

CHAPTER III
THE CASTES AND THEIR
OCCUPATIONS IN HARIA

I

Caste Composition:

The extent and variety of the impact of economic development on the life of the people of Haria can best be studied by first reviewing different aspects of village life obtaining before the two major economic changes began influencing it. As has been mentioned earlier, the introduction of afus-cultivation in Haria was the first major economic change and the establishment of a large factory near the village was the second and recent one influencing the village community.

About fifty years ago when afus cultivation was introduced in Haria, it constituted a small community

of seven Hindu castes and Muslims. Among the Hindu castes there were ANAVILS, DARJIS, MOCHIS, VAIRAGIS, NAIKAS, DUBLAS and DHEDS; and among the Muslims there was only one family of a barber.

Below is given an estimate of the number of families of these castes, arranged in order of their population strength (Table 2). It will be seen from ~~these~~ ~~above~~ table that while the Anavils, Dublas, Naikas and Dheds formed the bulk of the village population, the rest of the caste-people were in a great minority.

Each caste in Haria was traditionally associated with a particular occupation. The Anavils were land-owners and practised agriculture.

Table II

TABLE II

An Estimate of the approximate number of families of different castes in Haria in about 1901.¹

Caste Name	Number of families	Percentage of the total population
ANAVIL	60	40.00
DUBLA	45	30.00
NAIKA	30	20.00
DHED	11	7.30
DARJI	1	0.67
MOCHI	1	0.67
VAIRAGI	1	0.67
HAJAM(Muslim)	1	0.67
Total:	150	99.98 = 100.00

- 1 This estimate is prepared on the basis of genealogies of all families of Haria which I collected as a part of my field-work in the village during 1956-57

The Dublas and Naikas were labourers and worked under the Anavil landowners as their permanent servants. The Dheds were cloth-weavers and village pechs, the Darjis tailors, the Mochis, Shoe-makers, the Vairagis, non-Brahman temple-priests and the Muslim barbers.

II

Anavils and Their Hypergamy:

It is a typical characteristic of the Anavils ² that although they claim to be Brahmans, most of them practised agriculture as their family occupation. Moreover, unlike other Brahmans of Gujarat, they did not follow a priestly profession, nor did they receive alms from others. They were neither scholars of Sanskrit literature too. They have been highly concentrated in South Gujarat.³ The fact that almost all

2 The word Anavil is derived from a place, village ANAVAL of Surat district. It is about eighty miles to the South-east of Surat. ANAVAL is believed to be the place of origin of the Anavils. In ANAVAL there is a temple of Lord Siva, called as Shukleshwara, the caste-deity of the Anavils.

3 Their concentration was found between the town Vapi in the South and the river Tapi in the north.

of them practised agriculture as their traditional occupation inspite of being Brahmans is being supported by a mythological story given in their caste-purana.⁴ The mythological story found in the Anavil-Purana may briefly be mentioned as follows. God Rama encamped near village ANAVAL during his journey from the South to the North. He desired to perform a yajna. For this he required the help of 18,000 Brahmans. He searched for them in the surrounding areas, but in vain. Therefore,

4 Several Hindu high-castes have their caste-purana. The caste-purana is a mythological verse, the main aim of which is to enlogise the caste in question. An attempt is made thereby to trace the origin of the caste by associating with it the name of a rishi (saint) or a god or goddess as its ancestor who, it is believed, uplifted the caste by His or Her prowess. In doing so the caste-purana tries to support the claim of that caste for a definite status in the Hindu hierarchy. I came across a copy of Anavil-purana translated in Gujarati from Sanskrit. It has been published in Buddhi Prakash, Book 71, No.1, p.15, January 1924, . It has been mentioned in the brief preface to it that the original writer of Anavil-purana was Vallabh Bhatt who wrote it in Sanskrit.

he collected 18,000 tribesmen and raised them to the status of Brahmanhood by giving them Yajnopavita (lit. Sacred thread) to wear. He gave them land to settle in that area. Since then they became Brahmans but continued to practise agriculture. The place where Rama encamped and performed the yajna is the present village Unai near the village Anaval in Surat district. The hot and cold water streams at Unai are believed to be the marks of that great ancient event. Those streams served the purpose of giving a sacred bath to the 18,000 tribesmen who received Brahmanhood by the grace of God Rama.

The Anavils were divided into two status-groups, viz. Desais⁵ and Bhathelas.⁶ Of the fifty five Anavil

5 The word Desai is derived from the Sanskrit term *desam*, which means a region or district. By Desai is, therefore, meant the person in-charge of, or the head of a region or district.

6 The word Bhathela has been interpreted in two ways: (i) It is derived from Sanskrit term *bhrastha*, meaning 'degenerated'. Therefore Bhathelas are those persons who have been degenerated from a high social status to a lower one. (ii) Secondly, they are called as Bhathelas because they are rice(paddy) (*bhat*, lit., rice) growers. (It should be pointed out here that one of the major crops of South Gujarat is paddy.)

families in Haria twenty were Desais and forty Bhathelas. During the rule of the Moguls and Marathas, the Desais were hereditary revenue contractors in different parts of Surat District. They were also holders of large estates. Generally, they lived in towns but occasionally went on tour to villages in the interior parts of the district for collecting revenue from cultivators. As the British abolished the revenue contract system in 1818, they began migrating to villages gradually. While some of the Desais stayed on in towns and took to other professions such as business or some kind of government service, some others moved to villages and began cultivating lands. The ancestors of the Desais of Haria lived in Bulsar during the period of pre-British rule in South Gujarat. But they left Bulsar and settled in Haria in about 1835. Whereas the ancestors of some of the Bhathelas of Haria lived in the village as cultivators of land much before the settlement of the Desais. Similarly, some of the Desai families migrated from Bulsar to Chanvai, Abrama, Dived, Magod and other surrounding villages of Bulsar Taluka and settled there during the latter half of the last century. Nevertheless, some Desai families continued to live in Bulsar. At present there

are three big Desai mahollas (streets) in Bulsar.

Desaiship not only brought the Desai big fortunes but also conferred upon them some political power. As the office of Desaiship became gradually hereditary, it earned for them a high social prestige. All these privileges were denied to the other group of Anavils, viz. the Bhathelas, who were simply small cultivators of land. Thus there was a marked difference between the Desais and Bhathelas in respect of wealth, power and social prestige. This was reflected in their ways of life. The Desais of Haria lived in spacious, two storied, brick-buildings with an open vada land behind them. One of the wealthiest Desais of Haria had even built a wall around his vada land. The cost of their buildings ranged from about Rs. 5,000 to 10,000 or even more. They enjoyed other amenities and comforts of life possessing good furniture (e.g. chairs, tables, cots, swings and cupboards) and a fairly large number of household utensils. The Bhathelas, on the other hand, lived in single-storied, narrow-spaced houses built up of bamboo and wood. Their costs ranged from about

Rs. 1,000 to 5,000 only. Moreover, they enjoyed less comforts than the Desais as they owned little furniture and comparatively a smaller number of household utensils. The Desais also owned savari gallis (lit. passenger cart) which they used while going to a nearby village or town. But the Bhathelas, who hardly owned such galli, had either to go on foot or borrow a galli from a Desai and move from one place to another.

The Desais were ahead of Bhathelas in respect of education also. While the Bhathelas of Haria were mostly content to stop going to school after finishing primary education (upto 5th primary only) in the local school, the Desais went to a secondary school in Bulsar after completing primary education in Haria. One Desai of Haria even earned the honour of taking a graduate degree of the Bombay University in those early days when University education was a rare pursuit. Even though the Desais settled in villages, they retained their contact with their kin living in towns.

Desaigiri and all that it implied gave the Desais higher status than the Bhathelas. The Bhathelas and

Desais stood in hypergamous relationship. The Desais received girls in marriage from the Bhathelas, but did not give their girls in return. This is an important feature of hypergamous relationship existing between different status-groups within a caste-group. The group having a higher status enjoys the privilege of receiving girls in marriage not only from its own group but from the lower-status^{group} also. On the other hand, the low-status group has a restricted field for extending marriage relationships. This sort of situation results in a shortage of marriageable girls in the low-status group and relative abundance of them in the high-status group. Consequently, two apparently conflicting practices are followed, although at different levels of social relationships. They are what may be called as dowry prevalent in the high-status group and bride-price in the low-status group. While a high-status group bride-groom receives a sizeable amount of dowry (ranging from Rs. 500 to Rs. 5,000, or at times even extending upto Rs. 10,000 in some cases) at the time of marriage from the bride's father, a low-status group bride-groom

has to pay some amount of bride-price to the bride's father. As a rule, all members of the low-status group have an aspiration for raising their individual social status. They can do this only if they enter into kinship relationship with a member of the high-status group. Therefore, they not only give their daughter to a high-status group bride-groom but give him a dowry also. Thus dowry acts as a means of raising the individual status, of a member of the low-status group and, therefore, performs an important function in the whole mechanism of hypergamous relationships.

On the other hand, the prevalence of the practice of bride-price upholds the rule of the survival of the fittest. Comparatively a large number of bride-grooms in the low-status group compete for fewer marriageable girls. Therefore, only those who can afford to pay a bride-price can get married and others remain unmarried. An alternative for bride-price is satu or exchange marriage. That is, two, three or more persons decide to exchange girls in marriage. A girl is received and, in return, a girl is given.

The above generalisations hold good in the case of Desai-Bhathela hypergamy also. A Bhathela tried as far as possible to secure a Desai groom for his daughter. This was particularly so because every Bhathela aspired to raise his status by entering into kinship relationship with a Desai. The result of this trend of giving girls in the higher group was obviously a continuous drag of marriageable girls among the Bhathelas. Such a drag was experienced by the Bhathelas of Haria also. It is found from the genealogical charts of Haria Anavils that in as many as fifteen Bhathela families only three sons from among five or six sons in a family could get married and others remained unmarried. On the contrary, twelve Desais had more than one wife. The Bhathelas met with the problem of shortage of marriageable girls among them by practising satu or exchange marriage, and bride price. No less than ten exchange marriages are found to have taken place among the Bhathelas of Haria. Six of them are direct exchanges of sisters, and the remaining four are cases of exchange marriages arranged between three families each.

It should be pointed out here that it was in view

of these two practices of exchange marriage and bride-price that the social status of the Bhathelas as a group was considered to be lower than that of the Desais. The reason for this is that to receive money (e.g. bride-price) or a girl in return of a girl in marriage is considered to be a practice of extremely low esteem and, therefore, as far as possible, it should be avoided by high caste people.

III

Patron-Client Relationship:

While the Anavils were the owners of village lands, the Dublas and Naikas assisted them in all various agricultural operations as their permanent labourers. The different families of Dublas and Naikas were traditionally tied to the different families of Anavils in the village. As such, the Anavil landowner was called the dhaniamo (lit. master) of his Dubla (or Naika) labourer who was called the hali (lit. the ploughman). This traditional master-servant relationship was known as halipratha (Hali system) and was widely prevalent in

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the whole of South Gujarat.⁷

The Dublas and Naikas who worked as halis under the village Anavil landowners belonged to the two of the several Adivasi groups⁸ of South Gujarat. All the sixty families of Haria Anavils depended on land as their main source of income. I was informed by the elder Anavils and Dublas of the village that the seventy-five Dubla-Naika families of the village were attached to the Anavil masters and derived their income,

7 I propose to discuss various aspects of Hali system in greater details in Chapter IV.

8 In the Constitution of India the Adivasi groups have been named as Scheduled Tribes. The main Adivasi groups of Surat District are Dublas (1,82,473), Naikas (47,254), Chodhras (1,06,530) and Dhodias (91,971). According to the 1951 census, the tribal population consisted of 46.74% of the total population of Surat District. Except the Dublas, the others are more concentrated in one part and less in some other part of South Gujarat. But the Dublas are evenly distributed in all parts of South Gujarat.

although indirectly from land. Similarly, the other members of the servicing caste group also served the Anavils and thereby earned their livelihood from land. Thus, it may be said that it was the group of Anavils on whom, more or less, depended the other caste-groups of the village for their earnings. This may be seen from the following analysis of the traditional inter-caste service relationships which existed in Maria.

The Darji stitched dagalo and paheran for the males and kanchali (lit. blouse) for the females. It was by way of hand-stitching that he prepared the clothes. He charged either three annas for a waistcoat, and two annas each for a paheran and a kanchali or grains worth an equivalent value. As the Anavil masters supplied the necessary clothings to their Dubla-Naika halis, the Darji's patrons were the village Anavils. Similarly the Mochi supplied shoes to the village people. As in the case of the Darji, the Mochi's patrons were the village Anavils because the latter provided shoes also to their Dubla-Naika halis. The Mochi charged Rs. two or grains worth an equivalent value per pair of shoes. The Mochi prepared shoes from deshi (lit.indi-

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geneous) leather which was supplied to him by a ~~chamar~~^{chamar},
leather-tanner) who lived in a nearby village, Dived,
about two miles from Haria.

The village barbar was a Muslim.⁹ He served the
Anavils and others except the Dheds. If he served the
Dheds, the Untouchables, the Anavils would not accept
his services because he would pollute them " by touch-
ing the Dheds." The Hajam " was paid annually at the
rate of one maund of paddy for serving an adult male
and half a maund of paddy, for serving a minor male.
He received some extra grains or cash for offering his
services on some special occasions, viz. for dressing
the hair of all male mourners who met together on the
tenth day after the death of an Anavil in the village,
or for occasionally ~~serving~~^{the heads of} Anavil widows in the village.

But the village Hajam was a very important person
on the occasion of a marriage ceremony among the
Anavil families in the village. He was one of the first
persons to be called on a marriage day for he played the
pipe. He also accompanied the groom's party in a

9 It is not uncommon in some of the South Gujarat
villages to find Muslim Hajams.

marriage procession to another village and lit the mashal. He would bring a mirror and hold it in front of the face of the groom who returned to the village after marriage. Looking into a mirror was considered to be a very good omen for the groom. For all these additional services, the Hajam's remuneration was not fixed. It depended on his bargaining power and the goodwill of his patron. Usually, he received some coins as a gift and also enjoyed the marriage feast.

The Hajam's wife worked as a dāyan (lit. mid-wife). For her services of ten days after a delivery she was usually paid both in cash and kind, viz. one rupee and five seers of paddy, one and-a-quarter seers of jaggery and a quarter seer of ghee (clarified butter). She, however, received one rupee more as a special gift if the child born was a boy.

The Vairagi was a non-Brahman-temple-priest. He offered morning and evening prayers in the temples of Ramji and Vitthalnathji. The Vairagi priest, who was the paternal uncle of the present Vairagi's father, lived in the Ramji temple.

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For offering prayers to the third Siva temple named as gupteshwara mahādeo, a Tapodhan ¹⁰ living in a neighbouring village Bhagod, about two miles from Haria, came everyday to the village.

Both of these temple-priests received sidhu (lit. alms) consisting of approximately one dishful of uncooked rice, pluses, jowar or wheat floor, jaggery and ghee from different Anavil families in turn.

Apart from these two temple-priests there was another Brahman priest who only enjoyed the privilege of performing the ritual at the marriage, death and some other religious ceremonies among the Haria Anavils. This Brahman priest lived in Bulsar and only occasionally visited the village whenever his services were required by the village Anavils. He charged a fixed amount of cash or grains of equivalent value as his fees for performing the ritual on different ceremonial functions. What his charges were, is, however, not known.

10 Tapodhan is a low-Brahman temple-priest who offered prayers ~~only~~ to Siva.

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The position of the village Dheds was, however, quite different from the other servicing castes. They performed some menial services like disposing off carcasses; weaving woollen and cotton cloth; and working as vethiyās (lit. village peons). For disposing off the carcasses, the Dheds received from the Anavils about five to twenty seers of paddy per one carcass. They, however, had the additional advantage of taking off the skin of the carcass and selling it to the camar and eating the flesh of the carcass. The State gave each one of the three Dheds who worked as village peons an allowance of Rs. 3 per month and a few acres of revenue-free land for raising crops. Some of the village Dheds worked as weavers of both wollen and cotton cloth. There were a few Rabari¹¹ families in the adjoining village Chichwada, about two miles from Haria. They supplied raw wool to the Dheds of Haria. The Dheds weaved coarse wollen cloth for the Rabaris who paid the former their labour charges at some fixed rate which is not known to the author. The Dheds bought cotton yarn from Bulsar and weaved coarse cloth, a large part of

11 Rabaris are a Hindu caste whose caste occupation is to rear a herd of sheep and goats.

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which was sold to the village people on payment of either cash or grain. In weaving both cotton and wollen cloth, the Dheds made use of their simple traditional tools such as sal (lit. handloom), rentia (lit. spinning wheel), etc. Usually, the Dheds' wives spun yarn and the Dheds weaved cloth.

It should be pointed out here that a number of Dheds adults from Surat district had migrated to Bombay. Some European families at Bombay employed the Dheds as their butlers. As they found the Dheds to be quite smart and did not object to touching them, employed them as butlers in their homes.

About ten Dheds of Haria were employed as butlers at Bombay in 1901. During the period of service, the Dheds stayed alone at Bombay. They left the other members of their family in the village and visited them on some occasions such as a marriage, death, or sickness of a family member or of a near relative.

The village, however, did not contain some of the other servicing castes whose services were also essential to the village people. For this the village people had to depend upon some of the servicing castes living in

neighbouring villages and towns. As pointed out earlier the two Brahman priests living in Bhagod and Bulsar served Haria Anavils by paying occasional visits. Similarly, an Oil-presser of the village Magod, about four miles from Haria, visited the village once in a fortnight and gave the village people one seer of oil in exchange of two and a half seers of til, or sold them oil on payment of cash or grains of equivalent value. Some carpenters living in another neighbouring village, e.g. Segvi, about five miles from Haria, rendered their services to the village people. The Carpenters built and repaired wooden parts of houses and prepared simple furniture and wooden agricultural implements. For these services they received some amount of cash or grains of equivalent value. There were a few Iron-smiths in the same village. They served the Haria people especially in supplying and repairing iron parts of agricultural implements and received from the latter either cash or grains in return. Some potters from Pardi visited the village once a month with a cart-load of earthen-wares and were paid either in cash or grains by the village people. Lastly, the people of Haria

approached some Gold-smiths of Bulsar for the purchase of precious metals, e.g. gold and silver, and for getting prepared ornaments.

IV

Caste-Hierarchy:

The different castes in Haria were arranged in a specific hierarchical order and each caste enjoyed a status which was accorded to its specific position in the hierarchical order of the village community. Chart I given below represents the arrangement of castes in the village hierarchy.

Chart I

CHART I

Approximate position of Castes in the village Hierarchy:

I	ANAVIL
	VAIRAGI
(A)	DARJI
II	(B) MOCHI
	NAIKA
III	DUBLA

IV	BARBAR (Muslim) - (Non-Hindu)

Bar of Untouchability	

V	DHED

The above table represents an approximate hierarchy among the different castes of Haria in about 1901. It is by no means an attempt to ascertain a definite position of the castes of Haria, because it is extremely difficult to do so. It is a very important characteristic of the hierarchical system prevailing among the Hindus that there has always been some flexibility about the position

of what may be called the 'middle-castes'. While Brahmans occupy the highest occupational and ritual status, the Untouchables occupy the lowest occupational and ritual status. Their positions have always remained fixed in the Hindu hierarchy. But the position of the castes falling in the middle-range have been more or less remained unfixed. It is found that due to economic and political changes, some castes which occupied a 'higher' position before, went down the scale and some of the 'lower' castes pushed up their position, this reshuffling taking place within the middle range only. The comparative status of the middle castes has never remained fixed for all times and in all places. It is for this reason that a generalised scale of hierarchy cannot be applied over the entire region of Hindu castes. The same is true with castes of South Gujarat in general and Haria in particular.

The Anavils being Brahmans were at the top and the untouchables at the bottom of caste-hierarchy in Haria. But group II in the above table includes three servicing castes of the village. Among them, however, the Vairagis and Darjis occupied a higher position than the Mochis

because the latter defiled themselves by the touch of leather. The Vairagis and Darjis occupied almost the same position in the hierarchy but as the Vairagis were (non-Brahman) temple-priests they enjoyed a higher status than the Darjis. Nevertheless, all the three castes in this group were strictly endogamous and observed restrictions of commensality between them. All of them were strictly vegetarians.

The Naikas and Dublas formed a separate group of 'tribal castes' in the village. The two groups were strictly/endogamous but did not observe restrictions of commensality between them. They exchanged cooked food and drinking water. They invited each other for a caste-dinner on marriage occasions too. From the point of view of dietary and occupation also both of them were non-vegetarians and drank toddy and country-liquor prepared from either mahura flowers or jaggery. Both of them worked as halis under the village Anavil masters and freely/mixed with one another in folk-dances and other activities of occasional tribal festivals.

Nevertheless, from the point of view of the tribal hierarchy, the Naikas occupied a higher position than

the Dublas.¹² But this way of ascribing higher-lower ranks to these two groups does not seem to be proper. In the central plain region of South Gujarat, viz. in the talukas of Chorasi, Bardoli, Navsari and Gandevi, where the Dublas predominate upon other tribal groups, and where comparatively the Dublas' economic status is higher than that of the other tribal groups, the Dublas are not considered to be occupying the lowest position among the tribal groups of South Gujarat. Moreover due to their closer contact with the high-caste Hindus, the Dublas were gradually Sanskritized as compared to some of the other tribal groups which still continued to live in the eastern hilly tracts of South Gujarat. For these reasons the Dublas of the central parts of South Gujarat claim a status equal to it not lower than the other South Gujarat tribal groups. Thus, it seems that, especially in the middle-range the relative position which a particular caste occupies in the caste hierarchy depends not only upon ritual and occupational status but also upon its economic status

12 P.G. Shah also confirms this view point. See his The Dublas of South Gujarat (1958), Ch.iii, p.35

and the degree of Sanskritization it has achieved as compared to the other castes occupying more or less an equal position in the caste-hierarchy.

Below the Dublas and Naikas in the village hierarchy comes a non-Hindu, viz. the Muslim Hajam. Being a non-Hindu, he did not form a part of the Hindu caste-hierarchy. But from the point of view of the village hierarchical order, he was assigned a definite position in it. He came below all Hindu clean (touchable) castes. It is so because the clean castes did not accept drinking water or cooked food from him but he accepted the same from them. He was, however, above the Dheds because like the other village clean castes, he also did not touch the village Dheds, and did not serve them. Moreover, he did not accept drinking water or cooked food from the Dheds. While Dheds could not enter the houses of the clean castes, the Hajam could enter in their houses, of course, with certain restrictions. Being a Muslim, the Hajam was non-vegetarian, but did not drink alcohol.

The lowest position in the village hierarchy was accorded to the Dheds, because they were untouchables.

Any member of a clean caste was polluted by touching a Dhed and required a purificatory bath to regain his normal ritual status.

The flexibility among the castes in the middle range does not mean that those castes were any less conscious of their relative caste-status. They expressed their caste-status in various ways and always tried to preserve their caste-unity and caste-solidarity.

The expression of caste-status of the village people was found in their inter-caste relationships. A stranger who enters the village gets the first glimpses of the village hierarchy in the very pattern of the residential quarters of different caste-groups. The Anavils lived in the centre, their houses being built up in straight parallel lines forming distinct streets. The Vairagi, the Mochi, the Darji and the Hajam lived just by the side of the Anavils, but at the corners of the Anavil streets. The Dublas and Naikas lived in huts which formed four falias, clusters, in different directions of the village, although at a

little distance from the Anavil streets. The Dubla-Naika huts were raised on unlevelled ground and were not arranged in line forming a street. The Dheds lived at a noticeable distance of over a furlong both e from the Anavil streets and the Dubla-Naika clusters. Their houses were built up on a low-level ground, but in rows forming straight streets.

The caste-hierarchy also corresponded with the occupational hierarchy in the village. The Anavils were agriculturists. Agriculture as an occupation has been practised by several castes among Hindus. Unlike some other occupations it has not been associated with one or a few specific castes. From Brahmans at the top right upto the Dheds at the bottom, all various castes in between have been practising agriculture in different parts of India. As noted earlier, the Haria Anavils were landowners and were assisted by their halis in different agricultural operations. They participated in it only as far as the supervisory and some of the less heavy operations were concerned, whereas their halis performed all works involving heavy physical labour. The Anavils mainly gave instructions to their halis and managed the

affairs of agriculture with the help of the latter. From this point of view, the Anavils maintained their occupational higher status. Among the servicing castes forming Group II in the village hierarchy, the Vairagis (temple-priests) and the Darjis (tailors) performed occupations of a higher esteem than that of the Mochis, in the same group. Because the Mochis dealt with leather, their occupation was esteemed to be lower than those of the Anavils, Vairagis and Dargis. Leather defiles, but not as much as raw skin. The Mochi's occupation was, therefore, not so low as that of a Dhed or a camar who dealt with raw-skin.

The Dublas and Naikas who worked as farm labourers came below both the Anavils and the Group II servicing castes. Their occupation as labourers involved heavy physical labour as well as direct dependance on others for a livelihood. Occupations involving heavy physical labour are generally esteemed to be very low and direct dependence on others for one's livelihood suggests lack of freedom, which is also not a sign of a high-status occupation in the village. Therefore the occupation of the Dublas and Naikas was esteemed to be of a very low

status. The occupation of the Hajam was unclean because his work involved handling unclean things, viz. hair and nails.

The occupation of the Dheds was esteemed to be of the lowest status in the village because the Dheds performed some extremely unclean jobs, such as carrying the carcasses and taking out skin and eating flesh. Moreover by birth they were all untouchables.

The inter-caste relationships were governed by the concept of pollution. The different castes of the village observed certain restrictions regarding touch, acceptance of drinking water and cooked food and marriage. The clean castes could touch one another, but none of them could touch the Dheds because the latter were by birth untouchables. Secondly, a higher caste member could not accept either drinking water or cooked food from a lower caste member, but the latter could accept both from the former. Thirdly, although all castes were strictly endogamous in character, it was possible for a higher caste member to marry a lower caste girl, but not vice versa. However, the

Dheds were barred from any social intercourse with a clean-caste member. The Dheds fetched water from a separate well which was located in the dhedwad (i.e. the area in which the Dheds lived). They could not enter the clean caste temples. Their children taking education in the village primary school could not sit with the other clean-caste children. While the latter sat comfortably inside school building, the former sat outside it in the shaded verandah. Moreover, the Dhed children were punished by the clean caste school teacher by a throw of his shoe from some distance.

Thus, the castes in Haria formed somewhat distinct unequal groups graded according to their social and ritual status.

Lastly, one word for the family system. The author does not possess much information about this except that among Anavils almost all families were joint families. The adult male members of different Anavil families of the village held their ancestral property jointly; and worked together on family lands, thereby having joint incomes and expenditures also. Some of the Anavil informants stated that there were few very big Anavil families with a membership of about twenty

five to thirty members. The pattern of houses in Haria suggests that there were joint family clusters. Among other castes of Haria also it was reported that there were joint families. The nature of the joint family system which prevailed in Haria is not known.

Thus Haria was a small village community with few caste-groups in it. There was hypergamy among the Anavils who were divided into two status groups named as Desais and Bhathelas. The Anavils were landowners and the other servicing caste-groups largely depended upon them for their maintenance. They were bound to one another with specific service relationships. The village was also served by some other servicing caste-groups of few surrounding villages. The village castegroups were arranged in a hierarchy of status as upper middle, and lower groups. This status hierarchy was observed not only as regards their occupations but it was also reflected in various other aspects of their life. Finally, joint family system was quite common among them.