upto 4,000 to 4,500 litres per day in summer, during the tourist season. Thus, because local milk production is unable to satisfy demand, the requirements for milk in Almora, and other small towns in the region such as Ranikhet, Kausani, Garud and Bageshwar, are partly met by milk from outside places such as Lalkuan.

Out of the milk and khoya producing villages, two villages, Sialidhar and Deolikhan, were selected for a detailed survey.

4.2.1 Sialidhar

Sialildhar lies 5 km along the motor road from Almora. There are about seventy families in this village of which some are Harijan, while the majority are Rajput and Brahmin. The main occupations are agriculture and animal husbandry, in which the women are fully occupied from dawn to dusk. Some of the men are carpenters and masons, some hold jobs, while other are small contractors or shop keepers. The land is unirrigated and coarse millets such as madua are grown on it; but this is not enough to meet the family's yearly requirement of food. Almost all families have buffaloes but very little milk is sold, only 2 to 5 litres per family per day. The villagers are unable to keep more buffaloes because of the lack of green fodder. At present, the only available fodder is the wild grass growing along the raised

boundaries of their fields. They do not have the knowledge or facilities to try and grow better types of fodder which could increase the milk yield of their buffaloes. Another source of fodder is through contractors who have got licenses to cut grass on reserve forest land, the major drawback is that for every bundle of grass that is collected by the villagers, they have also to supply the contractors with a bundle.

The sale of milk in Almora is done largely by men and children, with one man carrying milk, collected from four to five families, to the bazaar in town. Since he normally has to walk a distance of about 5 km, he takes a cut for his labour. This, however, means that instead of getting Rs. 4 per litre, the women get only Rs. 3.

One of the women from the village, Saruli Devi, said that there are no proper facilities for veterinary care in the village. The only facilities available are in Havalbagh or Almora, and these are 12 - 15 km away so that it takes considerable time to get there and back. Another woman, Kishni Devi, said they had heard that veterinary care centres have reached even the remotest villages, but in spite of their being so close to the district headquarters in Almora, no facilities had been made available to them in Sialidhar village. She said, "Our lives are no better than those of our animals. We work very hard and, yet, we do not have enough food or clothers." An old lady from amongst them, whose wrinkled face and stooped back showed her to be over 90 years of age, added to this, "However much the world around us may change, conditions in our village remain the same."

She said, "We hear every day on the radio, that the Government has spent lakhs of rupees to help the poor, but we have not been given anything. Where does all that money go? Many people have come, like you, asking us about our problems and difficulties, and wasting our time, but nobody has done anything for us."

Our discussions continued in this vein for a while. Ultimately, the women said that in winter when they can spare some time, they would like to be given some training, in knitting for instance, so that they can earn something and make their lives more meaningful.

4.2.2 Deolikhan

To reach the village of Deolikhan by bus, one has to travel 35 km from Kausani to Koshi, change buses, and travel a further distance of 15 km to Kathpudia China.

From here it is another 7 km to Deolikhan which lies near the road at a height of 5,500 feet above sea level. The bus service is, however, infrequent and from Koshi, we were fortunate to get a ride in a friend's jeep, so that we reached the village around four in the afternoon. It was windy and cold at this height and we were swathed in shawls and sweaters. Since the time at our disposal was limited we planned to have an introductory meeting the very same night. We found the women busy with their chores : some were cleaning grain in their courtyards, some were wielding axes, chopping fire wood for their stoves, while others, we were told, were still in the forest collecting fodder. We invited all whom we met to our evening meeting.

When we reached the site of our meeting at 6 pm, we found that a mat had been spread out, and chairs placed in the courtyard of the selected house. A few men were already sitting on a low wall adjoining the courtyard, but women were still absent. Some were coming in from the forest carrying bundles of grass on their heads; some were milking their cows; others were cleaning millet, separating the chaff from the grain; while still others were feeding their buffaloes with fodder from the forest. In spite of our calling them several times, they were unable to leave their chores and come to our meeting.

By 7 o'clock, however, around 25 women and several men had gathered, and our discussions started. In the beginning, participation was poor, some women were nervous, while others seemed unwilling to treat the discussion seriously. Gradually, however, as we started asking them questions about fodder, fuel and water, the women started responding more vocally, and soon they were all actively involved.

One of the women said, "We labour from dawn to dusk tending to our fields and animals and doing our household chores, but in spite of all this hard work we remain poor." One of the men interrupted, saying "All the land in our village is unirrigated, and because it is at such a height, we cannot grow any rice, only wheat, barley, chaulayi (leafy vegetable) soya bean, bhang (opium), and potatoes. We trade the chaulayi seeds for rice and sell the potatoes to contractors in Kathpudia." A middle-aged women, Dhana Devi said "All our families have buffaloes (for milk) cows (for their dung and urine) and bulls (for ploughing the fields). We have enough cattle but not enough fodder and water to feed them. Also, the nearest veterinary care centre is 20 km away in Havalbagh and cannot meet our needs."

As the discussion proceeded, one of the women said that some of the villagers also made and sold khoya. A week's

production of khoya was taken to Kathpudia and sold to contractors at fixed prices. There was no bargaining or selling to different buyers. In summer, the rate was Rs. 18 per kg and this dropped to Rs. 14 during winter, which lasted from the festival of Deepavali to that of Holi, after which the summer rate prevailed.

Owing to the lack of fodder, water and proper veterinary care, the villagers can keep only a few animals. As a result, production of milk is low and khoya making can be done only on a very small scale. The khoya is cooked on a slow fire for several hours; this is a time-consuming process for which a lot of firewood is required, and getting enough firewood from the forest is becoming increasingly difficult.

We asked the women what were the reasons for their being unable to improve their condition in spite of working so hard. The women said that one of the reasons was that even though they spend the whole day tending to their fields and animals, so that they do not even have time to look after their children, the income they earn as a result is very low, and in no way commensurate with their labour. The second major reason, they said was that their husbands do very little work, and spend their time sitting in the market place, playing cards instead. Whatever little money is earned, by selling khoya or other means, is wasted by them in drinking and other such vices. The burden of all the work, including looking after the fields, animals, children and doing household chores, falls on the shoulders of the women. Summer and winter, the women must walk a distance of 5 to 10 km to get grass from the forest. To collect one bundle of grass to feed one buffalo takes an entire day.

In addition to this, the women said they had other problems. For instance, the local ration shop does not give them the provisions to which they are entitled. Also, women sometimes do construction work and for this they are paid daily wages of only Rs. 8 to 10, whereas men get Rs. 12 to 15 for the same work. "We work much harder than them", said the women, "and yet, we are paid less, only because we are women." The women also said they were interested in learning some kind of handicraft in order to make some money. The women know how to make ropes out of locally available fibre. It takes a lot of time, however, to make the ropes by hand, and they would like some sort of hand operated machine which would quicken the process so that they can make more ropes. With regard to animal husbandry, the women said that this was their traditional occupation and if they could be given the necessary facilities, they would like to take it up on a larger scale.

Our study of the dairy and khoya making industry in

Deolikhan highlights the fact that, while it is the men who are highly visible because they do the marketing and selling, the 'real' back-breaking work is done by the women who remain invisible.

In the cold darkness of winter mornings, when the rest of the world is still abed, the women are up by 4 o'clock, lighting their pine torches, and walking the long distance to the forest to begin their search for fodder and firewood. By dawn, when others are just leaving their beds, they are already on their way back from the forest carrying big bundles of pine needles. They tend to their animals even before they see to their children. In fact, they spend the larger part of their day looking after their animals and tending to their needs. They collect fodder, feed and bathe the animals, take them out for grazing, clean their beddings and collect their dung for use as fuel. Just to collect grass from the forest can take up to six to seven hours of their time. The women have to leave their babies at home for hours at a time while they finish all their chores.

For the women, their animals are vital for their livelihood, but their attachment to these animals goes beyond the purely economic ties of dependence. The women lead a fairly isolated life and for them, their animals become as close as their own children. They talk to them and treat them with great affection. For their part, the animals show an equally strong attachment and will respond to the voice of their mistress even when she is calling them from far away. Life in Kumaon is fairly solitary, the houses are spaced far apart, and the women come to cherish and depend on their animals a great deal. It is, however, becoming increasingly difficult for the women to provide adequate food and care for their animals.

To summarise, the following major problems are responsible for the difficulties faced in dairy and khoya production :

- 1) The difficulty in getting sufficient fodder from the forest is growing from day to day and there has been no provision for developing better types or alternate sources of fodder.
- 2) Existing sources of water are drying up and the shortage of drinking water is becoming more acute, daily.
- 3) Facilities for proper veterinary care which should have been provided under various development schemes have not yet been made available to the villagers.

- 4) No provisions exist for providing adequate facilities for the marketing of milk and khoya and to ensure that the producers get a just return, commensurate with their labour.
- 5) The contribution of men and women to the production and sale of milk and khoya is unequal and this inequality is reinforced by the fact that the earnings go only to the men. All the work associated with animal-rearing and caring for the animals, as well as the actual production of khoya is done by the women. It is only marketing that is done by the men and the money goes into their hands. Thus, while the men are disassociated from the hard work and long hours put in by the women to produce the milk and khoya, the women are disassociated from the income earned as a result, so that they do not even have the means of judging whether they are getting a fair return for their labour. The person who gains overall is the sweet shop owner sitting in Almora, who is able to buy the milk and khoya at whatever price suits him.

Women are, therefore, doubly exploited. On one side, their own husbands neither help them in their work nor even appreciate their efforts; they merely pocket the income. On the other side, the sweet shop owners are able to buy milk and khoya at very low prices and by making and selling bal-mittai at a very much higher price, earn a huge profit.

An additional reason which makes such exploitation possible, is the inability of the milk and khoya sellers to act collectively and fight for a better price from the shop owners. Instead of seeking the strength of marketing collectively, they succumb to the lure of individual gain and are more interested in making a profit for themselves, even if it is achieved through dishonest means such as watering their milk.

It was this kind of dishonesty that resulted in the failure of the Milk Sahakari Samiti (cooperative society) which was set up in Sialidhar village some years back. The samiti would buy only pure milk with a strictly specified fat content. The villagers, however, calculated that by adding half a kilo of water to two kilos of milk, they could get Rs. 2 more than if they sold the pure milk to the samiti. The samiti was as a result very short lived.

This experience highlights the necessity for building up solidarity and unity among the milk and khoya producers before forming any kind of cooperative enterprise. It must, however, be kept in mind that it is the men who

were mainly involved in the above incident. Perhaps things may have been different if the women had been involved directly since it is they who are the actual producers and, therefore, the persons who should have been involved.

VILLAGES IN HAVALBAGH BLOCK SUPPLYING ALMORA
WITH MILK AND KHOYA

Villages Supplying Milk

Sialidhar

Matela

Gar

Khathiadi

Valya

Maar

Vakh

Sarson

Maal

Dapoli

Lodhia

Chausli

Varsimi

Phalseema

Senartekad

Villages Supplying Khoya

Deolikhan

Dhagas

Kujiadi

Vadgal

Batt

Kurchann

Chaan

Guruna

Papoli

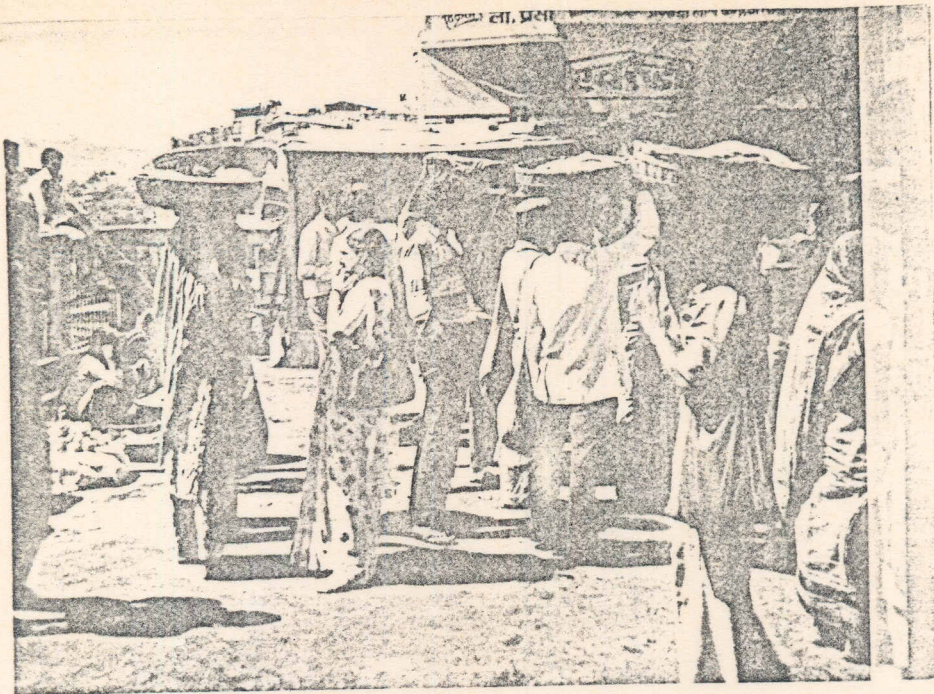
Katpudia

Dobra

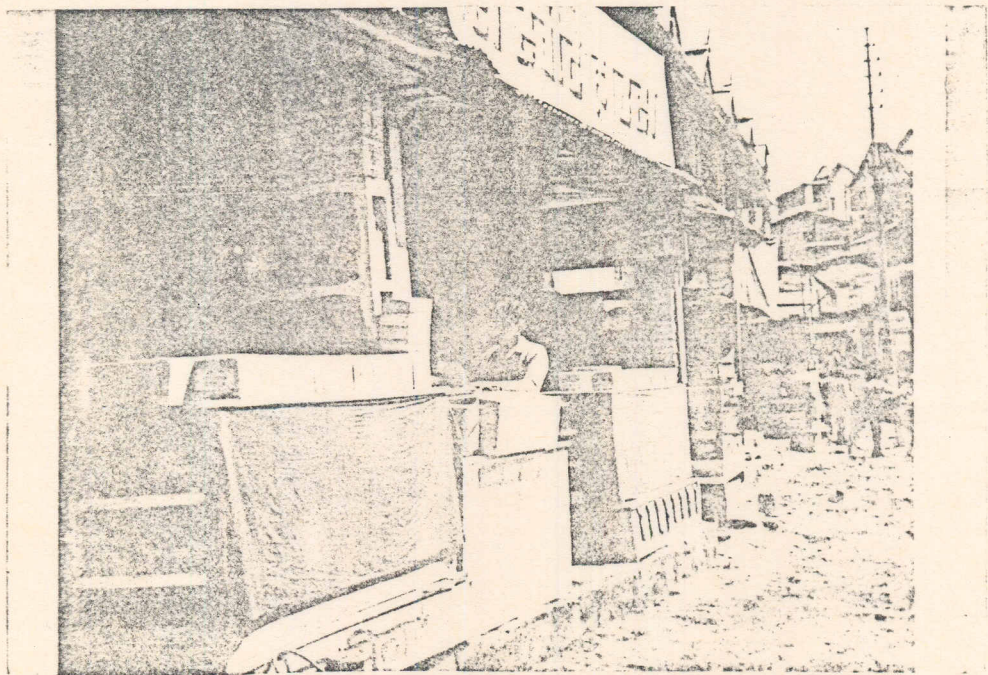
Rautela

Sukhasthal

Deli



SELLING KHOYA IN CHOWK BAZAR, ALMORA



BAL-MITTAI SHOP IN ALMORA

4.3 THE RINGAAL INDUSTRY

The ringaal industry is one of the traditional industries of Kumaon, the products of which are used daily in the fields and villages of the region for agriculture and animal husbandry work. The industry is spread over several villages in Kumaon and Garhwal, and it is essentially home-based with each family making ringaal baskets and mats for its own use. The industry is widespread in this region because ringaal grows only at these high altitudes. In the villages bordering the forests situated at these heights, people have been doing ringaal work for many generations. In Pithoragarh district of Kumaon, the ringaal industry is particularly prominent in Munsyadi, Dharchula, Champavath and Berinag blocks. Similarly, in Almora district, ringaal work is done on a large scale in the area beyond Kapkot, in the villages situated on the mountainsides bordering the Saryu river. Ringaal work is a major occupation in Chauda, Supi, Mikhila, Khalpatta, Jhuni, Khaljhuni, as well as in Shama, Liti and Mogina. In the Pindari valley, there are several villages such as Kunwari, Kilpara, Bacham, Sohrag and Badiyakot lying along the border of Garhwal district, which are also involved in ringaal work.

For the purpose of our survey, we studied several villages in Kapkot block including Jhuni, Khalpatta, Chauda, Mikhila and Supi. These villages are at a height of 10 to 12 thousand feet above sea level. The villages of Khalpatta, Supi and Chauda are situated near the source of the Saryu river. To reach these villages was an adventure in itself, since they are in a very remote area and inaccessible except on foot.

4.3.1 Khalpatta and Supi

Getting off the bus at Saung, I walked for 4 km in the hot sun until I reached the village of Munar on the banks of the Saryu. From here, I had to follow a narrow path for another 4 km before I reached Supi. Supi is the biggest and most well-known village in this valley. Even during the time of British rule, there was already a primary school here. This village is one of the most important centres for ringaal work in the area. People in the village not only make ringaal products themselves, but some of them also buy the products made in the surrounding area; they take these to the neighbouring vallies and sell them for a good price.

As I set forward from Supi village, a sudden heavy cloudburst, common in these mountains, drenched me completely. The sudden chill after the strong sunshine in Saung, made me start shivering. Ahead of me, mules laden with grain were going in the direction of Jhuni village. The track on which we were walking was so treacherous that even the mules were finding it difficult to keep their footing. One mule overbalanced and fell, and it was only with great difficulty that it was rescued.

Reaching the banks of the Saryu, we started along the path leading towards Khalpatta. A fallen tree had been used to bridge the river, anchored on both sides by heaps of stones. Crossing the bridge was a fairly nerve-racking experience; at any moment the loosely piled stones might slide and fall, or my foot might slip, and below the icy waters of the Saryu flowed swiftly.

Entering Khalpatta village, I felt as if I had been transported into another world. The fields were narrow strips of land carved out of the mountainside, planted with millet and oilseeds, and the system of agriculture seemed primitive. The houses were ancient, with thatched roofs and verandahs, and on all sides there were groups of men, women and children. I wondered why these people chose to live at this height of 7,000 feet, leading such an isolated life. Surrounding the village is dense forest, in which there are tigers which prey on the village animals. During four to five months in the year, the Saryu cuts the village off completely from the rest of the world. If somebody falls ill, the nearest available medical assistance is 10 km away. In spite of these hardships, people continue to live here, and I wondered why ?

"Because of the ringaal", they said. About fifty years ago the nearby forest was filled with high quality ringaal, but this was depleted with indiscriminate cutting, and now the villagers have to go 15 to 16 km deep into the forest to get such ringaal. In these villages, ringaal work is done by men and women, working together, and, therefore, when we held our meeting, both were present.

The villagers said there were two varieties of ringaal. The lower quality ringaal, called 'jumur' in pahadi, was available in the nearby forest, and women would go there in the morning, returning at dusk with a bundle of ringaal. The higher quality ringaal was, however, found only in far away forests, and it was gathered mostly by men. Apart from this, it was also possible to get

ringaal from the Panchayati forest in Khathi village by getting a license for Rs. 40 to 80 from the Van (forest) Panchayat there. A group of ringaal workers would buy a plot jointly, and the men would go there to work on this plot, cutting and cleaning the ringaal and stacking it in bundles (called puthar). This would take a week, and during this period, they would build a small hut and live in the forest itself. Five and a half hands (around 8 feet) of ringaal could be collected with one license, enough to make two mosta (mats). The ringaal was brought home and dried in the sun, after which it was woven into mats by both men and women.

Weaving is done out in the open, in whatever space is available adjoining the houses. During the monsoon, however, the villagers build small huts, open on three sides; and those who cannot afford to do this, continue their weaving in the closed verandahs adjoining their houses. Since the space available for weaving is cramped, the mats have to be bent as they are woven, and this lowers their value. Weaving is a lengthy process and to produce an eight feet long mat takes a whole week, over and above the time spent in collecting and processing the raw material.

Gathering ringaal from the forest, cleaning and drying is done during November to April. Weaving is done mainly during May to October.

4.3.2

a) Products

The products made from ringaal are many and include mosta, daliya, doka, kachchal, sup and chatyur. Mosta is a big mat which is used in the fields after harvest; the gathered crop, such as paddy, is spread out on it and the seeds are removed. Mosta are also used for drying grain in the courtyards of houses and inside the rooms, for sitting on. Another useful ringaal product is the daliya, a circular basket, which is also used in the fields to carry grain, fertilisers, seeds and the like. The daliya also makes a warm, strong and comfortable cradle for babies, in which they are safe and secure. It is also used as a sort of handbag by women. The doka is similar to the daliya and is also used for toting and carrying loads. Whereas the daliya is carried on the head, the doka is hung on the shoulders. The kachchal is also like the doka but is used only for carrying light loads such as dry grass, leaves, etc. The sup is used for winnowing grain, while the chatyur is used as an

umbrella while working in the fields. In addition to these, small bags and baskets are also made, but in smaller numbers and only for outsiders.

b) Marketing

- 1) Some products are sold directly from the home to farmers from the surrounding areas.
- 2) The men carry the goods packed in big bundles on their shoulders and backs to distant villages for sale; this is very hard work as the loads are heavy.
- 3) Contractors (who are themselves ringaal workers) from the village (and other villagers around) buy up the ringaal goods and sell them in villages, near and far, such as Garud, Bageshwar, Gwaldam (in Garhwal) and Karn Prayag, as well as Someshwar in the Koshi valley, and Takula and Lodh in Pithoragarh. The ringaal products are also sold in various melas held in Kumaon. To reach these melas, the villagers have to travel distances of 60 to 200 km, by bus and on foot, carrying heavy loads.

c) Price

An eight feet long mosta is sold locally for Rs. 100, and for Rs. 150 to Rs. 200 in more distant villages. The prices of ringaal products are rising daily, mainly because of the lack of raw material, but also due to transportation costs. These products are becoming increasingly expensive for the farmers.

d) Economic Conditions

The economic status of the villages in which ringaal work is being done is fairly backward. In Khalpatta village, there are 41 families, out of which 30 are Harijan and 11 are Rajput. Mikhila village has 22 families, half of which are Harijan, while the other half are Bhotiya. In Supi village all the families are Harijan, while in Jhuni, there are both Harijan and Rajput families. In Chauda, the entire village is Bhotiya. The economic condition of ringaal workers in these villages is poor. They live in small, thatched houses which afford little protection from the severe winter cold. In addition to ringaal work, these people

are also engaged in agriculture, but since the land is unirrigated and at high altitudes, very few crops can be grown on it, such as, small quantities of wheat, chaulayi (leafy vegetable), barley, bhangira (spice), bhang (opium) and madua (millet). Rice does not grow at these heights. Agriculture and animal husbandry is done mostly by women. A tributary of the Sarayu flows near these villages and during the monsoon, when the river is in spate, the villagers are marooned for three to four months at a time. What they miss most during this period is rice, which they are unable to get from the lower villages. How they are able to manage without proper communications and adequate provisions is a matter of wonder.

e) Problems

This traditional ringaal industry has provided many with a living and can continue to do so in the future, if a solution can be found to the problems besetting it. Finding a market is not a major problem since a local market already exists in the villages of Kumaon and Garhwal. There are, however, other problems :

1) Lack of Raw Material : The villagers have to put in a lot of effort to get ringaal and even then the quantities are insufficient. To deal with this problem, it is necessary to replenish the depleted source of ringaal through planting, and organise the cutting of existing ringaal on a scientific basis. Ringaal is ready for cutting two years after planting and, once cut, a new shoot grows which also takes two years to mature, when it is again ready for cutting. The scientific way of cutting ringaal is to cut two-thirds of the plant, leaving one third behind. If this method is not enforced on a widespread basis, and if indiscriminate cutting continues, ringaal will disappear altogether from the forests. The planting of new ringaal is equally important and the villagers are eager to do it. They must be encouraged and provided assistance to take up such afforestation on as large a scale as possible. With the help of Lakshmi Ashram in Kausani, the villagers of Loharikhet and Chauda have planted around 80,000 ringaal saplings, and this kind of activity needs to be promoted on an urgent basis.

2) At present ringaal grows most abundantly in the reserve forests, although it is legally forbidden to cut this ringaal without permission. The only way this can be done is by getting a license and this is very costly.

The ringaal artisans are, thus, unable to get sufficient quantities of ringaal when they need it.

3) Facilities for weaving are also inadequate. A wide open space is necessary, and this is not easily available. During the rains the space available is small and cramped, so that the mats being woven have to be bent and this spoils them. The villages cannot afford a shed for this purpose.

4) Marketing facilities are poor. The villagers would like assistance in setting up small, local shops in places such as Bharadi, Bageshwar, Garud, Someshwar and Pithoragarh. This would reduce the hardship they currently face in having to carry heavy loads over long distances on foot and by bus. It would also cut down on transport costs which make the products more expensive and eat into their margins.

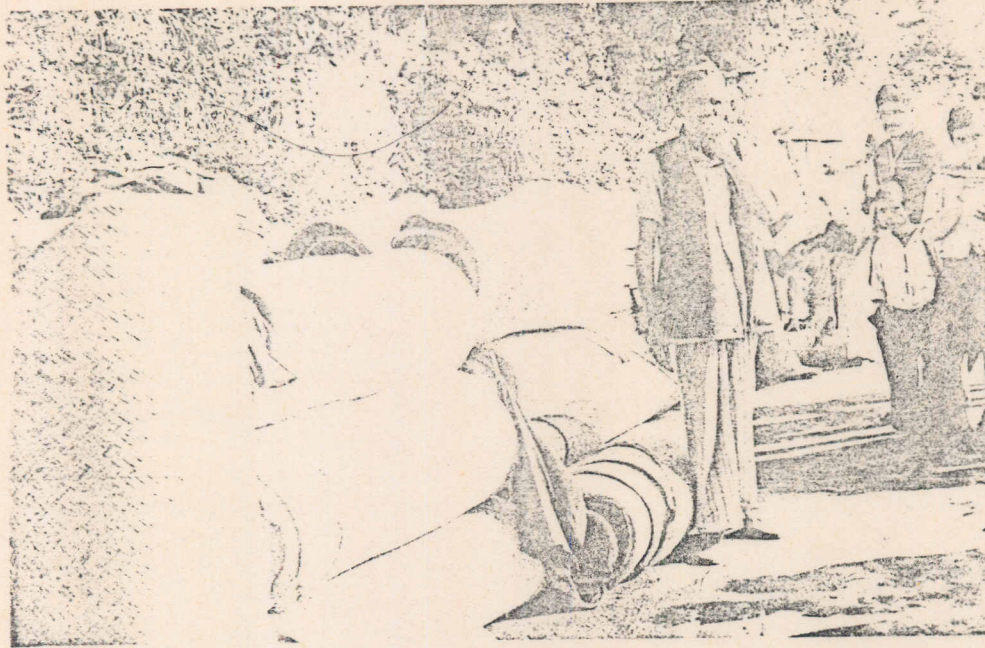
5) The villagers, suffer considerable harassment by the forest department officers who pester them with questions about where and how they got the ringaal.

6) The villagers also face problems when they attend the melas in order to sell their goods. During Makar Sankranti mela, the only place the ringaal artisans can find to set out their wares is near a dirty ditch, and for this they not only have to pay the usual fees to the authorities, but they also have to pay a bribe to the local big bosses. Men from the far away villages of Kilpara and Jhuni seemed frightened, and when I asked them how much they had to pay to get a place in the mela, they were unwilling to discuss the matter. When the men themselves found it so difficult to deal with the power politics and corruption in the mela, it was unlikely that the women who had come to sell their goods would be able to handle it at all. Among the men, many were contractors who were relatively more experienced in handling such situations, but even they were having problems.

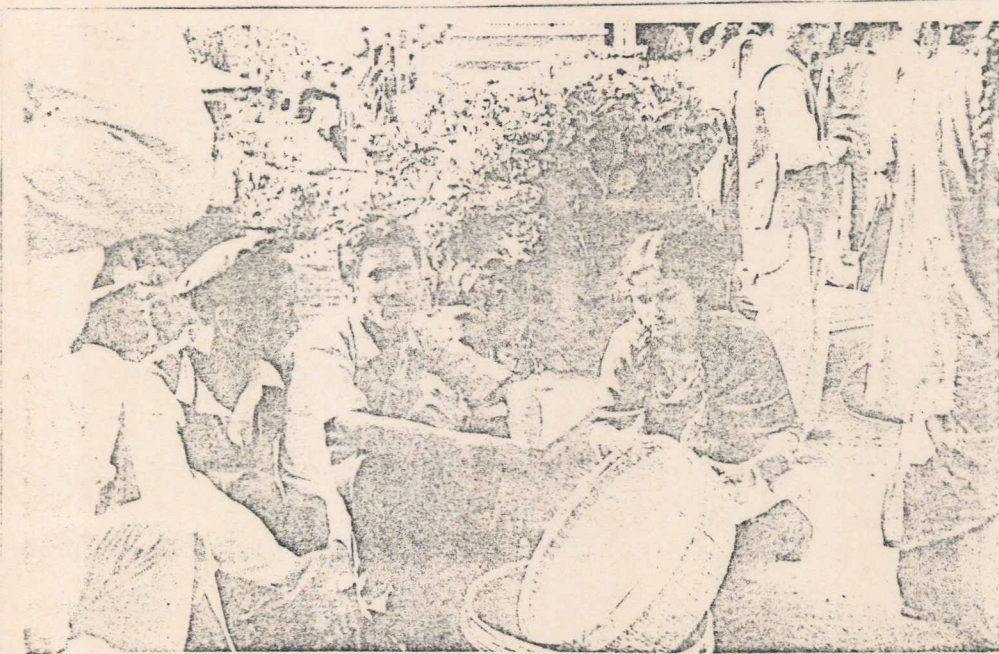
7) A day or two before the mela begins, the ringaal artisans pack their goods in bundles on their backs, and set off from their villages to the beginning of the motor road. On 13, January 1988, I saw a stream of men and women from villages such as Jhuni, Khaljhuni, Mikhila, Khalpatta, Supi, Gaasi and Minar, swathed in colourful shawls and toting big bundles of their wares on their backs, walking briskly along the narrow mountain path towards Saung, where the motor road begins. Once they reached Saung, however, they had to spend a very long time waiting for the contractor to come. Several of the

women showed signs of impatience; they were anxious to get back to their children whom they had left alone at home, and to their animals who had to be fed. When the contractor finally arrived, he tried to find hidden flaws in their goods in an attempt to lower the price. In these kind of conditions, the ringaal worker cannot even hope to sell his wares for a just return.

8) Those artisans who want to take their goods themselves to the mela, find themselves harassed by the bus drivers and conductors who charge them exorbitant amounts for carrying their goods, and this adds to the cost. I found that several ringaal workers had walked the entire distance of 60 km to Bageshwar on foot, carrying their back-breaking loads, all in order to avoid this kind of harassment. This is injustice of the worst kind, that these poor workers must labour unnecessarily, because they are not able to use the facilities which have been provided precisely to do away with such unnecessary labour.

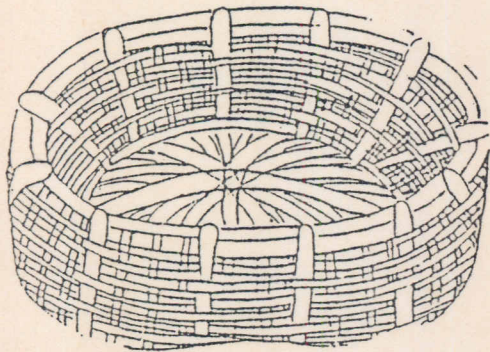


MOSTA BEING SOLD IN THE JANMASHTAMI MELA

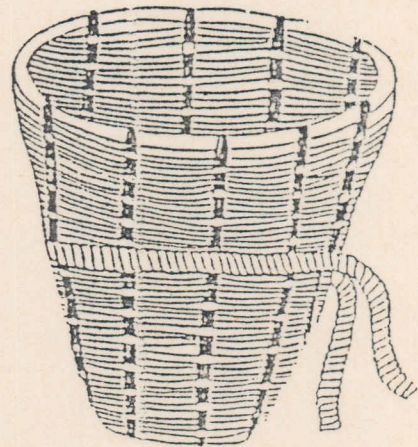


DALIYA ON DISPLAY IN THE MELA

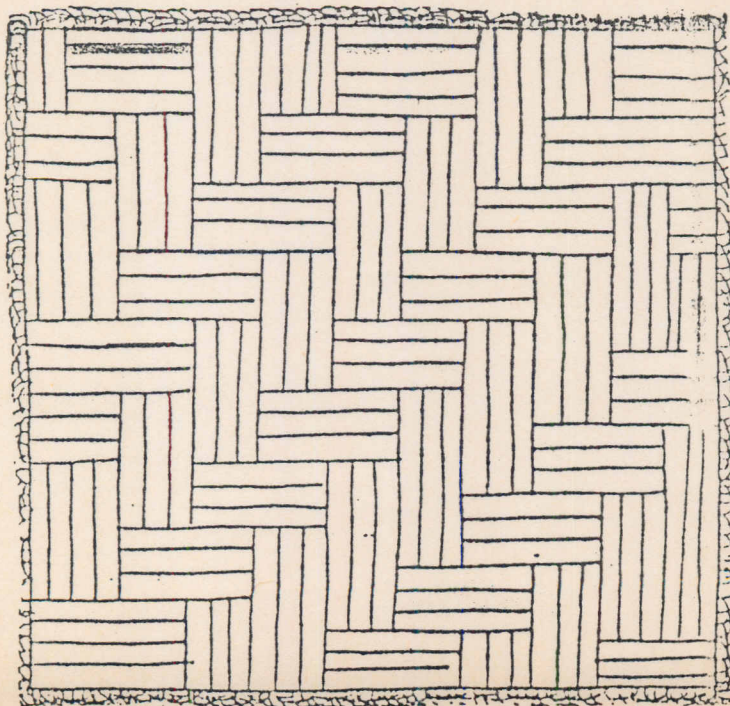
RINGAAL PRODUCTS



DALIYA



DOKA



MOSTA

4.4 CHILLI CULTIVATION

The cultivation of chillies is an activity performed entirely by women. As part of our survey, we studied the village of Chauda, situated in Malladanpur area of Almora district, near the Saryu river. Malladanpur is considered to be a backward area, but, even here, there are several income-generating activities which have been carried on for many years, such as, the collection of herbs, the rearing of sheep, the making of woollen products; and the like. Chauda village is situated at a height of 7,000 feet above sea level. The land is sloping and the top soil is soft and light. Chilli cultivation began in this area around 30-40 years ago, and is done entirely by women.

To reach Chauda village from Almora, one has to travel a distance of 51 km to Kausani, and a further 40 km to Bageshwar on the banks of the Saryu. The bus follows the course of the Saryu until one reaches Kapkot village. From here, one continues along an untarred road into the interior. It feels as if the road will take one right into the Himalayas, as the bus moves slowly along the next 20 km to Saung.

At Saung, I leave the bus. The Saryu flows swiftly nearby and, on both sides, the mountains seem to climb perpendicularly towards the sky. Shouldering my haversack I begin the long climb up the mountain, heading towards the east. The climb is very steep and my back begins to ache. Two or three women from Chauda pass me on their way down. They are carrying big gunny bags full of chillies on their back, which they are taking to sell in the surrounding villages. They are running down the path in order to catch the same bus which brought me to Saung.

When I finally reach Chauda after the climb of 5 to 6 km, I am breathless. In the middle of the village, sitting in front of a three-storeyed house is a venerable old gentleman draped in a coarse woollen shawl. This is Mansinghji, who is more commonly known as 'Mantri' (Secretary), because in the past, he was the Secretary of some local samiti (society). All visitors to the village must meet Mantriji, who is also the present Sarpanch (head) of the village Van panchayat. They must also meet the village's Sabhapati (head), a very simple and modest person. Both Mantriji and the Sabhapati, advise me to meet Budli Devi, when I tell them about my study.

As I cross the courtyard towards Budli Devi's house, I see her coming towards me carrying a big copper vessel full of water on her back, supported by a rope tied round her head. "A lot of people have come to our village to talk to us and to bring us new schemes", she says. "But nothing comes of them. You talk about helping us when you are here, but when you leave the village you forget about us." Budli is old but her frail appearance conceals a wiry strength. Lines of experience are etched in her face and her eyes are full of life. Her body is covered from top to toe in a cotton robe and a woollen shawl. "Yes sister", I answer, "forty years of independence have not helped to give you a better life." "Ask me", she says, "I will tell you all you want to know; you can carry my voice to the government." Budli Devi and the other women of the village then tell me about their work, and the problems they face.

The seedlings are planted in nurseries and when the plants reach a certain height, they are transferred to the fields. Every ten, fifteen days weeding is done, and the plants are watered, whenever possible. In October, the chillies are gathered and dried in the courtyards and on the roofs of houses, after which they are packed into big gunny bags.

Marketing of chillies is also done by the women who go from village to village on foot and by bus, carrying the big sacks full of chillies on their backs. This takes anywhere between ten to fifteen days when they are away from their houses. During this period they walk long distances between the villages, finding shelter for the night wherever they can. The chillies are bartered for rice, one sack of rice for one sack of chillies; when rice is not available, the chillies are sometimes sold for cash. In one such trip, they manage to sell around two sacks of chillies, but they also incur a cost of around Rs. 250 to Rs. 300.

This kind of selling, travelling from village to village is very tiring and the women have to undergo considerable hardships. When night falls, and they are in some distant village, they have to request the villagers for a place to stay. Sometimes they are lucky, at others they are not so fortunate. They are entirely dependent on the goodwill of the villagers for a place to stay and a place to store the rice they have acquired in exchange for the chillies. Under these difficult conditions, the women feel insecure, but they have no choice.

In response to my questions, the women said that they

faced other problems too. "We work hard to plant the chillies, and then they are destroyed by pests. We buy gamaxene to kill these pests, but cannot get it in sufficient quantity. Nor are we able to get fertilisers. We also have to water the plants, especially in the nursery stage. Since there is a shortage of water, and no facilities for irrigation, many plants shrivel up and die. In the months of Bhadon and Kartik (October) we gather the chillies and dry them for about 8 to 10 days, after which we fill them in gunny bags, and take them for sale. Rice is harvested around the same time and we trade our chillies for this rice."

The system of marketing, as described already, is very primitive, with no fixed rates of exchange, no shop to sell in, and no credit to buy pesticides and fertilisers with. In spite of all the back-breaking work they put in, the women have no means of ensuring that they get a just return for their labour. When asked what kind of assistance they needed, the women said they required irrigation facilities, pesticides and fertilisers, as well as a better system of marketing.

Apart from Chauda village, there are many other chilli producing villages near Ranikhet in Almora district, in which women are the major producers; and although these could not be covered in the course of our survey, it is necessary for us to study them in depth in the future.

4.5 COLLECTION OF HERBS

In the mountains and forests of the Himalayas, there is an abundance of natural flora, of which, herbs form a very valuable part. Our traditional systems of medicine are based on these herbs of which there are around seven hundred varieties. For years, people have searched for and gathered these herbs, and on the basis of their collective experience and endeavour, systems of traditional healing have been built up over the centuries, based on these herbs. Today, these herbs form part of many different systems of medicine including Ayurveda, homeopathy, Unani, and even allopathy. Certain mantras and slokas (prayers and incantations) are also associated with these herbs.

These herbs are found in greatest quantity in the area of Uttarakhand. Today, they are being exploited on a large scale because of their considerable value in the national and international markets. In addition to timber, minerals and lisa (resin) these herbs have become a very important natural resource of the Himalayas. The benefits, however, go to the Government and local authorities which control the herb trade; very little filters down to the local inhabitants of the region who do the actual work of gathering them, and whose natural environment is being harmed as a result.

In the Kumaon region, the collection and marketing of herbs is being done by the Kumaon Development Corporation since 1981. They employ around 5,000 people to do this work, of whom only 400 are permanent employees. The rest are wage labourers who gather herbs primarily during the winter months. The majority of workers are women. The Corporation maintains that it does not use middlemen but hires the workers directly, giving them permits to collect herbs in the forest. In practice, however, there are middlemen who pay the villagers to gather herbs, and themselves market these herbs. They pay the women very low wages. The middlemen are supposed to get a license from the authorities to collect herbs from the forests, but when they are unable to do so, the women are forced to do this work illegally, and often have to bribe the forest patrol guards to let them go.

As part of our survey, we visited several villages near Danya, including Ladhauli, Kota and Kali ghaspad in which collection of herbs is done primarily by Harijan women. The major occupation of these women is agriculture. They have small terraced fields which are

unirrigated, and on which they manage to grow some coarse grains, but in such small quantities, that these are insufficient to feed their families through the year. To meet their basic needs for the rest of the year, they have to take up some form of wage labour. During the winter months from November to March, the women gather herbs for the Kumaon Development Corporation.

Some of the women have been doing this work for the past six years, while others have started only recently. With the increasing scarcity of herbs, the women have to go very far, at least 10 to 12 km, in search of herbs; and, even then, after a whole day spent roaming around the forests, they are able to collect only a small quantity. The Corporation pays between Rs. 3 to Rs. 5 per kg, depending upon the kinds of herbs collected.

The supply of herbs is being steadily depleted because of over-exploitation, supported by the ever-increasing demands of drug manufacturers. As far back as 1974, the Government of India had declared nine medicinal herbs, used for curing a variety of illness, to be extinct.

The State Government has also conducted a survey which indicates that around fifty herbs are currently under threat of extinction. In these circumstances, it is vital to stop the indiscriminate exploitation of herbs, and to replenish their supply through planting and cultivation. The local people need to be instructed in the scientific methods of herb cultivation; they need to know what kinds of herbs can be grown in different types of soil and at different altitudes. Wherever possible, land can be allotted for this purpose so that the villagers have a place to grow these herbs.

At the same time, they can be involved directly in marketing and be given a say in fixing prices. For this purpose, they need to be given information on the market for such herbs and the prices they command, so that they have an incentive to grow them. In addition, the processing of these herbs could be done locally, instead of sending them outside the region, so as to generate additional employment for the people of the area.

A list of some important herbs of Kumaon is provided in Appendix 2.

4.6 OTHER TRADITIONAL PRODUCTS

Traditionally, the villages of Kumaon have been self-reliant, making most of the products used in their daily lives by themselves. As a result, their needs have stayed limited and their dependence on the market has been minimal. Even today, the villagers make articles such as brooms, ropes, halters and nets for their own use. Any articles made in excess of their needs are given for sale in the local shops. In the last few years, however, due to changing circumstances, the production of these articles has decreased.

a) Brooms (Jhadu)

The brooms used in this area are made from babil grass or jowar (a cereal). Babil grass is sometimes found growing wild along the borders of fields or, more often, in the rocky areas of far away forests, and is gathered by the villagers for their use. In every village, there are many who know how to make brooms. They are given a little babil grass or grain in payment; sometimes they even do it free, because in the village there is a tradition of helping each other out. The jowar, which is also used to make brooms, is grown in the fields in small patches between the regular crops. By September, October, the jowar is ready for use, the stalks are tall and the fibres are long and strong. The seeds are removed and part of the stalk and the fibres are used to make the broom.

In the past, the villagers used only these locally made babil and jowar brooms, as well as brooms made out of green pine needles. Now, however, they have also started buying brooms made out of kajur (date palm) leaves from the local market. In order to find out more we spoke to eighteen women from different villages.

Most of the women said that in their villages, even now, most people make brooms for their own use. In villages close to local markets, however, people also buy brooms which have come from the big markets in Ramnagar and Haldwani in the foot hills. On the other hand, the women of Thakla village said that all the people in their village still used locally made brooms and ropes.

All the women, however, said that it was becoming increasingly difficult to get babil grass; which is why, in the villages close to the markets, people prefer to

buy ready-made brooms, rather than go to the trouble of making them.

b) Halters, Ropes and Nets (Gayu, Rassi, Jal)

These articles are made from the fibres of plants such as bhang, bhekul, al and rambas. Bhang is grown in villages situated high in the mountains, and its seeds are used as a spice in chutneys and vegetable preparations. The bhang plant is tall and its skin is stripped to give long strands of fibre. The bhekul tree is grown for fodder; its leaves and twigs are cut and fed to animals. The fibre obtained from its bigger branches is very strong. The al and rambas are wild plants growing in the forest. All these plants are soaked for several days, after which their fibre is removed and used to make ropes.

Ropes, nets and halters are used constantly in the village for a variety of activities. Ropes are used by the women to tie the bundles of grass they bring from the forest and the dried sheaves of grain they carry from the fields. Nets are used to gather dry leaves which are used as bedding for the animals. All these items are made by the villagers themselves because the raw materials are available locally. Now, however, people have also started buying ropes from outside the village. In the last year or two, nylon ropes are being marketed in the local bazaars, and given their strength and durability, it looks as if the demand for them will grow.

c) Chatyur (Umbrellas)

These are made by binding together the leaves of the malu tree with strips of ringaal, to make a very light cover. Chatyur used to be found in every farmer's house and were used by the women when they worked in the fields during the monsoon, to protect themselves from the rain. In the last few years, they have disappeared altogether, and have been replaced by plastic sheets which are sold in large quantity in these villages. The chatyur takes time to make and is costly; although it is strong and durable, it cannot be folded up and stored, when not in use, like plastic sheets. For all these reasons, the villagers now prefer to use plastic sheets, which are easily available.

d) Daliya (Baskets)

These baskets made from ringaal are used in the fields, in tending to the animals and also as handbags. When visiting their in-laws or relatives, women used to carry their clothes and provisions in daliya. Increasingly, however, these big baskets are being found cumbersome, especially while travelling in buses, because they occupy too much space. Instead, nylon and plastic bags have become very popular and are being sold in large numbers. All the women now use these bags, when travelling from place to place.

Our study of the above products led us to the conclusion that, in Kumaon today, owing to changes in the environment and natural resources, as also because of changing social values and customs, there is a shift from the natural to the synthetic, and from traditional self-reliance towards market-dependence.

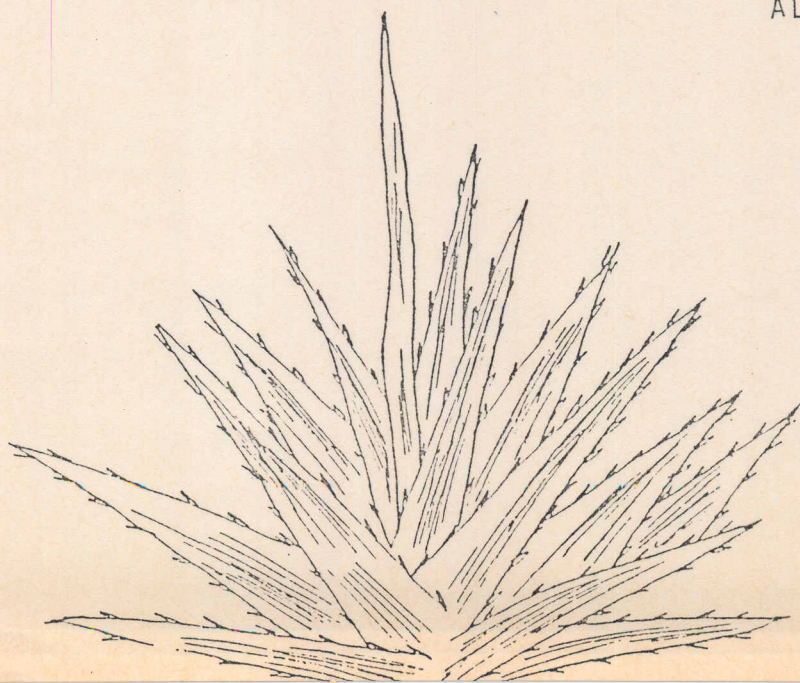
Another matter of concern to us, is the increasing pollution that is likely to occur as the result of greater use of such synthetic products, and what effect this will have on the natural environment in Kumaon.

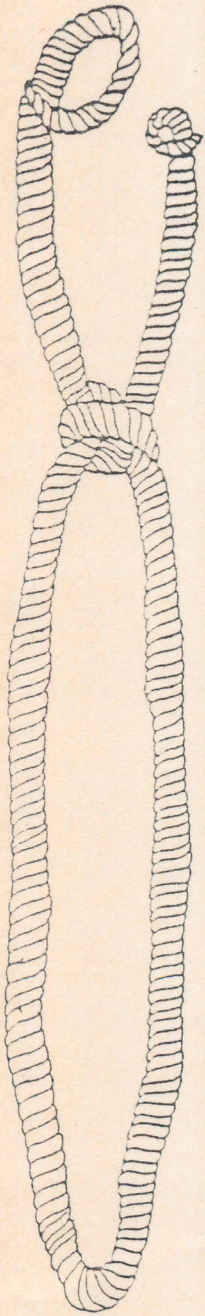


BHANG

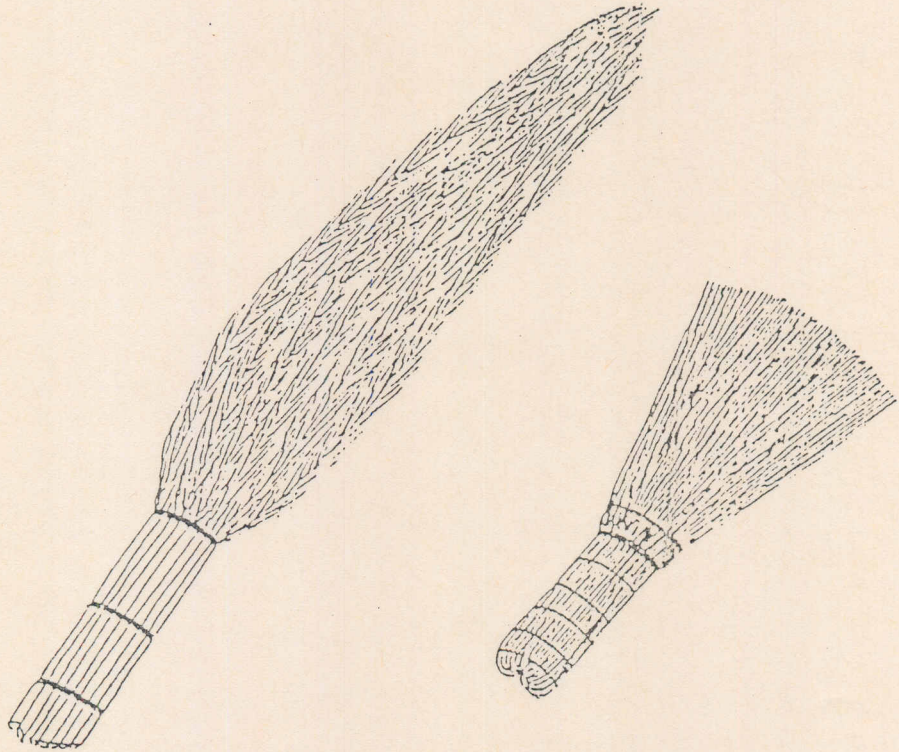


AL





HALTER FOR CATTLE



BROOMS

4.7 Mat Making

In Sitarganj block of Nainital district, close to Haldwani, there is a community from Bengal who were settled in this region by the Government, thirty years ago. After so many years, they have also become a part of the local population. Their major occupation is agriculture and animal husbandry; alongside, they also carry on their traditional industry of mat making. These mats are made from pater grass growing on uncultivated land and alongside water in the forests. Cutting and gathering of grass is done by both men and women, but the weaving of mats is done only by women.

a) Raw Material

The grass used for making the mats is found in the forests of the Terai. With the increase in the size of their community, the land under agriculture has increased and the forests have receded, so that now, the villagers have to go 20 to 80 km searching for grass in the remaining forest. The grass available is of fairly low quality, and the officials of the forest department harass the villagers when they come in search of grass. To bring the grass back from the forest, the villagers have to hire some means of transport, and this is costly.

b) Marketing

This is done by men in local bazars and in the towns of Haldwani, Almora and Bageshwar, as well as in the melas. The artisans sell directly, as well as to contractors. A small mat is sold for Rs. 5 to 10.

The major problem faced by these villagers is the lack of raw material, and the high cost of transporting it from the forest to their homes. In addition, they also need more facilities for, and a more organised system of, marketing.

5. MARKETING SYSTEMS IN KUMAON

A very important part of the rural haat survey is the study of marketing systems in the region. We found that there are a variety of marketing systems/methods in use:

- 1) Local permanent shops in which items of daily use such as soap, provisions, clothing, stationery, etc., are sold.
- 2) Local melas (fairs) held periodically through the year.
- 3) Mobile sales by artisans and producers, who carry their goods from village to village.
- 4) Home sales : orders placed directly by consumers who go to the producers' houses and collect the goods themselves.

5.1 Permanent Markets (Haats)

We covered the following markets : Almore, Someshwar, Channauda, Kausani, Garud, Bageshwar. A detailed description of the Almora, Garud and Bageshwar markets is given below. The remaining markets are small, and similar in nature, and are therefore not described separately.

5.1.1 Almora

In the last ten years, more than 60 new shops have been opened. These shops sell items such as cloth, vessels, medicines, stationery, etc. The products of local cottage industries are not sold in any of these new shops, and the total quantity of these products coming to the Almora market is constantly decreasing. However, locally produced goods such as vegetables, fruits, milk, khoya, and items such as brooms, ropes, halters, nets agricultural implements and reed baskets continue to be sold in the market. These products, however, form only a small part of the market.

In Almora, there is a colony of coppersmiths, the Tamta, who make very beautiful vessels of different sizes, both big and small, with traditional designs of Kumaon. These vessels are found in a few shops in the market. Present in far larger quantity, however, are brassware from Moradabad and stainless steel utensils from outside. As

a result, the coppersmiths now make vessels mainly to order and they do not have any special shop in which to display their wares.

In Kumaoni weddings, a traditional part of the bride's attire is the red and yellow pichoda (veil), which is traditionally made at home by women. Some women are now making and selling these pichodas in the market. During the wedding season, the brightly coloured pichodas are visible everywhere, giving us a glimpse of Kumaoni culture. Hand-knitted sweaters and hand-woven shawls, panki (big shawls for men) and kaleen (carpets) are also sold in Almora market; but they are to be found only here and there in a few shops. They are being displaced by machine-knitted shawls and sweaters, and cashmilon woollen wear from outside, which even though they are of lower quality, are often preferred by buyers because of their bright colours and bold designs. Apart from this, the making and selling of bal-mittai (milk sweet) is also an important trade.

A large variety of goods from outside are sold in the Almora market. These include gadgets like TVs, radios, cassette players; leather shoes and plastic slippers; plastic buckets and baskets; medicines, milk powder, sugar and so on.

5.1.2 Garud

During the last ten years, the market has grown considerably; 30 to 35 new shops have been opened selling cloth, steel vessels, general provisions, etc. Ten years ago, this market was dominated by the products of local artisans, but today, these are being increasingly displaced by products from the urban market, and are available in very small quantity. A few locally made products such as theki (wooden vessels for curds), ropes, reed baskets and winnowers are still to be found. Some years ago, these products were available in much larger quantity, and a number of other products were also being sold, such as agricultural implements made by local blacksmiths, matkas (earthen vessels) and pots made by local potters, brooms and umbrellas made out of leaves. All these products have now largely disappeared from the market because of the following reasons :

- 1) Due to the lack of raw materials, the villagers can no longer produce as much as before. They have to go far into the forest looking for raw materials. Babil grass which is used for making

brooms and ropes, and the special wood of the Sannan tree which is used for making vessels, have become very scarce in the forests.

- 2) In the past, there were specific communities of blacksmiths and potters; but these traditional skills are being lost as the younger generation, who are educated, take up other occupations and move to the cities in search of jobs.
- 3) As the villages are becoming better connected with the nearby cities through roads, urban products are, increasingly, entering the village markets.
- 4) The tastes of local consumers are changing through exposure to outside influences and as a result of changing needs. In some instances, locally made products have been substituted by urban products, as in the case of the leaf umbrellas which have been replaced by plastic and cloth umbrellas.

As a result, the local market today is flooded with goods from outside the region which are predominantly machine-made goods from the big markets in cities such as Delhi and Ludhiana. Apart from ready-made cloth, plastic articles and the like, even provisions and food-stuffs come from outside. So do agriculture implements, which are brought from the wholesale markets in Haldwani and Ramnagar.

5.1.3 Bageshwar

Bageshwar is situated on the banks of the Gomti river, and is a place of historical and religious significance. Many pilgrims come to visit the Bagnath temple at Bageshwar. Items used for ritual and religious purposes are, therefore, available in large quantity in addition to the various other products, which are available in Almora and Garud. In the last few years, locally made cottage industry products have also decreased in number, but as compared to the Almora and Garud markets, they are still to be found in greater quantity, because Bageshwar is in a more remote area and raw materials are still available to the local producers.

Ropes, halters and nets made from fibrous plants and tree such as bhekul, al and bhang, and wooden items such as theki, rauli (churn), dokai (wooden vat for curds), hal (ploughs), kutli (handles of tools), etc. are to be found in the market. Previously, brass and copper vessels were also sold in the market, but now that the

raw materials are no longer available, these have disappeared. Reed products are also available such as baskets and mats, as well as grass mats from Sitarganj. Vegetables and fruits which are locally produced are also sold in the market. In the summer, however, these are not available locally, and are brought from nearby towns such as Haldwani and Ramnagar.

Apart from this, just as in the Almora and Garud markets, there are all kinds of factory-made goods, including ready-made cloth, vessels and the like.

5.2 Local Melas

In the Kumaon region, local melas are of considerable importance in the area's trade and commerce. These melas are annual events in which cottage and village industry products are predominantly sold. In Uttarakhand, more than 300 such annual melas used to be held. In the past, the Bhotiya community would get raw wool from Tibet and sell it in these melas. They would also sell woollen products made by them.

In order to make these melas important occasions in the minds of the villagers, over the years, the melas have been associated with religious festivals. They are held in holy places where there are famous temples, and on the banks, or at the confluence, of holy rivers. The days on which melas are held are public holidays, and on these days farmers do not till their fields. This tradition of local melas has continued over the years and is still followed today, although the character of these melas has altered with changing circumstances.

A list of melas held in Kumaon is provided at the end of the chapter. Some of these melas which took place during the period of our survey, were studied in detail by us :

5.2.1 Jauljibi Mela in Pithoragarh District

Jauljibi is a small place with a population of 10,000. The closest areas are Nepal, which is 25 km away, and Tibet which is 30 km away. The Jauljibi mela is very old and dates back to the days of British rule. It is a purely commercial event with no religious significance. Products which are bought and sold in this mela come from Nepal, Tibet, Uttarkashi, Tanakpur, Almora and Ramnagar. The farthest distance from which people come with their products is 240 km from Ramnagar. People bring their goods by bus or carry them on their backs or

heads. The main products sold in this fair are :

a) Cottage Industry Products such as raw wool, woollen carpets (galicha, dan) and rugs(thulma), woollen shawls, blankets and sweaters; ringaal products like winnowers (sup), big mats (mosta) and baskets (doka); iron vessels and brass water pots (gagri); and honey, animal skins and animals themselves (goats, horses, cattle).

b) City Products such as warm clothes, denim trousers and other garments, plastic slippers and nylon ropes.

Selling is done mostly by men, although some women are also to be seen. Through the years, the mela has lost some of its importance and is no longer as big an event as before. There is a decrease in the number of traders who come to the mela from afar, and in the cottage industry products available for sale. The whole atmosphere of the mela has changed with the inflow of products from the cities, and its traditional character has changed accordingly. A variety of factors are responsible for these changes :

- The traders coming from Nepal and Tibet find it difficult to get permits to come to the mela.
- The cost of products, especially cottage industry products, has increased considerably because of the taxes levied on raw materials and products coming in from Nepal and Tibet. In addition, sellers often hike up their prices in order to make greater profits, and consumers are forced to pay them if they want the products. For instance, a woollen item which cost Rs. 500 three years ago, now costs Rs. 1,000.
- The incidence of drunkenness and associated misbehaviour has increased, and is adversely affecting the traditional character of the mela.

5.2.2 Makar Sankranti Mela in Bageshwar

The Bageshwar mela is held on January 14 or 15, on the day of Makar Sankranti. People from surrounding villages start coming into Bageshwar a day or two before the festival begins. Some people are there just to visit and enjoy the mela, while others come to sell their products.

Men and women from the nearby villages of Supi, Gaasi

and Manaar bring their ringaal products such as mosta (big mats), daliya (big baskets) and sups (winnowers) to the fair, carrying them in big bundles on their heads. Most of these artisans carry their products on foot, through the hills, to where the motor roads start. Here they are met by thekedars (middlemen) to whom they sell their goods. Others take their goods, by bus, directly to the mela. The bus drivers and conductors, however, harass the villagers, charging them high rates for carrying their goods. Some villagers, in desperation, end up walking the whole distance of 60 to 70 km to the mela.

This year, too locally made cottage industry products were found in very meager quantity in the mela. Most of the goods on sale were factory-made products from outside. On all sides items made from plastic were on display and were selling briskly. The authorities have built stalls which are available on rent to the sellers. There is, however, no government stall for cottage industry products. These products are usually sold by artisans on the roadside, near ditches, wherever there is a little open space available. Woollen products made locally were being sold side by side with those from Ludhiana, and more people seemed to be attracted to the latter. Although Bageshwar has traditionally been a centre for cottage industry products, there was no evidence of this in the mela.

5.2.3 Janmashtami Mela in Kausani

This mela is held on Janmashtami day, and is on a smaller scale than the other two melas. This year, however, more than 100 sellers attended the mela, some bringing products from outside, while others brought locally produced goods. The latter were largely ringaal products such as mosta, daliya, and pheena (mats) from Sitarganj. Sellers from Haldwani and Ramnagar had brought factory-made products such as cloth, slippers, pants, cosmetics, plastic toys, etc. There were also several women selling items such as bangles, cosmetics, and the like.

5.2.4 Kot Mela in Dangoli

This mela is held during the rainy season in August. Around 1,500 or more sellers attended the fair which was held near the temple of Kot. Some had put up tents, while others set up their goods in any open space available. Among the cottage industry products on

display, mosta were predominant, and around 50 people were selling these in large number. Another popular item was the pheena. In contrast, only one man was selling a few vessels made of wood. The rest of the products on sale were factory-made goods similar to those being sold in the other melas described previously.

5.2.5 Nanda Devi Mela in Almora -----

This mela is held around the same time as the Kot mela, during the rainy season. It is of considerable religious significance and most of the articles sold in the mela are associated with religious rituals. The usual commercial products are not to be seen. On the occasion of this mela, the local shops are decorated and religious articles displayed. In addition, one or two shops selling plastic toys are set up. Unlike in the other melas, artisans from the surrounding areas do not normally come and display their goods for sale.

5.3 Village-to-Village Sales -----

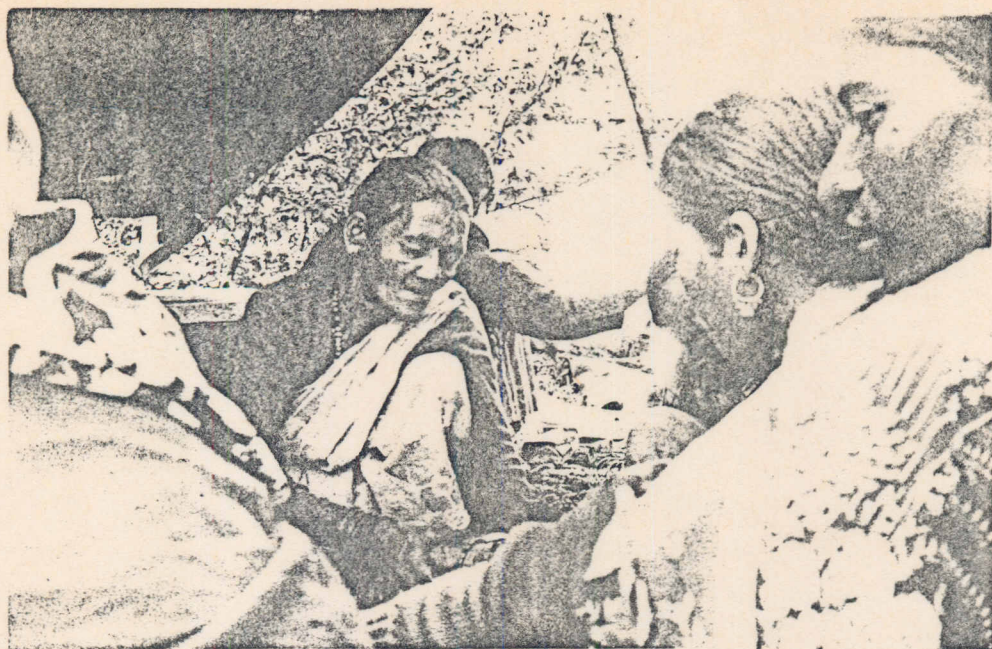
Some of the artisans go from door to door, village to village, selling their products, especially those making ringaal products. Where buses are available, the artisans travel by them; when the bus route stops, they get down and walk, carrying their goods on their heads. Having to pay bus fare again and again, adds to the cost of their products. They would, therefore, like to have permanent shops in several places from which they can sell their goods.

5.4 Home Sales -----

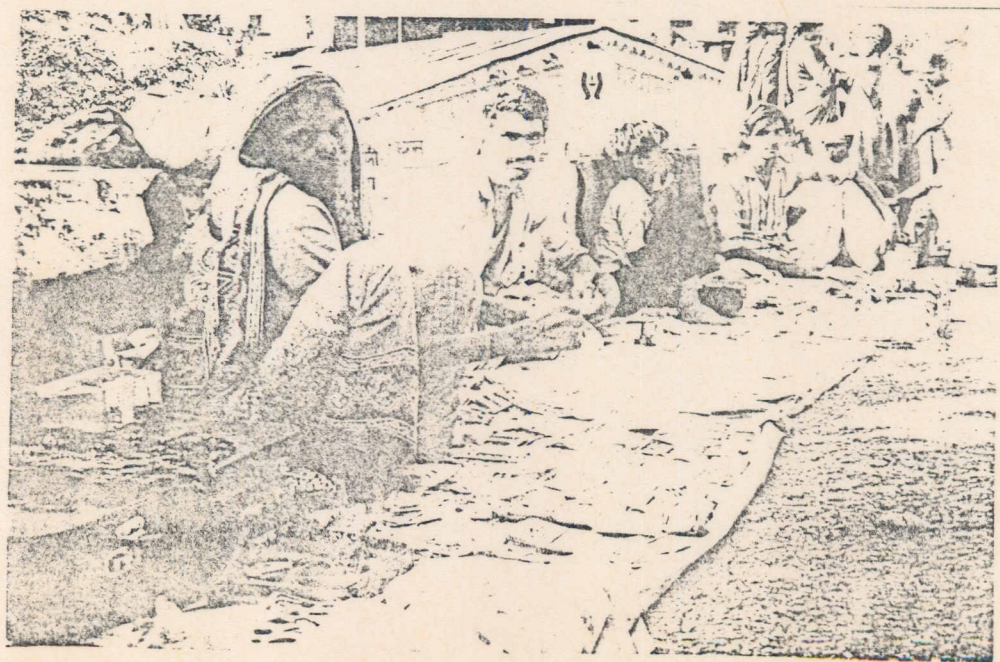
The women making woollen products in Kausani and Gwaldam said that people from nearby villages would come to their houses and buy sweaters and other items directly, or place orders. This meant, however, that the number of customers was limited, and it was difficult to get new customers. They also wanted permanent shops in which they can sell their woollen goods.

Melas of Kumaon

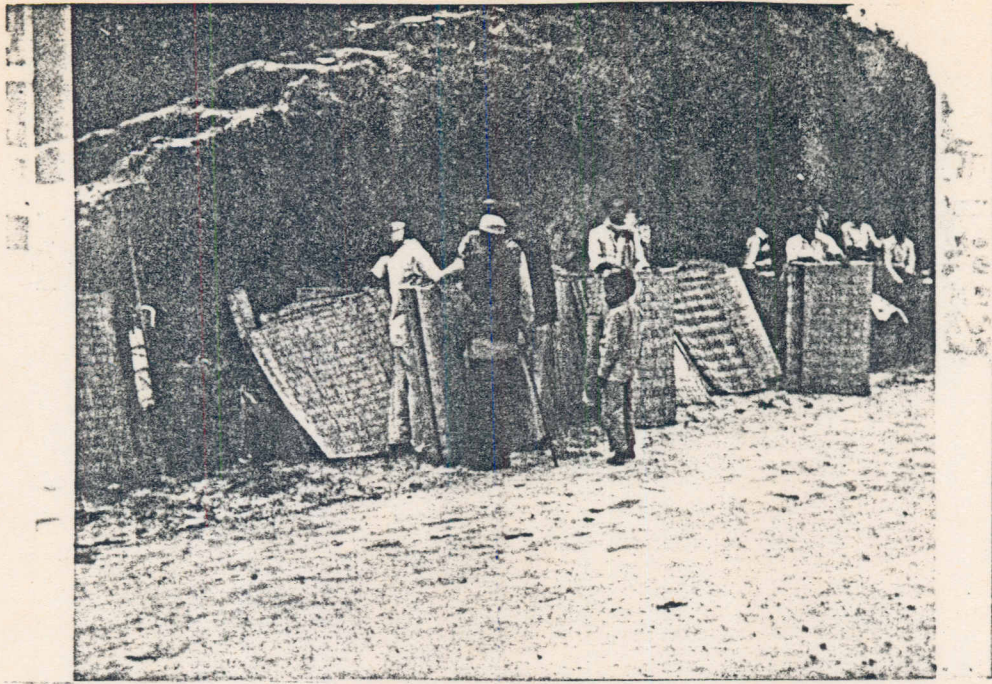
Name	Month	Place
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1. Makar Sankranti	January	Bageshwar
2. Sivaratri Mela	March	Bageshwar and other places.
3. Purnagiri Mela	March/April	Tanakpur
4. Chaiti Mela	April	Kashipur
5. Hariyala Mela	July	Champavat
6. Raksha Bandhan (Ashadi) Mela	August	Devidhura
7. Nanda Devi Mela	August/Sept	Almora & Nainital
8. Kot Mela	August/Sept	Dangoli (Katyur valley)
9. Janmashtami Mela	August/Sept	Kausani
10. Doonagiri Mela	October	Dwarahat
11. Dussehra Mela	October	Sangaad, Kanda
12. Jauljibi Mela	November	Jauljibi
13. Jageshwar Mela	-	Jageshwar



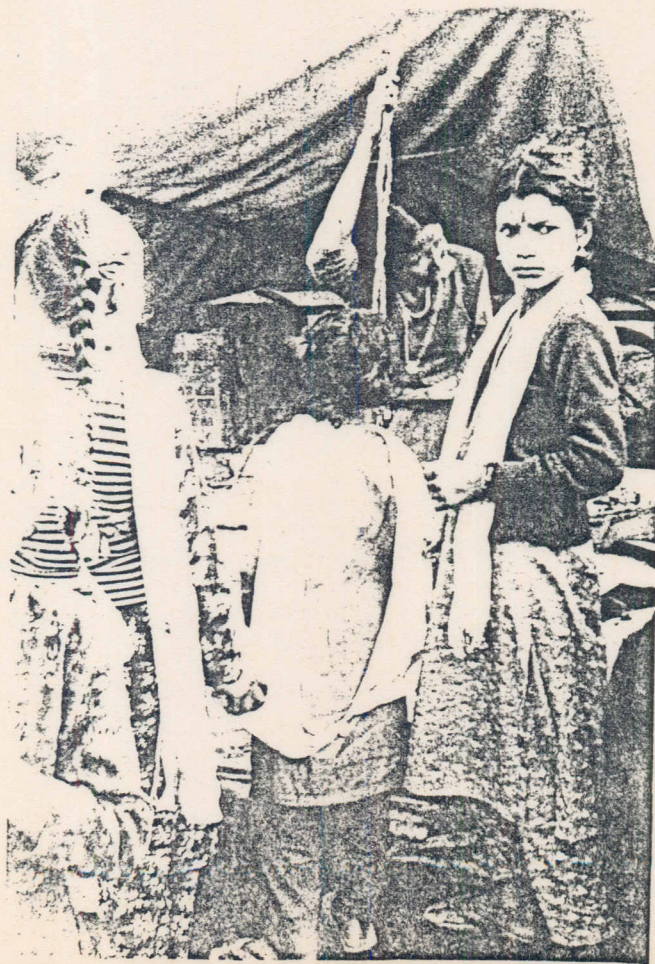
BANGLE SELLER IN THE JANMASHTAMI MELA, KAUSANI



COSMETICS ON SALE IN THE MELA



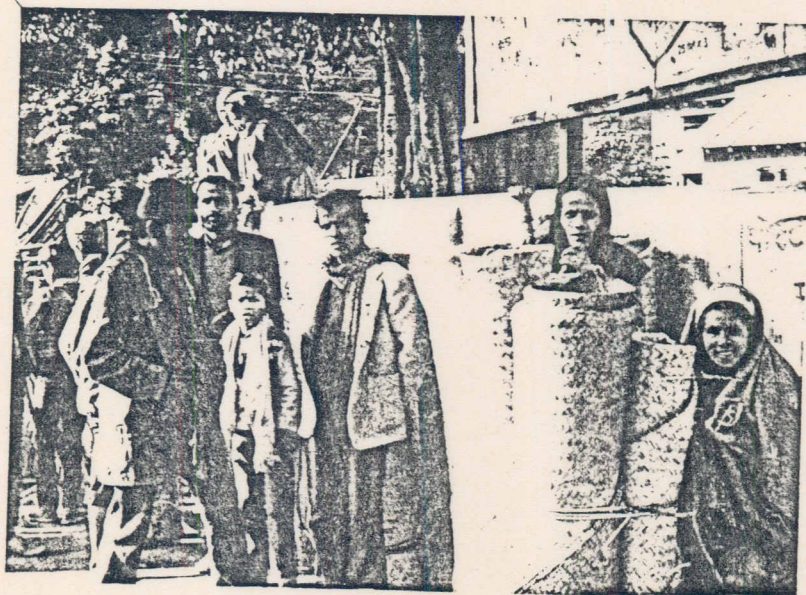
PHEENA BEING SOLD ON THE ROADSIDE IN KOT MELA



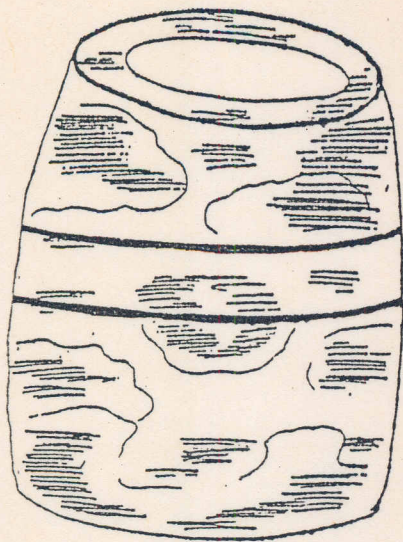
WOMEN PRODUCERS SELLING THEIR GOODS IN THE MELA



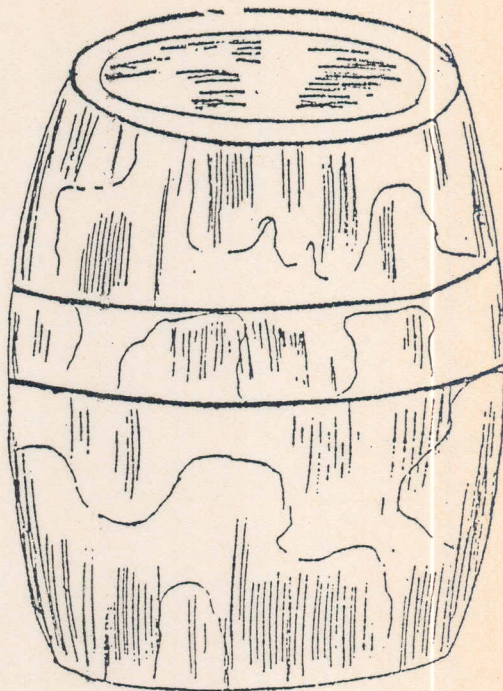
WOMEN SELLING DALIYA IN BAGESHWAR



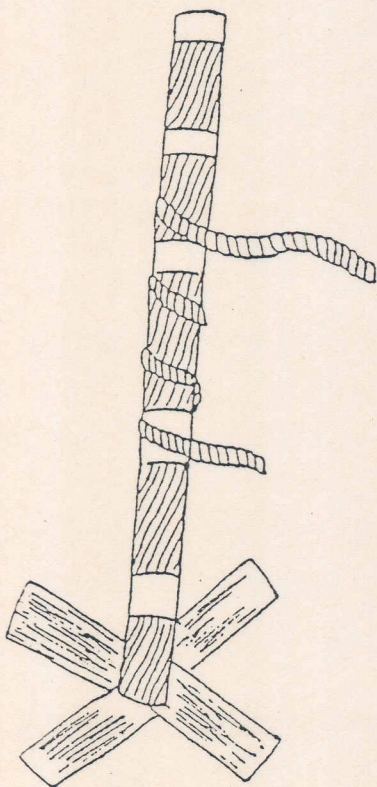
MOSTA ON SALE IN BAGESHWAR



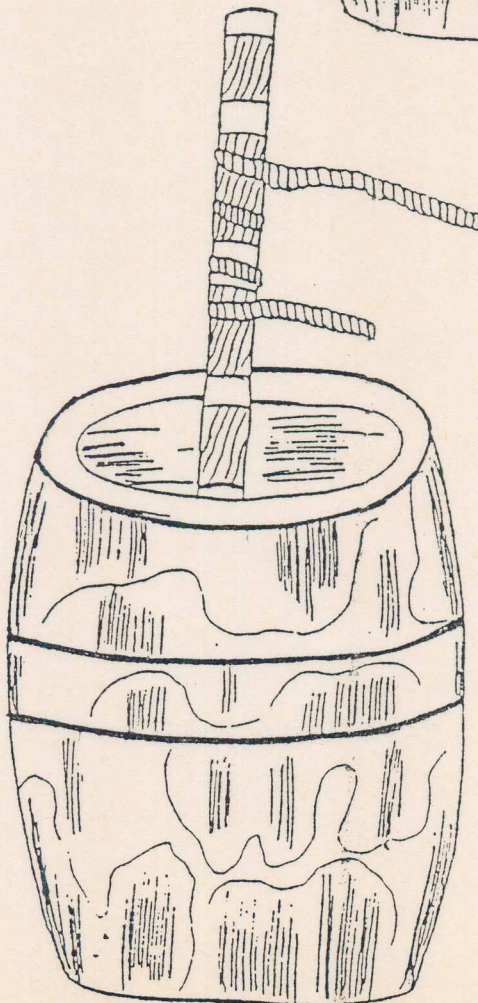
THEKI



DOKAI



RAULI



BUTTER CHURN

6. KHEERAKOT VILLAGE

The women of Kheerakot village are all engaged in agriculture. For centuries, their major occupation has been that of agriculture and animal husbandry, and they have no traditional cottage industries. Now, however, they feel the need to bring about some change in their life styles and work patterns, so that they can get some relief from the drudgery and hardships of their daily existence. They would, therefore, like to take up an income-generating activity which will help them earn some additional income. With the help of Lakshmi Ashram in Kausani, these women have learnt how to make sweaters on knitting machines. They now wish to buy raw materials and make and sell sweaters on their own. They would like some initial assistance in setting up this project.

On the advice of Lakshmi Ashram, we included this village in our survey. Our aim was to try and understand what influenced these women to seek a change in their life styles and work patterns, and to find out what kind of activities they wanted to take up, as well as what kind of support we could provide.

To reach Kheerakot village one has to travel a distance of 7 km from Kausani on the road to Almora, getting down at the bus stop in Channauda. From here, looking across the river, one can see the rows of tiny houses stretching across the mountainside which form Kheerakot village. The flags of a temple on the outskirts of the village, are also visible in the distance.

Crossing the Koshi river, we began the climb up to the village. On the way we met some villagers who were going down to the bazar in Channauda. Several women passed us, running towards their fields holding a tea kettle and glasses in one hand, and a hoe in the other. They all greeted us, asked us where we were going, and invited us to sit and have tea with them. We asked them where we could find Malti Devi whom we were supposed to meet, and they said that at this hour she could be found in the balwadi. We climbed a narrow path skirting the forest to reach the balwadi, and found Malti Devi teaching the children of the village.

After exchanging greetings, we asked her what had motivated the women in her village to want to form a sangathan (group), and take up the activity of knitting sweaters on a commercial basis. Malti Devi said that they had thought of doing this on their own, without any outside influence.

She said, "At one time, we used to spend all our time in the forest, collecting fodder and fuel wood, gathering dry leaves and fresh grass for our animals. We were fully dependent on the forest for all our needs. Then, 15 years ago, a contractor called Sheetal Singh, got a license from the forest department and cut down all the pine trees in our forest. He carted away most of the wood and left the small branches and twigs behind, which we gathered for our use. At that time, all of us were happy that we had got so much fuel wood without any extra work. But when the entire forest had been cleared, we found we had nowhere to go to collect the fodder and wood we needed. As a result, our people were forced to start cutting trees in the common forest belonging to the village.

This made me think, what would happen if the common forest were also to be cut down entirely? Where would we go for our needs? Some of the other women in the village supported me, but nobody else would listen when we said that the cutting of trees should stop, and some people even quarreled with us. The end result was that we had to go farther and farther, in search of grass and wood. From eight in the morning to five in the evening we would be out in the forest. Our children were being neglected and were falling ill, and our animals did not have enough fodder. Gradually, the women of the village started realising their error, and our group increased to fourteen. We stopped cutting down our forest and started replanting it.

But our troubles were not over. Two years later a small company, by name of Katihar, secured a 40 year lease to mine in the area covered by our forest. They promised that everyone in the village would get wages. The village sabhapatis were each given Rs. 1,000 and gave their written consent without a murmur. Two or three years passed. Our boys were earning money, but were also falling into bad habits - drinking, smoking, gambling. Two men from our village were killed in the mine when the earth caved in on them, but the mine owners gave no compensation to the bereaved families. Our animals were also falling in the mine pits. And so, our problems kept growing.

Then the mine owner stopped employing us and brought in wage labour from outside the area. This happened because the local people kept having to take holidays to look after their families, tend to their fields etc., and this was not to the mine owner's liking. These outside labourers, however, misbehaved with our women. The mine owner also brought a hundred mules into the area, to

carry loads between the mine and the factory. These mules trampled our paths so badly that it became difficult for us, and our animals, to walk on them. Often, we would have to stand waiting for several hours with heavy loads, while the long line of mules passed in front of us. Also, because of the mining, our water became polluted and our children fell ill. We discussed our problems amongst ourselves, as well as with our husbands. Ultimately, we decided to tell Katihar that he should stop mining in our forest, because it was causing us a lot of hardship; but he would not listen.

The turning point occurred one day during the monsoon, when we woke up to find that a thick slurry of waste materials from the mine had inundated our fields, ruining our crops. A meeting of the villagers was held, and the men took out a silent procession in protest. We also blocked the paths between the mine and factory, so that it was impossible for the mules to use it. All this was to no avail. Katihar fought back and tried to get several of the men, who had participated in the demonstration, arrested by the police. We decided we had to do something urgently if we were to be able to help the families of these poor men, so we collected some money amongst ourselves and got ready to fight back."

The Patwari, the District Magistrate and other officials were all on Katihar's side. Katihar was a very rich man; he would boast, saying, "I can cover the road from here to Bombay with currency notes. You are poor, what can you do?" When the local officials finally visited the village, all of us gathered together and shouted slogans, 'Either the mining stops, or we die'. I caught hold of the DM's hand and pleaded with him saying, 'what will happen to us?' During this entire period of struggle, whenever we had difficulties, we would go to Lakshmi Ashram for help. The battle went on in court for several years, but we persevered and ultimately, we won our case and the mine was closed.

Then, we had to undo all the damage done by the mining. With the assistance of Lakshmi Ashram, we filled up the mine pits with earth and stones and planted new trees. For this purpose, a shivir (camp) was held in the village to which people from many surrounding villages and local organisations came. They contributed their labour free, and with the help of this 'shramdan', our forests were brought back to life.

Now our forest has become big and dense, and in the last few years, we have even seen a few tigers in it. We can meet all our needs for fodder, fuel wood, and the like,

through careful and organised cutting. Since we no longer have to go far and wide in search of wood and grass, we have some time to spare, and we would like to take up some craft or other activity to earn some income. Also, if we keep ourselves busy in this way, our forest will also be protected; because, otherwise, the tendency for most of us when we have a few hours to spare, is to pick up our axes and ropes and go to the forest to cut more wood. This way, we will cut only as much as we need."

The other women, we talked with, were also in favour of learning a new craft or skill so that they would have a little money in hand; even a small sum like two rupees is of great use to them, since there is no cash income to be earned from their work in the forest. We asked the women whether their husbands and sons did not earn and send them some money, and what they did with this money? Kashti Devi answered, saying that several men in the village used to get pensions, but it was only after their deaths, that their wives were able to use the money to build houses to live in, since the husbands, during their lifetime, preferred to waste it on themselves. She also added that, with the assistance of Lakshmi Ashram, eight women in the village had learnt how to use knitting machines.

We also asked the women whether their sanghatan had been registered formally. Malti Devi replied, "Our sanghatan is from within; whenever there is a problem, all of us get together and try to find a solution. When this is not enough, we ask Radha Behn in Lakshmi Ashram for her advice. We are now thinking of getting our sangathan registered, and have started working on this."

The women would like assistance in setting up a unit for making and selling woollen sweaters. This would include equipment in the form of knitting machines, raw material (wool), and some form of marketing support, such as a shop. By taking up this activity, the women feel that they will be able to improve their economic condition and, at the same time, keep their forest safe.

7. LAKSHMI ASHRAM

Lakshmi Ashram is situated in Kausani village of Almora district. For the past forty years, the Ashram has been working to strengthen the economic and social status of the women of Uttarakhand, by building up their self-confidence and teaching them how to be self-reliant. In order to achieve these objectives, the Ashram carries on several activities and programmes for the integrated development of women, touching all aspects of their lives. These activities include : basic education; training in khadi weaving; skills development for teenaged girls and young women through an 'Earn and Learn' programme; balwadis for the young; organising Mahila Mandals and building up a women's movement in the hills.

"Self-reliance" is Lakshmi Ashram's major objective, and all its activities are designed to reach this goal. The Ashram has developed a variety of new programmes and strategies to foster physical, mental and social self-reliance, as well as economic independence. These include :

- 1) Making agriculture, animal husbandry and spinning and weaving part of the basic educational curriculum, so as to teach the children self-reliance.
- 2) Training young women to weave khadi so that they can develop skills for self-reliance.
- 3) Providing vocational training to teenaged girls through the 'Earn and Learn' programme.

As part of our survey, we studied the training programme for weaving of khadi and the 'Earn and Learn' scheme, since both are activities which directly enhance the economic self-reliance of women.

7.1 Earn and Learn Programme

Students in the Ashram school, between the ages of 16 and 20, who are studying in eighth to tenth standards, are given a choice of several occupations. They can sell in the khadi bhandar (shop); manage the stores in which raw wool and finished cotton and woollen goods are kept; help in running the office, school and mess, where students and teachers eat; or take charge of the gardens in which fruit and vegetables are grown for the Ashram.

They are given full responsibility and are taught the basics of costing, accounting and marketing, so that they are capable of handling their jobs independently. In this way, not only do they learn important skills, but they also acquire self-confidence and the ability to stand on their own feet.

7.2 Training in Khadi Weaving

This programme, which started in 1972, is supported by the Khadi and Village Industries Commission, and is for women from the surrounding villages between the ages of 18 and 30. The training is given in the Ashram's Udhogshala (production centre) which has all the necessary equipment. The women are taught how to spin wool on the Bageshwari charka; weave cotton and woollen cloth on the kargha (hand loom); knit sweaters by hand and on knitting machines; and weave woollen carpets. The training lasts for a year and, during this period, the women live in the Ashram premises and participate in all its activities. They develop their skills and, at the same time, under the influence of the Ashram, their self-confidence increases with their changing perceptions of themselves and the world around them.

This training programme incorporates the accumulated experience and understanding gained by the Ashram, over several decades of working for the development of hill women in Uttarakhand. The programme seeks to achieve the following objectives :

- 1) To improve the status of hill women by changing their work patterns and reducing their drudgery :

For the average hill woman, who is semi-literate, life is a meaningless struggle to keep herself and her family fed, in the face of overwhelming odds. From morning to night she labours in the fields, in the forests, and in the home. Whether rain or shine, she has to continue her never ending round of chores, walking many miles carrying heavy loads and working for hours on end in the fields. Her life is full of drudgery, with no escape.

Government schemes to educate the people and develop the area have been running for the past forty years, but there has been no major change in the lives of hill women. The new generation of educated young women prefers to leave the hills rather than face the same kind of drudgery. The Ashram has tried to encourage these women to stay by providing them with practical training in skills such as khadi weaving, so that they

have an additional occupation and source of income. The Ashram's attempt to change their work patterns is not intended to alienate the young women from their main occupation of agriculture and animal husbandry but, rather, to make their lives more productive and stable by providing them with additional income-generating capabilities.

- 2) To help the Kattins (women spinners) engaged in khadi production to improve their status :

The status of kattins in the khadi industry is that of wage labourers. In spite of years of experience working in the khadi institutions, the kattins remain in the same position; they remain ignorant about the count of different yarns and, since their wages are linked to these counts, they do not even know whether they are being paid properly. They are, as a result, easily exploited and the gap between them and the managers of the institutions in which they work, keeps increasing. The training programme of the Ashram seeks to help the women increase their knowledge and understanding and learn how to work together, so that when they work as kattins, they will have sufficient knowledge to manage their own work, and the ability to organise themselves to resist exploitation.

- 3) To provide skill training and develop income earning capabilities of hill women :

After the completion of their training, some of the women work in the various Ashram centres, such as the khadi bhandar and oil press, where the entire responsibility for managing and running these centres is placed on their shoulders.

- 4) To help hill women to overcome the handicaps that society places on them.

In the social framework within which hill women live, society itself is responsible for many of the troubles they face. From childhood, they are burdened with work, first in their father's house and then in their husband's house. As a result, they miss out on education. Worst of all, is the status of child widows and young women who have been deserted by their husbands. Their lives are devoid of hope and meaning and they are entirely dependent on others. The Ashram's programme attempts to give these women the courage and strength to become self-reliant and self-supporting.

It is not only the women of Uttarakhand who have

benefited from this training, but also women from the entire Himalayan region, as well as women from states as far away as Arunachal Pradesh in the east and Jammu and Kashmir in the north. The programme has also provided a new path for the women of Uttarakhand, whose traditional occupation is agriculture.

Lakshmi Ashram has trained 170 women in 16 batches during the past 14 years, of whom 122 are working. Five women are currently working in the khadi bhandars and running an oil press and flour mill. For the women of Uttarakhand to take part in business and commercial activities is a revolutionary step.

The training programme has also had an impact on villages in the surrounding area, and women in these villages have been encouraged to develop additional skills. In Dania village, for instance, the women learnt how to knit sweaters by hand, and now they want to learn how to use a knitting machine. The women of Kheerakot and Kausani villages have, similarly, got training on knitting machines, without the incentive of a stipend or other monetary benefit, and have now decided to work together to develop these skills for income-generation.

7.3 Community Development in Dhauladevi

In addition to its various activities, the Ashram is also involved in community development in the nearby areas. Since 1977, it has been working in Dhauladevi block which, although it is only 30 to 35 km from Almora, is a fairly backward area. The land is poor and unirrigated, and the villagers have no subsidiary industries or activities to support them. Educational facilities are poor, and the education of girls, in particular, is totally neglected. Opportunities in the area are so few that most of the young boys and men prefer to take their chances in the towns and cities, or enlist in the army. The money they manage to send back to their families is very little. The women, who are left behind, have to cope with all the work and their lives are very hard.

Working in these 25 to 30 villages over the last decade has helped the Ashram understand the specific needs of these women. The women want some kind of activity which can be done during their spare time. They want to be able to earn an income in cash from this activity, however small the amount; and they want this activity to provide a few hours of escape from the drudgery of their existence.

The Ashram used its many years of experience to draw up a programme which would meet the requirements of the women in Dhauladevi and help them become more self-reliant. They provided training to the women to help them develop production and business skills and opened three khadi bhandars in which the women could sell their produce. The bhandars sell hand-made woollen and cotton cloth and garments, as well as a variety of hand-made articles. They are run by women who have been educated and/or trained by the Ashram. Initially, this caused quite a stir in the area, and some resentment too, but now the local people have adjusted to the idea and have come to accept the fact that women are fully capable of running a business successfully. The most dramatic confirmation of this occurred when a semi-literate widow from the area started working in the bhandar, and was very successful. The women manage all the activities related to the running of the bhandars, including stock keeping and controlling inventories, selling and book-keeping.



THE ASHRAM SHOP IN KAUSANI



ASHRAM STUDENTS WORKING IN THE GARDEN

8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The objective of Mahila Haat is to empower and strengthen poor women producers by providing them with the necessary assistance and support for their income-generating activities so that they can earn a reasonable livelihood on a durable basis. By inculcating awareness among women producers, Mahila Haat also seeks to help empower them so that they can fight exploitation and press for their demands at the level of policy.

To achieve this objective, it is necessary to study the activities of women producers at the grass root in order to understand their problems and search for their solutions. This Rural Haat Survey was undertaken in Almora district of Uttar Pradesh for the purpose of studying the activities and problems of hill women of Kumaon, who are engaged in a variety of cottage industries and other occupations. The area is mountainous and the villagers led a fairly isolated life until recently. As a result, they were largely self-sufficient, and their limited needs were satisfied by the products of their traditional cottage industries. The survey of local markets and traditional melas reveals the changes that have taken place with the opening up of the area to urban influences.

The various findings of the survey are summarised below. The problems of women producers and the recommendations suggested for their solution, in each cottage industry/type of activity, are given separately.

8.1 Wool Industry

Villages surveyed - Kausani, Gwaldam

Products - blankets, shawls, kaleen (carpets), sweaters, etc.

This is a traditional industry of the Bhotiya women for whom it is still the major occupation. Several other women engaged in agriculture would also like to take it up as a subsidiary activity (see Kheerakot village below).

A. Problems

- 1) Lack of Raw Material at affordable prices - In the past, the Bhotiyas got raw wool from Tibet, but with the closure of the border, this supply has

been cut off. Another source of wool is from Nepal, but the wool is expensive and the quantity available is small because of high duties and other trade restrictions. Locally available wool is also limited in supply and expensive.

- 2) Lack of Working Capital and Storage space to buy wool in bulk, and build up a sufficient stock of raw material and finished goods to meet demand on an immediate basis.
- 3) Lack of Carding Facilities - Only one carding machine is available in the entire area, which is located at a distance and is available only two days in a month.
- 4) Lack of high quality Dyeing Facilities - The dyes in use are not colour fast, and the facilities for dyeing are inadequate.
- 5) Lack of Equipment for spinning and weaving.
- 6) Lack of Marketing Facilities - Goods are currently being sold at home since there is no shop available.

B. Recommendations

- 1) There is no immediate solution to the problem of raw material supply. To increase the supply of locally available raw wool, by rearing more sheep, is not feasible because of the lack of fodder. The possibility of using Angora wool could, however, be considered as this is a high value product for which there is demand, and the return may be sufficient to cover the cost.
- 2) In order to tackle the various problems mentioned above it is proposed that a production cum marketing unit be set up on a small scale in Kausani, which the women themselves would run. The unit would have provisions for :
 - bulk buying and stocking of raw wool
 - spinning, weaving and carding facilities
 - dyeing facilities
 - storage and marketing facilities to sell to local people as well as visiting tourists
 - learning new designs
 - training facilities

8.2 Milk and Khoya Industry

Villages surveyed - Sialidhar, Deolikhan, villages around Almora

Products - Milk, khoya (milk cake)

A. Problems

- 1) Lack of Fodder - The number of domestic animals is very high in the region. Different animals are kept for different activities such as bullocks for ploughing, buffaloes for milk, dung and urine, and cows to breed bullocks. This has contributed to the problem of over-grazing and the supply of fodder is, thus, inadequate. Milk yield is also low because of the poor quality of fodder.
- 2) Lack of Veterinary Facilities - Existing veterinary centres are far from the villages, and the villagers are, therefore, unable to avail of them.
- 3) High Cost of Fuel - The making of khoya from milk is a slow process involving high consumption of fuel wood, which is in short supply and very costly.
- 4) High Drudgery, Low Returns - There is a lot of hard, physical labour involved in this activity which is done entirely by women. Marketing is, however, done primarily by men, who get the income. Women, therefore, get little or no return for their labour.
- 5) Marketing problems - There is no fixed rate at which milk and khoya are sold, and for those women who sell their khoya directly and do not have the time to stand and bargain for a better rate, the return is always low. Since marketing is done on an individual basis, the buyers are able to dictate their own terms to a large extent.

B. Recommendations

- 1) The severe shortage of fodder is a major problem, because it means that the only way to increase milk production is by increasing milk yield, since it is not feasible to increase the cattle population further. In order to improve the fodder situation and increase milk yield, the local

people need to be given information on new and better types of fodder, and assistance in planting these wherever there is a little land available, for instance along the borders of their fields, etc.

Although there are existing government schemes in the area which seek to provide such information and assistance, they do not seem to have reached the villagers. Apart from this, there are other organisations which are doing a lot of work in this field and could help us bring the necessary knowledge and assistance to Sialidhar and Deolikhan villages,

- 2) In order to deal with the problems of marketing, it is proposed that the women of these villages be encouraged to form a cooperative society so that they can sell their milk and khoa jointly. This can help them improve their return through collective bargaining, as well as ensure that the income is in their hands. In addition, we may investigate the possibility of helping the women open a shop of their own in which they could themselves sell bal-mittai, which is made from the khoa which they are presently selling to the sweet-shop owners. Both these suggestions would need to be examined further, in detail, in order to determine their feasibility.
- 3) With regard to fuel, we could examine whether there are any alternative possibilities.
- 4) In order to provide the villagers with better veterinary care for animals we need to find out whether it is possible to have these facilities nearer to the villages, so that they are easily accessible.

8.3 Ringaal Industry

Villages surveyed - Chauda, Khalpatta, Mikhila, Jhuni, Supi.

Products - daliya, doka (baskets), mosta (mats), sup (winnow), chatyur (umbrellas).

- 2) Lack of Working and Storage Space - This problem is faced especially during the monsoons, when the villagers have to manage in the cramped space available in their homes.
- 3) Marketing problems - Since there is no shop where

ringaal products can be sold, the villagers must carry them from village to village, which is time-consuming, arduous and costly. Ringaal goods are also sold in the various melas. Again, the villagers have considerable problems transporting their goods to these melas; even when buses are available, they are often unable to use them because of harassment by drivers and conductors. At the mela, there is no space available and facilities are poor; the villagers are harassed and local bosses extort money from them.

B. Recommendations

- 1) The most urgent need is for planting of ringaal on a wide-spread basis so that the supply of ringaal is replenished. In addition, the villagers must be helped to conserve the existing supply of ringaal through organised and scientific cutting. By increasing awareness and providing encouragement and incentives to the villagers, this planting of new ringaal can help restore the supply of ringaal in the forests.
- 2) In order to facilitate marketing, we can consider the possibility of setting up a local shop in which ringaal products, along with other locally made products, can be sold.
- 3) At present, there is no separate stall for the products of cottage industries in the various melas. If the local authorities could provide such a stall, the ringaal artisans and many others would benefit considerably. In addition, there are special buses laid on for the melas, and if some similar service is provided for the ringaal workers, this would help alleviate their transport problem.
- 4) Ringaal products are primarily for use in the fields and in daily village life. In addition, however, we may consider whether the artisans could make a few decorative items which could be sold to visiting tourists and outsiders.

8.4 Chilli Cultivation

Village surveyed : Chauda

Product : Whole red chillies

The cultivation of chillies is an activity

performed entirely by women, from the initial sowing to the final marketing of the produce.

A. Problems

- 1) Lack of Water for irrigation, especially during the nursery stage.
- 2) Lack of Pesticides and Fertilizers
- 3) Problems in Drying of chillies - Chillies are usually dried on roof tops and when there is rain, a large number get spoilt.
- 4) Marketing Problems - This is a major problem as, at present the women have to travel very long distances on foot, and sometimes by bus, going from village to village to sell their chillies. Carrying the heavy loads of chillies on their backs is very arduous, and the return journey is equally tiring, since the women bring back sacks of rice obtained in exchange for their chillies.

B. Recommendations

- 1) Water is a major problem both for irrigation of the chillies, as well as for drinking purposes. The existing source of water is far away and we need to make some provision for bringing water closer to the village by installing a pipe and building a reservoir.
- 2) At present, the women use a chemical pesticide, gamaxene, to kill insects which destroy their crop, but they are unable to get it in sufficient quantity. They do not use any chemical fertilizers. Both pesticides and fertilisers can be supplied to them locally in sufficient quantities. But, we also need to find out to what extent it is possible to promote traditional methods of pest control, such as using ash, and whether organic manure in the form of gobar (cowdung) can be enriched and used as fertiliser.
- 3) With regard to the drying of chillies, we would have to find out whether, it is possible to use some sort of artificial drier within a shed, which would also provide storage space.
- 4) To facilitate marketing, the possibility of helping the women to form a cooperative society needs to be examined. The chillies, whether whole

or in powdered form, could be marketed jointly to local shops so that the women do not have to travel from village to village, as they are doing now. We would, however, need to ensure that they are able to get a fair price from the shop keepers. An additional possibility is to sell the chillies to the Mahila Upbogta Bhandar (women's shop) in Almora, where the women are less likely to be taken advantage of.

8.5 Collection of herbs

Villages surveyed - Ladhauri, Kota, Kali Ghaspad

Products - herbs, other medicinal plants, barks of various trees, shells of walnuts, etc., jhula (a kind of fungus on the oak tree) etc.

The gathering and selling of herbs and other plants has been going on for many years in Kumaon. In addition to herbs, the stems, roots and barks of various plants and trees are used for their curative properties in traditional systems of medicine. The industry is controlled by Government and local agencies and, because of over-exploitation, many herbs and plants are slowly becoming extinct.

A. Problems

- 1) Decreasing supply of herbs/plants - The women have to go long distances into the forest and spend many hours looking for various herbs and plants, as these are becoming increasingly scarce.
- 2) Problem of Middlemen and Low Returns - The women sell the herbs they collect to middlemen, who in turn, sell them to the local agency. The wages paid to the women are very low (between 3 to 5 Rs./Kg), and in no way commensurate with the labour and time they have put in.
- 3) Harassment by Forest Patrols - When the contractors have not secured a license from the forest department, the women have to work illegally, and often have to bribe the forest patrols.

B. Recommendations

- 1) We need to help the women form a sangathan so they they can resist exploitation by contractors, middlemen and, if necessary, sell their herbs directly to the local agency.

- 2) We need to provide information and assistance in order to encourage the women to grow more herbs and other plants on existing wastelands, around the borders of their fields, and so on. For this, they would need to learn about the market and the prices of different varieties, as well as about the different kinds of soil and climatic conditions suitable for various species of herbs and plants. This would also help replenish the supply of these plants in the long run.
- 3) The economic status of the women is very poor and their living conditions very difficult. We need to help provide basic facilities such as drinking water, as well some income-generating activity which will provide them with a durable livelihood, since their land is very poor.

8.6 Mat Making Industry

Area surveyed - Sitarganj

Product - Grass Mats (pheena)

Although this group is located in Nainital district, it was also included in the survey because theirs is a traditional industry carried on largely by women. These women are originally from Bengal, and they and their families settled down in this region around 30 years ago. The mats are made from paret grass found in the forests, and are used inside the house for sitting on.

A. Problems

- 1) Lack of Raw Material - These women face similar problems to those of the ringaal artisans, as the grass they use is no longer found close by, and they must go 20 to 80 km into the forest in search of it.
- 2) High Transportation cost - To bring back the grass to their homes from the forests, the villagers have to spend a lot on transport.
- 3) Marketing Problems - There are no marketing facilities and the women must sell at whatever price they can get.

B. Recommendations

- 1) We need to find out whether the women can be

assisted to plant more paret grass closer to their village.

- 2) At the same time we need to examine whether the women can transport the grass from forest to home, collectively, and whether this sort of bulk transport is cheaper. Since the terrain is flat, it may be possible to use a bullock cart in lieu of more expensive motorised transport.
- 3) We also need to look at the possibility of local marketing through a shop.

8.7 Other Tradition Products

Products - brooms, ropes, halters, nets, chatyur, doka

These are products of every day use which the villagers have traditionally been making for their own use. They are made from locally available resources such as wild grasses and the fibres of various plants and trees. Although some of the more remote village continue to remain self-sufficient in the making of these products for their use, many villages which are closer to the local markets are now buying these articles. For instance, the villagers would rather buy cheap brooms available in the bazar, rather than go in search of babil grass, which is in short supply, out of which the local brooms are made. Similarly, nylon ropes and plastic sheets are increasingly being substituted for the traditional ropes made from fibre and the chatyur (umbrellas) made from ringaal and fibre.

This substitution is taking place partly for functional reasons, such as the greater durability of nylon ropes, and partly because tastes and conditions are changing as the villages come under the influences of city markets and their products. Traditional products are still, however, made and used in many villages, and these can be supported to whatever extent possible. For instance, the making of ropes by hand is very time consuming and, with the use of a hand-run machine, this can be made far less tedious. In addition, some thought must be given to the possible adverse effects in terms of pollution, as a result of the increasing use of plastic and nylon products.

8.8 Marketing Systems in Kumaon

- Local permanent markets surveyed : Almora, Garud, Bageshwar, Someshwar, Channauda, Kausani.

- Melas surveyed in - Bageshwar, Jauljibi,
Kausani, Kot, Almora.

In Kumaon, there is no tradition of weekly village haats. There are only the local permanent markets in the towns, and the traditional melas held through the year in various places. A survey of these markets and melas revealed the same trend as above, that is, the increasing influence of urban markets in big cities, and the inflow of their products into the local markets and melas. In the markets in Almora, Garud and Bageshwar, a variety of factory-made goods are on sale, from stainless steel utensils and stationery, to mill-made cloth and cosmetics; and, everywhere, there are plastic and other synthetic goods available including slippers, bags, toys and cloth.

There are several instances where the products of traditional cottage industry are being displaced by products from outside. For instance, locally made woollen shawls and sweaters are often rejected in preference for the modern designs and bright colours of machine-made woollen garments from Ludhiana. Similarly, women and girls increasingly prefer to use plastic bags in place of traditional ringaal baskets which are often cumbersome, especially when travelling by bus. A further instance is that of the Tamta community, whose copper vessels are too expensive compared to cheaper utensils available from city markets.

Although the process of change cannot be reversed, it is necessary to help traditional cottage industries retain their position, by providing support wherever possible, to ensure that their products remain competitive. For instance, local woollen garments could also adopt new designs and colours to suit different tastes. Similarly, in the various melas of the region, the local authorities could provide a stall for traditional cottage industry products where the ringaal artisans, the wool workers, and others, could display and sell their products. This would be of great help to the local people who suffer considerable harassment when they attend these melas.

Apart from the local markets and melas, products such as ringaal goods and chillies are also sold by going from village to village, while others are sold directly from homes, as in the case of woollen shawls and sweaters.

8.9 Kheerakot village

This village was included in the survey because the women, whose primary occupation is agriculture, would

like to take up an income-generating activity in order to earn some money. This activity would be a subsidiary one, which they can do in their spare time, after finishing their work in the fields and forests. At present, whatever spare time is available is spent in collecting more wood from the forest, and the women feel that if they have some other occupation to pursue during this period, this will keep them from collecting fuel wood in excess of their needs; and in the long run, this will prevent over-cutting in their forest.

The women have learnt how to knit sweaters on knitting machines and would now like to make and sell sweaters locally. They can get additional training in making carpets at the proposed unit for woollen products in Kausani, from the Bhotiya women who are skilled in the art, and market their products jointly from this unit. Apart from this, we can consider the feasibility of other activities such as : making and selling of potato chips locally (potatoes are grown fairly abundantly in the village), and bee-keeping.

8.10 Lakshmi Ashram

Lakshmi Ashram in Kausani, also known as Kasturba Mahila Uttan Mandal, has for many decades been working for the economic and social upliftment of the hill women of Uttarakhand. The Ashram provided very valuable guidance and assistance in conducting the rural haat survey.

The major objective of the Ashram is to help women in the region become self-reliant. To foster this aim, the Ashram runs a variety of activities including a residential school for girls based on Gandhian principles of education. Their 'Earn and Learn' programme provides vocational training to teenaged girls, while their Training Programme in Khadi Weaving teaches women an additional skill with which they can earn a livelihood. The Ashram has opened several khadi bhandars and an oil press and flour mill, which are run by women who have been educated/trained in the Ashram. These women manage all aspects, including stock-keeping and selling, as well as book-keeping.

The Ashram's efforts are also directed towards raising the consciousness of women in the region and helping them mobilise their collective strength for empowerment. The women in the region look to the Ashram for help and advice in dealing with their problems.

8.11 In the course of the rural haat survey, we have seen that the traditional cottage industries of the

region are an important part of the lives of the local inhabitants especially the women, who play a major role in these industries. These women are highly skilled and very hard-working. They, and their families, depend on these activities for their livelihood. Their problems are many but they themselves have suggested the kind of assistance and facilities they need to solve these problems. Our task is to help provide them with assistance and support, to increase their awareness, and to help them gain strength through collective action. This rural haat survey is a first step in this direction.

PART II

RURAL HAAT WORKSHOP

ABSTRACT - RURAL HAAT WORKSHOP, KAUSANI, U.P.
(JUNE 8-9, 1988)

A workshop was held in Lakshmi Ashram, Kausani on June 8-9, 1988 as part of the Rural Haat Project, in which the findings of the Rural Haat Survey were presented to the women producers. Suggestions for future action were discussed and an attempt was made to put these into concrete terms. The kinds of action/intervention suggested are designed to meet specific problems in raw material procurement, production, marketing, etc., with the overall objective of strengthening the income-generating activities of the women producers in Almora district.

1. Wool products (village Kausani and Kheerakot)
 - Setting up a centre for making hand knotted carpets in Kausani (for 26 women)
2. Milk and Milk Products (village Deolikhan)
 - Chaff-cutter for efficient collection of fodder
 - Better types of fodder to increase milk yield
 - Better veterinary care
 - Shop for marketing khoya sweets in Almora
 - Alternative fuel source for khoya making
3. Ringaal (reed) work (village Chauda)
 - Assistance in planting of ringaal saplings
 - Organising scientific cutting of ringaal
 - Workshop with adequate space for weaving mats
4. Chilli Cultivation (village Chauda)
 - Adequate water for irrigation
 - Insecticides and fertilisers
 - Hot air drier and shed for drying and storing
 - Cooperative society for joint marketing of chillies
5. Collection of Jhula (village Ladhauri)
 - Organising women for collective action against exploitation by middlemen
6. Suggestions for new activities (village Kheerakot)
 - Potato-chip making
 - Tailoring
 - Bee keeping
 - Knitted wool garments

RURAL HAAT WORKSHOP

(June 8-9, 1988, held at Lakshmi Ashram, Kausani U.P.)

1. Participants :

1) Women Producers :

Budli Devi	Chauda	Chilli cultivation Ringaal (reed) work
Hira Devi	Kausani	Wool products :
Jamuna Devi	"	kaleen (carpets), asan
Sita Devi	"	(small mats), shawls
Rupa Devi	"	pankhi (big shawls),
Shanta Devi	"	sweaters.
Kunti Devi	"	
Kesari Devi	"	
Revati Devi	Ladhauli	Collecting jhula
Nandi Devi	"	
Devaki Devi	Deolikhan	Milk and khoya
Bachuli Devi	"	
Malti Devi	Kheerakot	Would like to start an
Leela Devi	"	income-generating acti-
Kamala Devi	"	vity
Shanti Devi	"	
Parvati Devi	Channauda	Same as above

2) Field Persons (accompanying women producers)

Bhavani Kunjwal	Deolikhan	involved in environ-
Lata Nainwal	"	mental project and or-
		ganising Mahila Mandal
Basanti Devi	near Ladhauli	Balwadi teacher

3) Radha Bhatt, Lakshmi Ashram, Kausani
Anand Joshi and Durgesh Gupta of Lakshmi Ashram
also attended

4) M.M. Van Vliet, First Secretary - Women and
Development, Royal Netherlands Embassy

5) Taposh Chakravarty, Small Industries Fund,
Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI)

6) Lalit Pande, Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi

7) ISST :

Bhuvana Krishnan
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2. Objectives of the Rural Haat Project, Almora District

- to study the income-generating activities of women producers from low income households in Almora district, Kumaon
- to identify problems and constraints faced by them
- to suggest areas for possible action in order to strengthen their activities

A Rural Haat Survey was conducted in Almora district during July-Dec., 1987, and the following income-generating activities/products were studied in detail.

- 1) Wool products
- 2) Milk and Milk Products
- 3) Ringaal Work
- 4) Chilli cultivation
- 5) Collection of herbs, including jhula
- 6) Mat making

Specific problems were identified such as difficulties in procuring raw materials, lack of credit, production and marketing constraints. Suggestions for improvement were made by the women involved in these activities and, on the basis of these, recommendations were made for future action. In order to put these recommendations into more concrete terms a workshop was held after the completion of the survey in which these could be discussed more thoroughly.

3. Objectives of the Workshop and Methodology

The purpose of holding the workshop was :

- to discuss the findings of the rural haat survey
- to arrive at concrete suggestions for action

While working towards solutions we had to keep in mind that they should be practicable. We also had to make a distinction between what we could hope to accomplish in the short term, as opposed to long term changes of a more complicated nature.

In addition to this, we were faced with the problem of language since many of the women were more comfortable speaking "Pahari" (a dialect of Hindi), and also the problem of earning their trust. We were fortunate to have the help of Radha Behn and Lakshmi Ashram in overcoming these problems. The Ashram has been working for many years in the region and a very close relationship exists with the people around.

Given the above considerations, we felt that informal group discussions supplemented by question and answer sessions where specific problems could be taken up in detail, would be the appropriate method to follow. We also felt that, as far as possible, the women themselves should suggest possible solutions which could then be built upon.

17 women producers attended the workshop, some of whom were interested in taking up an income-generating activity, while others were already engaged in such activities. Only one group making grass mats, was unable to attend.

4. Workshop sessions

Radha Bhatt of Lakshmi Ashram gave a brief introduction covering the objectives of the Rural Haat Project and the purpose of the workshop. She briefly referred to the findings of the survey and the problems faced by the women producers. The issues discussed and suggestions made relating to the different income-generating activities were as follows :

4.1 Wool products

This was the largest group represented at the workshop since the women were from Kausani itself. Leela Devi, who is considered by the women to be their leader was ill and could not attend, but Rupa Devi and the others were very articulate.

A major problem for these women is the lack of raw wool and its high price, sometimes as high as Rs. 70-80 for a kg. Many of the women make carpets and sweaters on a wage basis for the Gandhi Ashram, Channauda. They get the raw wool from the Ashram and return the finished product to them. It involves hard work, spinning and weaving, at low wages. To buy raw wool directly from the Nepali traders would be cheaper, but the distance is prohibitive. Sheep rearing in the area is also not feasible as there is a shortage of water and fodder and the climate is not suitable.

The women would like assistance in getting sufficient raw wool at an affordable price so that they can make and sell on their own. Their hands are never idle and even during the workshop they were busy knitting.

Additional carding facilities are also required. A hand carding machine is available but it was found unusable because of the difference in the length of the staple fibres. There is an on-going project in Lakshmi Ashram at the moment to develop a suitable machine and distribute it for use among the women.

The dyes in use at present are both natural and chemical. Assistance to get better dyes was asked for by the women, who said that some of the colours they are using are not fast enough.

For making one kaleen the women spend about Rs. 400 on the wool alone and invest an entire month's labour (working full time). The carpet is sold for Rs. 800-900, so there is no question of profit.

The women in this group are largely landless so that it is vital for them to be engaged in an alternative activity which provides a living. At present marketing is local, to the Gandhi Ashram, or directly to people who visit their homes.

A society had been formed in the past but it proved to be a failure largely because of inadequate funds. Leela Devi, whom we visited subsequently in her house, told us about this. She said the "art" (of kaleen making) was dying out and needed to be revived, a major requirement being a much bigger market covering local and nearby tourist spots, since local demand was finite.

A suggestion was made that the women could set up a centre for wool products combining all the activities of spinning, weaving, dyeing, etc. Around 16 women from Kausani are already proficient in making kaleen and they could provide training to the women of Kheerakot who are looking for additional income. The response was enthusiastic and the women expressed their willingness to learn how to manage such a centre. Lakshmi Ashram could provide both managerial and technical assistance in the initial stages. IDBI would also be interested in studying such a proposal.

The centre would have 15-16 women from Kausani and around 10 from Kheerakot who would require training for one year, during which a stipend could be paid to them. One teacher could be selected from among the Kausani

women or they could take on the job in rotation. Many women have looms at home and would continue working on these, so that apart from some looms for training, the centre would basically be for bulk storage, carding, dyeing, etc., and need not be too big. New designs and better dyes and the notion that the Kaleen is not only for sitting on but can also be used for decorative purposes will help improve the product and extend the market. A shop could be set up within the centre to take advantage of tourist traffic. It is not possible to use the existing Ashram shop because it is only for articles made from handspun wool. A proper assessment of the size of the market and the marketability of the products would be the first step.

4.2 Milk and Milk Products

Devaki Devi and Bachuli Devi from Deolikhan village make about a kilo of khoya everyday, and their husbands sell it to middlemen at Rs. 18-20 per kg. Since fodder for a buffaloe (most families can afford only one) costs as much, if not more, per day, this activity would appear to be uneconomic. The contractor in Almora who buys the khoya sells it at a much higher rate but will not give the women a higher price. He does, however, give them credit free of interest which they use to purchase other household needs.

The buffaloes are fed grass, khali (oil cake) and bhat (soya bean). Only the grass is available free of cost, although with increasing difficulty, except for two months in the year (March and April) when it is bought at Rs. 50 per bundle of dry grass. Once a year or so, the women are allowed to cut grass in reserve forest lands. They gather as much as they can and store it. The women felt that if they were given a chaff cutter they would be able to cut a larger amount of grass, more efficiently. Against this however, must be weighed the possible physical hazards of using such a machine.

Veterinary centres for cattle care are too few and far apart and it was suggested that there should be at least one centre per 10 villages.

While the Deolikhan women's husbands go to Almora to sell the khoya, other khoya makers market their wares themselves. Since they must rush back to perform their other chores and tend to their families, they are often forced to sell at low prices because of time constraints. In this connection it was suggested that the women could set up a shop of their own in Almora with provisions for cold storage. They could sell their

khoya to this shop at a mutually agreed upon price. Also, instead of selling the khoya to middlemen, they could themselves make sweets and market these. Lata Nainwal, who is working in an environmental project in Deolikhan and surrounding areas, offered to look into the possibility of setting up such a shop. Although there is a ready market for khoya sweets (bal-mittai), the competition is considerable and this would be an obstacle to be overcome.

The making of khoya is a lengthy process involving considerable consumption of wood for fuel. We could consider whether an alternative source of fuel such as gas/electricity at subsidised rates is possible.

An additional activity of the women is spinning wool and making sweaters on a piece rate basis for Gandhi Ashram, Channauda. The women say it is tedious and ill-paid work.

Water is also a problem and the women of Deolikhan would like help in installing a pipe/pump.

4.3 Ringaal Work

Budli Devi of Chauda village weaves baskets and mats from locally available ringaal. The major problem is that the supply of ringaal is running out. The villagers, however, are aware of this problem and some 40 thousand saplings have already been planted. It is necessary for us to promote such afforestation.

If the National Wasteland Development Board or other body could provide some monetary incentive for every additional sapling that is planted, the villagers would receive strong encouragement to continue. To ensure conservation of the existing supply of ringaal, it was suggested that an efficient system for cutting ringaal could be organised by the women.

At present weaving of mats is done in the limited space available at their homes, and the women would like to construct a workshed where there would be ample space for everybody to work together. Budli Devi suggested that this workshed could form part of a village centre which would also include a balwadi and nursery school for the children.

The possibility of setting up a shop for selling ringaal products had been suggested earlier but at the workshop it was felt that this was not a priority, whereas the

planting of ringaal should be taken up on an urgent basis if the activity was to survive and remain viable.

4.4 Chilli Cultivation

The first basic problem raised by Budli Devi of Chauda village was that of adequate water, both for drinking purposes as well as for irrigation. The village is situated at a height and with the progressive fall in the water table, women need to go further and further in order to fetch water which is carried in vessels on the head. There is a fairly big source of water some 7 km away - a stream which would provide adequate water - and the women of the village would like a pipe installed. A plastic pipe had been bought by five, six people jointly for about Rs. 700/- but its reach was insufficient. The women would like an iron pipe to draw up the water and a reservoir for storing, which can be used for washing clothes and from which cattle can drink. Around 66 families in the village will be benefited. The water can be used not just for chillies but also for wheat in winter. Maize and jowar are also grown, but in the rainy season, so there is enough water. The chillies need water in the nursery stage which lasts 3 months, and for a week after transplanting (this is reduced to about 3 days if it rains).

A second problem is that of insects attacking the crop. Ash which is a traditional remedy has been thought of, but the supply from their stoves is inadequate. Instead, the women buy gamaxene, a chemical insecticide, from nearby shops.

In October, the chillies are gathered and spread on the roof tops to dry, but there is not enough sun and when it rains the chillies get spoilt. The possibility of using some sort of hot air drier in a shed needs to be considered. At present, one third or more of the chillies get spoilt in this manner.

Women in the region took to chilli cultivation about 40 years ago as an additional source of income because it was thought to be commercially lucrative. Every family produces ten to twenty-five big gunny bags full of chillies, so that a little over 900 such bags are produced by the village as a whole.

The chillies are bartered for grain - one bag of paddy per bag of chillies. The women carry the gunny bags full of chillies 5 km from the village to the road where they catch the bus to Garud. It costs 10 Rs. per bag for the distance of around 90 km, which is very expensive. At

Garud the gunny bags are left with acquaintances/relatives and the women set off on foot, two by two for company, taking only as much as they can carry on their backs. In this manner, all villages in a radius of about 50 km are covered. Since the chillies are bartered, money for bus fare comes either from male members who are earning outside the village, or from growing and selling potatoes, radishes and other activities such as ringaal and wool work.

Marketing of the chillies is, thus, both expensive and back-breaking. A suggestion that the women should form a society to package and sell chillies jointly was not received with great enthusiasm. Experience with societies has been negative in the past but even if this were overcome, the general reaction from the women was that it would take a very long time to put into effect.

4.5 Collection of Jhula

Revati and Nandi Devi from Ladhauli earn a precarious living collecting a kind of fungus growing on the bark of the oak tree. This fungus is used as a colouring agent. They sell it at about Rs. 4 per kg. - Rs. 24 for a gunny bag full which takes 2-3 days to fill - to a 'thekedar' (middleman), who sells it at a much higher rate in town. The women are aware that the middleman pays them a pittance but they say that they are constrained to accept it. In the past they once switched contractors so as to gain a rupee more per kg, but since the other contractor was at a distance the extra travel cost wiped out the gain.

The middlemen, or contractors, bid for licenses from the forest department. When they are unsuccessful in getting them, the women must collect the jhula illegally, bribing the patrol guards. Jhula collection is done for 4 months in the year and there are 7 villages doing this work, with 40 women from Ladhauli itself.

A suggestion that the women should get together and exercise their collective strength in boycotting the middlemen was received favourably and Vasanti Devi (an ex-student of the Ashram who runs a balwadi in the area) said she would be interested in helping the women organise themselves.

A suggestion was also made that the government could be persuaded to reserve a quota for collection by women while handing out licenses, so that the middlemen would have to buy from the women. The possibility of "farming"

the jhula was also mentioned for further study.

The Ladhauli women also said they had a severe water problem. The distance and height over which water has to be raised is considerable and the technical possibilities need to be examined.

4.6 Grass mats

The group was unable to attend the workshop because they live in a very remote area.

4.7 Alternative activities

The women from Kheerakot wanted us to help them choose and take up an income-generating activity. They welcomed the suggestion that they could receive training and participate in the proposed wool products centre in Kausani.

Other activities considered were as follows :

- 1) Potato chips making - The women could make potato chips from the potatoes they currently grow and sell, and thereby get better returns. We need to examine whether there is a market for such a product.
- 2) Tailoring - Many women have learnt how to use sewing machines under existing government training programmes but none have put it to use in earning a living. Most of the tailoring shops in the area are run by men. It was suggested that one or two women could be trained in designing and stitching ready-made garments and if they were successful, the activity could be extended. Competition from cheap, factory-made garments would however, have to be contended with.
- 3) Bee Keeping - In the past, bee keeping had been tried and it failed because the bees died as a result of some disease specific to the area. It was, however, considered worth looking into, as conditions have improved since then.
- 4) Knitted wool garments - The women have learnt how to use a knitting machine and would like to acquire one. They are wary of taking a bank loan for the purpose and would prefer a grant. They do not, however, have a steady supply of raw wool, nor are they sure that they can sell the knitted articles locally. An alternative would be to work on a piece

rate basis for the Gandhi Ashram which would provide the wool for knitting.

4.8 Some general issues affecting the women in the area were as follows :

- 1) Scarcity of water
- 2) Alcoholism among the men
- 3) Negative attitude of the men
- 4) Lack of self-confidence (in running a shop, production centre) because of a felt lack of education
- 5) Feeling of helplessness (although this was an exception as most of the women are eager to help themselves if we could provide the necessary support)

Further detailed study and consultation with technical experts, local government officials, etc. is necessary to determine the feasibility of the above measures and to work out specific details so that these can be implemented successfully.

TABLE NO. 1

AREA AND POPULATION - DISTRICTS OF KUMAON

	<u>Almora</u>	<u>Nainital</u>	<u>Pithoragarh</u>	<u>Total</u>
1. Area in sq.m.	5385	6794	8856	21035
2. <u>Population in thousands</u> :				
Men	364	618	243	1225
Women	393	519	246	1158
(% of total)	(52)	(46)	(50)	(49)
Total	757	1137	489	2383
Rural	710	824	462	1996
Urban	47	313	27	387
(% of total)	(6.2)	(27.5)	(5.5)	(16.2)
3. Density of population per sq.m.	141	167	55	113
4. Population Growth (%) 1971-81	16.8	43.9	17.9	28.5
5. Cities and townships	4	17	5	26
6. Inhabited villages	3019	1806	2174	6999

Source : 1981 Census

TABLE NO. 2

AGRICULTURE & ANIMAL HUSBANDRY - ALMORA DISTRICT

(A) AGRICULTURE

	<u>Year</u>	
1. Gross Sown area	1985-86	175256 ha
Rabi	"	70605 ha
Kharif	"	104651 ha
2. Net sown area	"	105470 ha
3. Gross irrigated land	"	21871 ha
Net irrigated land	"	11612 ha
4. Food grains :		
Total area under cultivation	"	162443 ha
Total production	"	169964 m.t.
5. Pulses :		
Total area under cultivation	"	3487 ha
Total production	"	1920 m.t.
6. Food grains and pulses :		
Total area under cultivation	"	165930 ha
Total production	"	171884 m.t.

(B) ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

1. Total livestock	1982	699686
2. Veterinary centres	1986-87	31

Source : Census Statistics, 1987

ha - hectares
m.t. - metric tonnes

TABLE NO. 3

SOME PRINCIPAL IMPORTS AND EXPORTS OF ALOMORA DISTRICT

(A) EXPORTS			
Item	Quantity in M.T.	Approx. value in Rs. lakhs	Destination/ place of supply
1. Resin	5,980	120.00	Bareilly, Haldwani
2. Timber	42,970 (cu.m.)	42.97	Haldwani, Bareilly
3. Fruits	2,000	40.00	Bareilly, Moradabad, Delhi
4. Potato	4,000	30.00	Bareilly, Kanpur, Moradabad, Delhi
5. Turpentine	770	23.10	Delhi, Kanpur, Bombay
6. Chillies	600	18.00	Ramnagar, Delhi, Moradabad
7. Herbs	N.A.	10.00	Mathura, Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta
8. Wood Pulp	28,720	5.00	Saharanpur
9. Honey	50	3.00	Haldwani, Bareilly, Lucknow
10. Woollen khadi	2	3.00	Lucknow, Kanpur Delhi, Meerut
11. Woollen Products	1	1.00	"
12. Charkha	5	0.50	Pithoragarh, Nainital, Garwhal
13. Jhula	38.8	0.40	Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Kanpur
14. Ringaal Products	5	0.30	Haldwani, Bareilly, Ramnagar, Moradabad
15. Sweets	4	0.25	Bareilly, Lucknow, Delhi
16. Bark	12	0.10	Kanpur, Delhi, Agra

TABLE NO. 3 (contd.)

(B) IMPORTS			
Item	Quantity in M.T.	Approx. value in Rs. lakhs	Destination/ place of supply
1. Rice	22,000	270.00	Ramnagar, Haldwani
2. Wheat & flour	20,000	200.00	"
3. Sugar	6,000	180.00	"
4. Tobacco & Allied Products	400	162.00	Bombay, Calcutta, Jabalpur
5. Woollen Cloth	40	120.00	Kanpur, Delhi, Bombay
6. Cotton cloth	1,300	108.00	Ahmedabad, Delhi, Bombay
7. Vegetables & Fruits	8,000	180.00	Ramnagar, Haldwani
8. Edible oils	800	40.00	"
9. Tea & Coffee	300	39.00	Calcutta
10. Potato	5,000	30.00	Haldwani, Ramnagar
11. Goats	5,000(no.)	25.00	Rajasthan
12. Pulses	800	16.00	Ramnagar, Haldwani
13. Iron & Steel goods	400	12.00	Bareilly, Calcutta Bombay
14. Salt	5,000	10.00	Ramnagar, Haldwani
15. Raw wool	100	10.00	Nepal, Rajasthan Australia
16. Kerosene	12 lakh litres	9.00	Ramnagar, Haldwani
17. Oil cake	800	7.00	"
18. Brass, copper, aluminium utensils	60	6.00	Moradabad, Mirzapur, Jagadhari
19. Hosiery	6	1.80	Ludhiana, Delhi Calcutta
20. Cotton	20	0.80	Kanpur, Bareilly
21. Dairy	7	0.23	Agra, Bareilly

Source : Based on Census Statistics

TABLE NO. 4

TRANSPORT IN ALMORA DISTRICT

1. Distance of Villages from Motor Road

On Motor Road	0-1 km	1-3 km	3-5 km	Over 5 km
295	190	519	422	1,556

2. No. of Villages not Accessible Throughout Year from District HQ.

Reason	Lack of Proper Road	No Bridge	Other Reasons
No. of villages	69	158	105

3. Distance from the Bus Stop

With Bus Stop	0-1 km	1-3 km	3-5 km	Over 5 km
103	117	463	469	1,810

(Based on figures gathered from the Census Office)

TABLE NO. 5

PRODUCER GROUPS SURVEYED

Producer Groups -----	No. of Villages covered -----	No. of people interviewed -----
1. Wool	2	30
2. Milk and milk products	5	56
3. Ringaal	2	20
4. Herbs	2	20
5. Grass mats	1	15
6. Chillies	1	15
7. Khirakot village	1	20
8. Brooms, ropes, nets	18	18
9. Melas	5 (Melas)	5
10. Local Markets	5	5
11. Lakshmi Ashram	1 (Institute)	3
Total	----- 43 =====	----- 207 =====

TABLE NO. 6

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF WOMEN PRODUCERS

Age in years	Milk & Khoya producers	Wool producers	Ringaal producers	Herb Collectors	Mat producers	Chilli producers	Khirakot	Broom ropes & net producers
15-20	5	-	5	-	2	1	-	4
20-25	8	-	-	-	1	2	-	6
25-30	10	3	5	8	3	5	-	3
30-35	9	7	2	6	2	3	2	-
35-40	11	4	6	3	3	1	14	3
40-45	6	10	-	1	1	-	4	1
45-50	3	2	1	2	2	3	-	1
50-55	2	3	1	-	-	-	-	-
55-60	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
60-65	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
65-70	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
70-75	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
Total	56	30	20	20	15	15	20	18

TABLE NO. 7

MILK AND KHOYA PRODUCING FAMILIES

S. No.	Land Dist- tribution	No. of persons in the family	No. of cattle in a house- hold	Land irrigated/ Non-irrigated
1.	20 plough	5	3	Non
2.	14 "	6	4	"
3.	4 "	5	8	"
4.	5 "	5	4	"
5.	8 "	7	6	"
6.	2 "	8	4	"
7.	12 "	6	3	"
8.	10 "	6	5	"
9.	2 "	2	3	"
10.	Nil	4	4	"
11.	3 Nali	3	4	"
12.	8 plough	4	3	"
13.	2 "	4	2 (Goats)	"
14.	11 "	8	10	"
15.	2 "	9	4	"
16.	1 "	5	2	"
17.	5 Nali	6	2	"
18.	16 plough	11	7	"
19.	20 "	5	4	"
20.	20 Nali	7	3	"
21.	Nil	2	1	"
22.	30 Nali	5	4	"
23.	25 "	5	2	"
24.	8 "	5	4	"
25.	6 "	3	2	"
26.	6 "	5	3	"
27.	30 "	4	3	"
28.	7 "	5	5	"
29.	8 "	4	2	"
30.	8 "	3	2	"
31.	30 "	N.A.	1	"
32.	20 "	3	4	"
33.	15 "	2	1	"
34.	10 "	5	6	"
35.	6 "	6	2	"
36.	60 "	N.A.	N.A.	"
37.	10 "	N.A.	1	"
38.	40 "	"	7	"

Table No. 7 (contd.)

S. No.	Land Dist-ribution	No. of persons in the family	No. of cattle in a house-hold	Land irrigated/Non-irrigated
39.	60 "	"	5	"
40.	55 "	"	7	"
41.	30 "	6	1	"
42.	80 "	7	7	"
43.	60 "	6	4	"
44.	N.A.	3	8	"
45.	50 Nali	5	6	"
46.	N.A.	5	6	"
47.	40 Nali	5	4	"
48.	35 "	2	3	"
49.	20 "	1	7	"
50.	N.A.	4	7	"
51.	N.A.	3	2	"
52.	N.A.	6	N.A.	"
53.	60 Nali	7	5	"
54.	50 "	8	6	"
55.	100 "	6	2	"
56.	60 "	6	5	"

Nali - 20 nalis = 1 acre

Plough - Local measure roughly equal to the amount of land ploughed by a pair of bullocks in one day.

List of Some Important Herbs of Kumaon

(local names are in parentheses)

1. *Parmelia* sp. (Charila, selaj/dhagar phul)
2. *Cinnamomum* sp. (dalchini)
3. *Myrica nagi* (jayphal bark)
4. *Acorus calamus* (ghudrach)
5. *Cinnamomum* leaves (tejpat)
6. *Hedychium spicatum* (kapur kachri)
7. *Sapindus mukorossi* (ritha pila)
8. *Bergenia* sp. (pashan bhed)
9. *Costus* sp. (mulim-kala kosht)
10. *Nardostachys jatamansi* (balchad)
11. *Picrorhiza kurooa* (kutki)
12. *Valeriana* sp. (sugandha vala-sabheva ganth)
13. Valerian root (sugandh vali-jad ganth)
14. *Valeriana* sp. whole plant (sugandhvala-pachag)
15. *Aconites* (vatsnabh)
16. *Terminalia belerica* (baheda)
17. *Urginea indica* (jangli pyaz)
18. *Pinus* sp. (devdas guliya-chirgulli)
19. *Pinus* sp. (devdas guliya-sapata)
20. *Prunus Puddam* (padam kasht)
21. *Prunus Puddam* bark (padam chal)
22. *Berberis* bark/root/stem (daru haldi)
23. *Viburnum* bark (vivernum vark)
24. *Thallictrum* sp. (mamira-pilijadi)
25. *Swertia* sp. (chiraytha kala/mithi)
26. *Tinospora Coodifolia* (giloy)
27. *Asparagus* sp. (sathavar badi)
28. *Adiantum* sp. (hasraj)
29. *Roscoea procera* (Kakoli)
30. *Eulophia* sp. (salam mishri)
31. *Doranicum* sp. (dhup lakkad)
32. *Mycrostallis* sp. (jivna)
33. *Rheum emodi* (revand chini)
34. *Terminalia chebula* (harad sukhi)
35. *Emblica Officinalis* (avala sukha)
36. *Rubia Cordifolia* (majishta)
37. *Semicarpus anacardiam* (milava)
38. *Polygonum* sp. (med-mahameda)
39. *Xonthoxyllum alatum* (thomad bij)
40. *Plumbago zeylanicum* (chitrakabhul)
41. *Gloriosa superba* (Kalidhari)
42. *Juglans regia* bark (dandasa akhrot mul trak)
43. *Vernonia authelmintica* (kali jiri)
44. *Orchis latilolia* (salav paiya nepali)

45. *Aeonilum heterophyllum* (athis nepali)
46. *Mesuaferrea* (nagkesar asli)
47. *Taxus baccata* (thalis patra)
48. *Betula bhoj patra* (bhoj patra)
49. *Brassica latifolia* (chyura bij)
50. *Salonum khasianum* (kantkari)
51. *Skimmia launola* (nayerpathi)
52. *Datura metal* (dhatura kala)
53. *Rhus sp.* (kakra bhrugi)
54. *Viola surpens* (banpasa)
55. *Herpestis moniara* (brahmi)

Glossary

baj	-	oak
bal-mittai	-	milk sweet
bazar	-	market
bhangira	-	spice
charkha	-	spinning wheel
chatyur	-	leaf umbrella
chaulayi	-	leafy vegetable
daliya	-	circular reed basket
doka	-	reed basket carried on shoulders
fafer	-	leafy vegetable
haat	-	market
jau	-	barley
jhibbu	-	cross between yak and cow
jhula	-	kind of fungus on bark of oak tree
kachchal	-	reed basket for light loads
kaleen	-	woolen carpet
kargha	-	loom
khaddi	-	loom
khoya	-	milk cake
madua	-	millet
mahila	-	woman
mela	-	fair
mosta	-	reed mat
panki	-	big woollen shawl
pheena	-	grass mat
pithiyachand	-	folding loom carried on back
ringaal	-	reed found in forest
singoudi	-	milk sweet
sup	-	winnower
thakli	-	hand spindle
thulma	-	woollen rug

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