

CHAPTER IV
THE PEOPLE AND THE VILLAGES

4.1 INTRODUCTION:

This chapter intends to introduce the villages under study. This is about the physical structure, baris, social groups functioning in these villages as could be observed by the researcher as a non-participant observer during the field work for data collection. This general descriptive analysis may delineate some of the trends of change in these villages as an impact of education.

4.1.1 Bangladesh:

Bangladesh is a new nation with an area of 55,126 square miles (1,58,005 square kilometers). Bangladesh is a deltaic region lying between 20-45°N and 26-30°N latitude and 88°E and 92.30°E longitude (Ahmed, 1969; 1-3). It is surrounded by West Bengal on the west and north and Meghalaya, Assam, Tripura and Mizoram on the north and east. It shares a common border with Burma for about 172 miles (275.2 kilometers) on the south-east. South faces the Bay of Bengal (Maron, 1957; 8-9). Two of the largest rivers of Asia, the Ganges and Brahmaputra flow through Bangladesh and join to form the Padma before emptying into the Bay of Bengal. Other important rivers are the Surma from Assam flows as Meghna and joins the Padma near the Port town of

Chandpur in the district of Comilla. The Karnafuli flows through Chittagong hills to the Bay of Bengal. Together with these major rivers, there are many other tributaries and canals which combine to make Bangladesh an alluvial plain with frequent floods.

For major part of the year from early March to October, Bangladesh experiences a sub-tropical climate with high temperature and humidity. The monsoon usually begins in June and lasts for about four months with exceptionally heavy rainfall. On the whole, Bangladesh averages more than 80" (200 centimeters) of rainfall annually second to Assam only in the world record. The mean temperature varies from around 64° Fahrenheit during cold months to 83° Fahrenheit in the hot months. (Ibid; 9).

Bangladesh is the world's eighth most populous nation (larger than any single nation of Europe) (House, ed, 1972; 1). At present, it has a population of about 91 millions with a density of 750 to 2000 per square mile. Rice is the sine qua non of Bangladesh diet. The typical question, "Have you eaten yet?" means "Have you taken rice?" (Ibid; 19). It indicates that food means rice for Bangladesh.

Ninety percent of the population directly or indirectly lives on agriculture. The country is mainly a land of small farmers, most of whom own less than the country's average of a little more than three acres per family. Most of the plots are fragmented and sub-divided. Rice, jute, some kinds of pulses are the main agricultural products.

The country is divided into four divisions, twenty one districts, fifty six sub-divisions, four hundred and thirty five thanas (Police Stations), four thousand three hundred and fifty five Union Parishads, thirteen thousand and sixty five wards, and sixty five thousand villages (to some estimation there are 68,000 villages) (Bangladesh Directory, 1976; 15). Thana is smallest administrative unit, equivalent to a U.S. county, having on the average an area of 100 square miles with a population of 1,50,000. Union Parishad or council is a unit of local government consisting of 12 to 15 villages, approximately. Ward is a sub-division of union generally into three. Village is the smallest political unit having an average area of 0.75 square mile with a population of 800 (I.R.D.P., 1977; 65).

Literacy rate is about 30 percent. There are 40,959 primary and 6,648 high and junior high schools,

433 colleges and 6 universities in Bangladesh
(Bangladesh Directory, 1976).

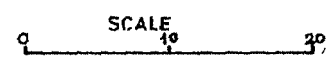
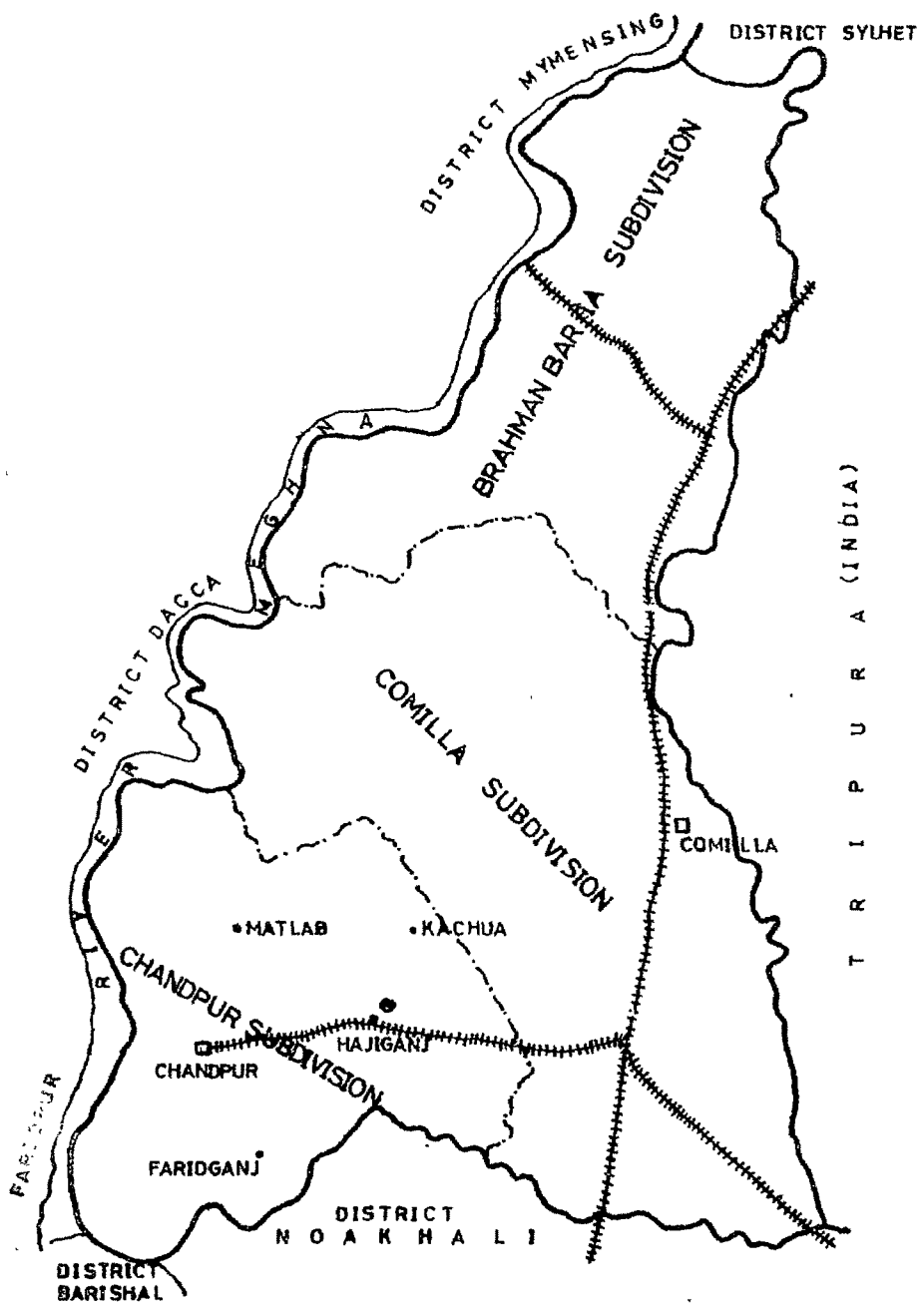
Comilla district locates in the eastern part of the country. It is divided into three sub-divisions and 22 thanas. Hajiganj thana lies on the western part of the district under Chandpur sub-division. Hatila is one of the 10 unions of the thana, consisting of 18 villages with a population of 23,307 according to the 1974 census. The four selected villages of Hatila, Hariain, Tangirpar and Noapara are contiguously located as a part of ward No.3 of the Hatila union. Table No. 4.1 shows the total number of population and area (in acres) of the four villages according to the 1974 Population Census.

Table No.4.1

Total number of population of four villages

| Name of the Villages | Area (in acres) | Male | Female | Total |
|----------------------|-----------------|------|--------|-------|
| Hatila | 1292 | 1794 | 1760 | 3554 |
| Hariain | 285 | 419 | 419 | 838 |
| Tangirpar | 129 | 434 | 397 | 831 |
| Noapara | 157 | 104 | 101 | 205 |

(Source: Village Population Statistics - Comilla District, 1977; 161)



COMILLA DISTRICT.
◉ SYMBOL OF RESEARCH
LOCALE.

Table No.4.1 shows that the villages are of different sizes in respect of population and area. Hatila is the biggest and Noapara is the smallest in respect of population.

4.2 THE VILLAGES:

A village is generally consisted of settlements and agricultural lands around it. Geographers and anthropologists made a distinction between a nucleated village and dispersed village as mentioned earlier (1.7.6). The villages under study roughly can be classified as nucleated ones. Majority of the baris (homestead/dwelling) are in nucleated forms. Though there are some dispersed baris or homestead also. The dispersed baris or dwellings are the extension of the villages on agricultural land. These dwellings or baris are built in order to support the excess population whom can not be supported in the old baris. In some cases the villages are dispersed according to the population characteristics. People of high birth or rich origin may be concentrating in one area as the case of "agraharam" in Sripuram village in Tamil Nadu, India as found by Beteille (1966). Similarly people of low birth or economically depressed may be concentrated in one area as the "cheri" inhabited by adi-Dravida in

the said Sripuram village. Of course, such a rigid classification can not be made for the present villages but a distinction apparently can be made. In Tangirpar the dwelling of feudal family that is 'Mia bari' is located in the southern part (para) of the village and the low status family (Nichchu bari) in the north and eastern para (Part). In Hariain traditional Unchu baris (high status family) are concentrated in the south-western para (part) whereas the Nichchu baris (low status family) are located more in east para (part). In Hatila both Unchu status baris (high status) and Nichchu status (low status) baris are inter-mixed, as for example, Chyal bari is situated just contiguous to Khan bari.

Both the Chandpur-Chittgong railways and the Chandpur-Comilla, C and B highway run by the south of the research site at a distance of two miles from the central point. A mud road passes by the villages to the railway station waruk. The road goes under water during the rainy season. Even during the dry season the road is fit for pedestrians only. The villagers are very much interested in improving this road. In fact, they were inquiring whether this field work could help to construct the road as mentioned in the methodology -

field work. However, it is learnt that, this road is going to be constructed under Public Works Programmes shortly.

There is a canal flowing through the villages of Noapara, Tangirpar and Hatila to the river of Dacoitia. The canal is known as 'Shail Khali' meaning the canal of a kind of fish 'shail' by name. There are some other small streams flowing through the villages. During the rainy season specially from the months of July to November, the whole area goes under deep water. The villages get an isle look floating on the water in this season. Country boat is the only means of communication in this season. Again, during the dry season specially from the months of January to April, there is no water in the field except big canals and ponds for domestic use only. In fact, villagers take different views with the turn of the seasons. Bengali literature is filled with the description of these panoramic scenes, the national song "Sonar Bangla" by Rabindranath Tagore being only one of them.

4.3 BARI:

The Bengali word 'bari' as mentioned in the methodology chapter of this study, bears special

connotations both physically and socially. Bertocci (1975; 352, 53) and Wood (Huq, 1978; 26) in their studies of social organizations of Bangladesh in particular and South East Asia in general laid emphasis on the term of bari as a social unit for understanding rural communities in this region. As mentioned in 3.9.3 section of this study bari can be defined, according to Bertocci (op.cit), as the peasants' homestead, the residential locus of patrilineal kin group (gusthi/gotra to some extent) and commonly, any matri lateral and/or affinal relatives who for various reasons may have come to live with the patrilineage. The residents of most homesteads composed of more than a single nuclear family nearby always divide themselves within the compound along the lines of property ownership. These are inadequately but easily described in English as "households." The word bari generally evokes the notion of building, dwelling the residence of a specific lineage or family of a particular social type, status, occupation, as for example, 'Bhuiya bari' indicates the home of the Bhuiya family whose prestigious title denotes high status especially due to land property. In this sense bari evokes the idea of family and community

living. Karim's (1976; 146) study of Stratification of Nayanpur village into "Chowdhury", Khundakar can be termed as members of Chowdhury bari or Khundakar bari. Mukherjee's (1971; 240) kin-group or gusthi can be termed for bari or Chowdhury's (1978; 78-108) study of Kazi, Gazi, Bhuiya, Chowdhury, Mia can be termed as the members of mia bari, bhuiya bari, Chowdhury bari.

The basic building material used in the construction dwellings in the villages is bamboo. In some cases the roof is of corrugated iron sheets. Houses made of bricks are rare in this locality. A few fruit bearing trees of banana, mango, jack fruit, wood-apple, coconut, etc. are planted near the dwellings. Betel nut trees and bamboo groves are located a bit far. In the vicinity of house or bari there must be at least one man-made pond which serves several functions, notable as a place for bathe, fish cultivation, washing and drinking water. The aristocratic bari or Unchu Status bari may have a number of ponds as for example, there are about a dozen of ponds in the vicinity of 'mia bari' of Tangirpar. The soil removed in the excavation of the pond or ponds is usually used to raise the living area as a protection from monsoon flooding (House, 1972; 21).

4.4 THE VILLAGE OF HATILA:

Hatila is a well known village in the locality as it bears the name of the Union Parishad. This village (Table No.4.1) is biggest not only among the studied four villages but in the whole of Union. Because of its size, the village is divided into different paras ('Para' is a Bengali word denoting Part). This village is divided into East and West Hatila. West Hatila is again divided into 'South Para' and 'North Para'.

In the absence of any written versions as to origin of this village, nothing can be said in definite. Of course, this is applicable to almost all the villages in Bangladesh. Some information could be collected from the living village elders. These may be some calculative guess. The word 'Hatila' might originate from the word 'Hata', whose English translation is 'to walk'. They say the name indicates that a group of people came on foot and settled in this village and the village was named as 'Hatila'. But it cannot be identified who were these people and where they came from. Anyway whatever may be the meaning of the word or whoever may be the inhabitants the village is known as Hatila. The village is discussed below according to baris.

4.4.1 West Hatila (North Para):

Khan bari: It is the homestead of Khan lineage or descendants. They trace their origin from landed aristocratic class. This is a traditional Unchu bari in this village. They were managing this part of the village and they had some subordinate people to serve them. They take pride in their noble origin. But with the growth of time they are not at the full control of the 'Para'. Only the members who could maintain their economic solvency due to educational attainments or by other means are holding earlier status. Generally they would not establish matrimonial relations with other common villagers. But now-a-days the poorer section of the bari is establishing matrimonial relations with the rising group in the village. The members of the bari having education are found to be modern, change-oriented and less superstitious.

Munshi bari and Haji bari: These two baris are religious oriented. They are God fearing and tradition bound people. They have matrimonial relations with the Khan bari. In spite of traditional origin members having education are found to be modern, change-oriented and participating although some reservations are there.

Chyal bari: Chyal means one who constructs huts or make agricultural tools or household furniture out of bamboo. The members of this bari trace their origin from a chyal. This is a traditional Nichchu bari in this locality. But some members of this bari by dint of their physical labour acquired a considerable amount of land property. Some of them are richer than many of the Khans. But they cannot get matrimonial relations with the Khan bari. The members who got educated can get married into Unchu bangsha outside the village but not in the same village. Educated members of this bari preferred a change. There is a change in their dress, manner, dietary habit also.

Chakun bari: This bari is named after late Chakun Ali. Possibly he came of nichchu bansha (low family status) as he had no matrimonial relations with the traditional Unchu bansha of the village though he had a big land property. He was known in the locality for his land property. But he did not care for educating his children. At his death his descendents could not maintain the land property he left for them. They are poor, illiterate and neglected in the village.

Karim bari: This is a big bari with a large population. The inhabitants claim their traditional religious origin. But this is lost now. This bari named presently after one Mr. Karim who became very rich out of his bidi industry. His two sons are also highly educated. His elder son was elected member of the union council in the 1964 election. The educated from this bari are found to be modern, change oriented. There is a village 'sardar' (leader) from this bari.

Mazumdar bari: This bari is traditional and members are pious. Most of the members got religious education. They are not very much interested in village affairs. A faction of this bari got rich after independence in 1971 by acquiring land property. But they could not attain social status because of their ill-manner and greediness. They are not getting education for their children. They prefer agricultural modernization as it brings them money. They do not prefer birth control measures.

Khasher bari: This is a religious oriented traditional Unchu bari. Though they are religious but modern educated persons are found to prefer changes.

Chowkidar bari: In Bengali the word 'Chowkidar' stands for watchman. This is a traditional nichchu bari in

village social hierarchy. Most of the members are illiterate, poor. They have no important role to play in the village. Both physically and socially they give a poor look.

Talunna bari: The name of this bari does not carry any meaning of social origin. They are a traditional nichchu bari. But their status is changing as some members got educated and financial solvency. There is a village 'sardar' from this bari. Now this bari is countable in the village. Educated found favouring a change.

Satrani bari: The title of this bari does not carry any social significance. They are traditional nichchu bari. But the first graduate of West Hatila comes from this house. Hence this bari got a social status. Educated are holding good position with the Government. Educated of this bari preferred changes.

Raiter bari: The name of this bari does not carry any social significance. Once they were at the bottom of the social hierarchy in the village. But presently this bari gained both financial strength and education. One village politician hails from this house. One educated boy of this bari got married into Khan bari by playing village politics. This bari is important

in village affairs. There is a change in values and attitudes of the educated.

Ekū hafiz bari: This house is named after one Mr. Ekū who was a 'hafiz' means who could learn Quran by heart. None of the members of this bari is educated upto S.S.C. level, one person from this house is expert in village affairs.

Majid bepari bari: This is not a traditional unchu bari. This is named after one Mr. Majid who was a tradesman. Inmates of this house are generally illiterate. They are found to be traditional and fatalistic.

Sardar bari: 'Sardar' means leader. This is a traditional unchu bari. They are known for their land property and physical strength. This bari is important in village affairs. There is one village 'sardar' or 'Pradhan' from this bari. Educated are found to be modern and favoured changes.

These are the constituent baris of north para of West Hatila. Once this para was managed by the members of unchu baris but now-a-days, their authority is challenged by the members of other baris having wealth, education, physical strength or otherwise important.

The educated irrespective of family origin are found to be modern, less superstitious, participating and support the trend of change.

4.4.2 South Para (West Hatila):

Akond bari: This is a traditional Unchu bangsha bari. They trace their origin from moslem aristocracy. Now a days their traditional status has been waned out. Those who can manage service or business are maintaining earlier status. Once they were very important bari in this para. The present Gram Pradhan, a new socio-political venture of the late President for local self-government, has been elected from this house. Inspite of traditional background educated members of the bari are found to be modern and change oriented.

Pradhan bari: This is a large size bari in respect of population. They are not of traditional Unchu bangsha. Some members of the bari gained status by virtue of education and village politics. One member of the bari has been elected a member of Union Council for consecutive two terms. Educated persons are found to be change oriented.

Budher bari: This is a traditional 'nichchu bari'. This

house is not counted much in the village. Inmates are poor, illiterate, superstitious.

Patwary bari: This is a traditional unchu bari. But presently this is a decaying house. Only a few members are educated. Educated are found to be modern and change oriented.

Aftabuddin Patwary bari: This bari is named after the man concerned. He is not a descendent of the Patwary. Sometimes out of curiosity the villagers give certain nomenclature to a person or bari. Aftabuddin might have been keeping good contact with the Patwary or he might be replicating the ways of Patwaris. In this way he might be called Patwary fictitiously. Sometimes out of criticism also such a title is conferred upon a person. Anyway, this is a nichchu bari. Education had no headway in this group.

Ibrahim mistry bari: This is the name after one Ibrahim who was a carpenter. This bari has physical name also as Bailler bari. They are traditionally nichchu bari. Some educated persons got better status. Educated found to be change oriented.

Samir Uddin bari: This bari bears the name of one Samir Uddin. This is a traditional nichchu bari.

Majority of the members are illiterate^s. This bari bears no significance in the village affairs.

Quazi bari: Quazis held prestigious social status in the Moslem royal court as judges. Though the members of this bari trace their origin from a quazi but now they are found socially degrading. They have no cultural heritage either material or non-material. They deal in fishes. Dealing in and catching fishes for marketing are regarded as down graded profession in these villages in particular and Bangladesh in general. Most of the members are illiterates.

Tina gazi Mazumder bari: Though this bari has the nomenclature of mazumder but it is a nichchu bari like that of Aftabuddin Patwary. Most of the inhabitants are either illiterate or primary educated.

Haji bari: Like the Haji bari of the north para, this is a traditional Unchu bari. There are many educated persons in this bari. Though every faction of the bari could not keep pace with the changing time, the bari in general demands a high status and position in the village. There are more than one 'sardar' or 'Pradhan' from this bari. Educated are found to be modern and

prefering changes.

Bakaul bari: This is a religious oriented traditional high status bari. They are known for their better standard of living though they are not very rich. They bear a cultural heritage. Educated persons are found to be modern and prefering changes.

Chyal bari: Unlike the Chyals of the north para this bari is insignificant in the village. Almost all the inhabitants are illiterates, poor. There are some beggars also in this bari.

Mazumder bari: This is a large size bari divided into many parts. This is a traditional unchu bari. This bari holds importance in the village. There are some village sardars or pradhans from this bari. Earlier there were some union level leaders from this bari. Educated persons are found modern and preferred for a change.

Thus, in this para there are both Unchu and Nichchu baris. Educated persons irrespective of bari status are found to be modern and change-oriented.

4.4.3 East Hatila:

Chowdhury bari: This bari trace its origin from feudal

origin. This is the traditional unchu bari. The construction of this bari is different from other bari of the village. There are many brick-built houses in this bari. In the village affairs they had a last word. They have no matrimonial relations within the village. The mias of Tangirpar and these Chowdhuris are related with each other. But with growth of time, abolition of zamindary system, introduction of democratic polity, mass education their traditional authority is challenged by other groups. Majority of the members both male and female of this bari are educated. Though some members are still holding traditional views but members with education are found to be modern and change oriented.

Khundaker bari: They trace their origin from priestly class. This is a traditional unchu bari. Now a days they have lost their earlier reputation. They could not keep pace with the modern education. After the death of an important personality the bari had a social scandal. Generally they are found traditional and less change-oriented.

Mader bari: This is a landed aristocratic bari. The village Primary school is located in the vicinity of this bari. Of course, education could not make a

major break through in this bari. Only a few got educated. Educated are found modern.

Khaser bari: This bari is divided into two parts. This bari is known for their orthodoxy. There is a controversy over some of their religious rites and rituals. Even modern educated of these bari are not so modern in comparison to the educated of other baris, they try to maintain a distance from other parts of the village.

Mridha bari: This is a traditional Unchu bari. There is a village 'sardar' from this bari. Educated persons are found to be modern and change-oriented.

Pradhan bari: This is a traditional nichchu bari. There is a village 'sardar' from this house. Educated from this bari found to be modern and change-oriented.

Muharam ali Moulvi bari: This is named after Moulvi Muharam Ali. This is a traditional nichchu bari but due to this moulvi (religious educated person) it got some status. This is not so important in village affairs. Inhabitants are mostly illiterates.

Abjaner bari: This bari is inhabited by the kept of some landed aristocratic family. They are known for anti-social activities. Almost all the members are illiterates.

Adam ali Patwary bari: This name originates from one Mr. Adam ali who gained social status by good manners. Though originally this is a nichchu bari but now they are holding important position in village hierarchy. Some members got educated. Educated favoured a change.

Mazumder bari: Though mazumders in the district of Comilla are aristocratic family, this bari is not traditional aristocrat. It is said they are the descendents of the concubine of the Chowdhuris of the village. But now they are the best known bari in the whole of the locality as some of the members are highly educated and hold very important positions with the government. Members of this bari are found modern and change oriented.

Mirza bari: Mirzas are the aristocratic family in the Muslim society. The general members of this bari are not in a position to maintain their earlier status but educated are maintaining the status. Educated are modern, participating.

Bhuiya bari: This bari is divided into many parts. It is a traditional aristocratic (unchu) bari. There are both religious and modern educated persons in

this bari. Modern educated persons are found to be modern, participating and change oriented. There is a village 'sardar' from this bari.

Mullah bari: This is a religious oriented unchu bari like Khundekar. There was a renowned personality in this bari. After his death, the descendents could not maintain the status. Most of the members are illiterates. Some of them are involved in anti-social activities.

Quazi bari: Though quazis are noble descendent but this quazi bari is not a traditional unchu one. Education could make no headway in this bari.

Chowkidar bari: This is a traditional nichchu bari. There is no change in their status as they could gain neither education nor wealth.

Munshi bari: This is a traditional unchu bari because of their religiosity. Educated persons are found to be modern and preferring changes. There is a village 'sardar' from this house.

Fazal bepari bari: This bari is named after a petty tradesman Fazal by name. It is a traditional nichchu bari. But this bari is important as some members

acquired considerable wealth and education. Educated are found to be modern and change-oriented. There is a village leader from this bari.

Gedu bepari bari: This is a traditional nichchu bari with a large population. Because of their numerical strength they are holding importance in the village affairs. There is one village 'sardar' from this bari. There are some educated persons who preferred change.

Jalal Uddin Karati bari: This is a traditional nichchu bari and bears the name of a person who would cut timber with saw. There are some educated persons who are found to prefer a change.

Hamid Ullah bepari bari: This is a traditional nichchu bari. Some educated members are there in this bari. Educated are found to prefer for a change.

Sit qazi bari: This is a traditional nichchu bari. This bari holds no importance in the village. There is one educated person who is found to be modern to some extent.

Hanjer baper bari: This is a traditional nichchu bari with a large population. Some of the members are considerably rich, by land property. There are some educated

persons in this bari. The local high school is very close to this bari. Though traditionally of nichchu origin, this bari is very important in the village. There is a village 'sardar' from this bari. Educated are found to be change oriented.

4.4.4 Summary:

In brief, this is the short description of the baris and their social status in this village of Hatila. In earlier times land, birth were the determinants of social status, power and authority. The Chowdhuris in collaboration with the Khans, Khundakers, Bhuiyas, Patwaries, Mazumdars had the absolute authority over the village affairs. With the growth of time this traditional power, authority and status are decaying and facing challenges from other groups. Education, political movement, democratic polity helped the general villagers to take part in village affairs with a changed role and status. Irrespective of bari origin educated are found to be modern, and preferring changes in the village communities. The society is changing from ascribed status to achieved one.

4.5 THE VILLAGE OF HARIAN:

Nothing can be said definitely as to the origin

of this village. But its physical settlement and land arrangement show it to be very close to West Hatila. Actually West Hatila and Hariain look alike hence they may have same origin. Generally villages are demarcated by their agricultural land from each other, as for example Hatila and Tangirpar. But there is no such apparent demarcation line between Hariain and Hatila (West). Of course, there is separate official record for villages narrating area and boundary.

The village is discussed according to bari in brief for a general view. The village is divided into West Para (part) and East Para (part).

4.5.1 West Para:

Mirza bari: This is a unchu bangsha (high family) bari in this village. They trace their origin from a religious saint. Their bari is separated from the whole of the village. They have their own separate agricultural land grazing ground independent of the village. They can look after their family affairs without others help. They can be compared to some extent to that of agraharam of Sripuram (Beteille; 1966). Earlier, they had no matrimonial relations within the village.

Of late, they had established some marriage connections with the mizi bari, another unchu bari of the village. Except one fraction, the whole of the bari is decaying. The present union council member, an educated person, hails from this bari. He is maintaining the earlier status of the bari. The educated are found modern and change oriented though they are conscious of their earlier status.

Mizi bari: This is a unchu bari but they are decaying, due to the loss of land property, population pressure, lack of general education. Only a few members of the bari are educated who are maintaining previous status. The present 'Gram Pradhan' is elected from this bari. He is an educated person. Some of the members got modern education and they are found to be modern and preferring changes.

Chyal bari: This is a traditional nichchu family in village social hierarchy. But due to land property and numerical strength this bari is countable in the village. There are two traditional 'sardars' from this bari as they are otherwise important (Beteille; 1966). But this bari had a personality whose sons are highly

educated, obtaining foreign degrees also. They are holding important positions with the government. Due to educational attainments they are holding high status not only in the village but in the thana (taluka) also. The educated are found to be modern, participating and change oriented.

Chowkidar bari: This is a traditional nichchu bari. They are illiterates. They are superstitious and tradition bound.

Haji bari: Originally this is a traditional nichchu bari. But around 1945 one gentleman performed 'Haj' at Mecca gaining a status for the house. Now this bari is named as haji bari. His son and grandsons are also educated. Some members of the bari acquired some wealth working as semi-skilled workers in Dacca. Educated are found to be modern and change oriented. There is one person who is an expert in village politics.

Dighir Par bari: This bari is so named as it is situated on the bank of a big pond (dighi). The residents of this bari are not from the same descendents. People from different villages settled here buying

land. One faction of this bari is of better descent. Most of the people of this bari are illiterates. There are two primary educated persons who are active in village politics. They are considered important in the village. They are participating in public works and found to be modern to some extent.

4.5.2 East Para:

Hafiz bari: The residents of this bari are the descendants of the renowned saint. This is a traditional unchu bari. But its earlier status is decaying as the members are not educated except of a faction. Some members are involved in anti-social activities. The educated section is maintaining status. Though of religious origin educated are found modern and change oriented.

Khalifa bari: The residents of this bari trace their origin from a tailor (Khalifa). This is a traditional nichchu bari. But the residents of a faction of the bari are highly educated both males and females. They are very important in the village and locality. Of course, due to many social scandals their prestige has come down recently. The educated members of the bari are modern and change oriented. There is a 'sardar' from this bari.

Bhuiya bari: Bhuiyas are traditionally unchu bari in Bangladesh rural community. But this bhuiya bari is totally forgotten in this village. They have lost all their land property. Almost all the members are illiterates. There are some social scandals within this bari. Residents are superstitious, traditional.

Pandit bari: The ancestor of this bari was a Pandit (Guru, teacher). He had a better status in the village. But his son was involved in a serious scandal with a widow in the same bari. The social status of the bari came down. There is 'sardar' from this bari. The educated are found to be modern and change oriented.

Daiyar bap bari: This is a traditional nichchu bari. Some members of this bari gained social status due to serving the defence force (Army). There was a 'sardar' from this village.

Sardar bari: This bari has no importance in the village. The residents are neither educated nor rich. Many members are engaged in anti-social activities. They are found illiterate, superstitious and traditional.

Konar bari: This bari is situated in a corner of the village, hence it is called Konar bari (Kona = corner).

This is a traditional nichchu bari. Most of the residents are engaged in manual works. Almost all the members are illiterates. At present a litigation is running with a woman of this bari for a scandal with a member of Pandit bari and other from Khalifa bari.

4.5.3 Summary:

In brief, this is the description of the village Hariain. Comparatively traditional unchu baris are still dominant in the village as they are educated also. Irrespective of bari origin educated are holding high status in the village. Educated are found to be modern, change-oriented and participating.

4.6 THE VILLAGE OF TANGIRPAR:

The name of this village, as it could be collected from the experienced old villagers, stands for 'tang' meaning something like tent floating on water. As to the origin of this village, it is said, that the original inhabitants of this village migrated from nearby Noakhali district. It is said that these people fled away from their ancestral home out of the torture of the feudal oppressors. These helpless people settled in this village and as they could not erect a house

they started their life in 'tang'. In this part of Bangladesh, as mentioned earlier, the whole area goes under deep water during the monsoon. The dwellings are to be constructed raising the baris by digging ponds as a protection from flood. Initially these people could not do so hence they started their life in the tent (tang) floating on water. The word 'Par' stands for a place generally on the banks of canal, river or pond. The meaning of the word 'Tangir Par' is the place of 'tang' (tent).

This village is well known as it is the abode of the local zamindars. The zamindars established the local "Tangirpar Hatila Union High School" in the year of 1945 as a junior high school, on their own khas land. They bore all the recurrent and non-recurrent expenditure at the initiation of the school. The initiation came from a young educated member of the mia bari. The school is government aided one. The school managing committee is consisted of the members from all the surrounding villages. The founder, now an advocate by profession, acts as Secretary of the Committee. The school has a reputation for good schooling. Baris of this village are described in brief to have an idea of the village in general.

4.6.1 Bari:

Mia bari: As mentioned earlier it is the house inhabited by the ex-zamindar family. The bari is divided into as many as five parts. The bari has a panoramic view from the south facing the vast agricultural field. There are many houses in this bari built of bricks. The bari has abundant gardens filled with plants for fruits and flowers. There are many ponds both big and small filled with different types of fishes, in the bari.

The social life of this family is different from the whole of the village. Virtually there was a time when the whole village and people were directly or indirectly subordinate to them. This can be compared as mentioned earlier, with the 'agraharam' (Beteille, 1966). They do not keep matrimonial relations with the village except the bhuiyas of the same village and the chowdhuris of Hatila. In fact the ancestor of the chowdhuris of Hatila was brought here by this mia family giving their daughter in marriage and offered the house (chowdhury bari) as a dowry.

Once the village was under their authority. With growth of time their earlier status is changed.

Either they are challenged by villagers or they keep themselves aloof from the village affairs directly. Most of the members of this bari are literates. Educated are found to be modern, participating and change oriented. Of course, some educated persons hold traditional views also.

Bhuiya bari: This is a landed aristocratic house. Their social status is almost at par with that of mia bari. This bari has a comparatively small population. Almost all the members are educated. Educated are found to be modern and change oriented, more or less. There is one educated person who ploughs his land himself with a tractor.

Patwary bari: The patwaris are supposed to be aristocrats in this locality. But this patwary bari is not so reputed one as they might have been of subordinate status under the mighty mias. Now a-days, due to education they are important in the village. Educated are found to be modern and preferring for changes. There is a village sardar from this bari.

Pradhan bari: This bari has a large population. They are not of traditional unchu status. But presently

They are only next to mia bari in importance in the village. There are many rich and educated persons in this bari. There is an influential village leader from this bari. Once he was elected a member of the Union Council/Parishad. Educated are found to be modern and change oriented.

Makram ali bari: This is a traditional nichchu bari. The inhabitants are poor, illiterate, superstitious.

Fateh Ali bari: This is a traditional nichchu bari. The inhabitants are poor. There are some educated persons who are more or less modern and change-oriented.

Bara bari: This is a traditional nichchu bari. This is a large bari. This bari is getting importance in the village as some members got educated. Educated are found to be modern and change oriented. There is one 'sardar' from this bari.

Maizer bari: The name of this bari indicates its location in the centre of the village. This is a traditional nichchu bari. Now a days some persons acquired some land property. Educated are found to be modern and preferring changes. There is a 'sardar' from this bari.

Uttar bari: This bari is not a traditional unchu one. But now a days this bari is getting some importance. Educated of the bari are modern and change oriented.

Gowal bari: This is a traditional nichchu bari. Most of the inhabitants are illiterates. This bari is not socially important in the village.

4.6.2 Summary:

In brief, this is the description of the village Tangirpar according to bari. Once the village affairs would be managed by the traditional unchu bari. The mias and bhuiyas form the traditional unchu bari. Other villagers were directly and indirectly dependent on them. But now a days with the abolition of zamindari system, introduction of democratic polity, mass education, members of other baris also attained some status in the village. Now a days irrespective of traditional status people with education and other qualities are getting importance. Educated are found modern and change-oriented.

4.7 THE VILLAGE OF NOAPARA:

This is a small village. In Bengali, the word 'noa' means new and para means place. Noapara, then,

stands for new place. Actually this village is an extension of Tangirpar village. Socially, economically and culturally it is related to Tangirpar. But census and other official documents treat it as a separate village. Originally, it appears, the residents were people who would work for the feudal family of Tangirpar mia bari. Some outcaste members of the mia bari were also accommodated in this village. Baris are described below.

4.7.1 Baris:

Asgar mia bari: This bari is named after one Mr. Asgar who was a descendent of the mia bari of Tangirpar. He and his family were made locale here because of the family intrigue of the mias or for some other reasons. This is a traditional unchu bari of the village. There are some educated persons in this bari. Educated are found to be modern and change oriented.

Fakir bari: The word 'fakir' stands for mendicant or religious person. The inhabitants of this bari trace their origin from such a person. But now a days there is no such religious person in this bari. Educated of the bari prefer a change.

Zamindar bari: The name of this bari indicates that this place was once belonged to the zamindar of Tangirpar (mia bari). They had given this place to these people either as a gift for their service or sold to them. Most of the inhabitants are illiterates. There are some persons with land property. They are found to be traditional and superstitious. There are some literate persons who prefer a change.

4.7.2 Summary:

The village Noapara seems to be an extension of the village Tangirpar. Both the villages are related to each other in day to day affairs. Comparatively the number of literates is less in Noapara village. However, literates are found to be modern and preferring for changes.

4.8 TWO CASE STUDIES:

Two case studies are presented to identify the impact of education as an agent of social change in these four villages of Bangladesh, as collected the researcher through his field works. Both the sketches are of persons having almost same background except one is illiterate and the other is educated upto graduation. The fictitious name for the illiterate

person is 'Khalil' and 'Sharif' for literate one.

Both Khalil and Sharif are of same age of 35/36. Both of them are coming from agricultural families. Both of them have about 3 acres of land. Both of them are married and maintain their independent families with wives and children. Khalil is a cultivator and Sharif is a school teacher. Both of them reside in the same village. Both of them have illiterate fathers.

Superstitions: Khalil invites mullah at the time of sowing and harvesting. He does not start any important work on Saturdays and Tuesdays. Out of the twenty questions asked on superstitious beliefs and practices he applied in affirmative for all the questions. He is found superstitious. In contrast, Sharif replied in the negative for almost all the items except some replies on religious orientation where he showed some reservations as for example, calling "Azaan" for stopping cyclone/storm.

Modernity: Khalil is not generally concerned about social problems very much. He does not prefer schooling for girls. He does not favour new experiments. He appreciates one's high family (unchu bangsha) background as a basic quality. He takes God's help as the most

important future. He does not support to limit the number of children voluntarily as it is a sin for which he will have to face God at the great day of judgement (Keyamat/Hashar). He does not think that a man can be good without any faith in religion, at all. He is not connected to any social organization. To him food problem is the most important problem of the country. He never reads a news paper as he is illiterate, neither he is interested in listening the news. In contrast, Sharif is frequently concerned with social problems both local and national, favours equal schooling both for boys and girls alike, favours new experiments, takes higher education and special knowledge as the basis for holding high office and social prestige. He thinks that hard work of the people is the most important for the future of the country, favours limitation of the number of children voluntarily as a necessity. He likes a stranger and believes a man can be good without having any religion. He is attached to local social and rural development works and holds the view that population growth and illiteracy are the biggest problems for the country. He reads newspapers almost daily as it is available in the school.

Family and Marriage: None of them favours more than one wife. Khalil feels that rituals and ceremonies are part and parcel of marriage and they should be maintained. He prefers marriage age for boys should be 20 years and for girls as soon as they get puberty, or it will be shameful for the parents. He supports the dowry system though he himself is not in a position to pay the same without selling the land property. He feels 'Kabin' (marriage deed registration) is a secondary matter for marriage. He wants 'Purdah' should be maintained strictly or God will burn the womenfolk in the hell after death. In family affairs he is the supreme authority and hardly cares for wife for a decision. He supports 'Quranic' law for the distribution of property amongst sons and daughters. He favours a joint family. He is of the opinion that if girls choose their own marriage partners it would be a shame for the parents or guardians and it creates social scandal. He cited such a scandal, according to him, in his village. However, he confirmed that the couple was happy after marriage. He neither adopts nor supports family planning measures as it is against God's will. In contrast, Sharif

favours and adopts family planning measures and a small family. He will allow his children to choose their marriage mates. The above mentioned marriage scandal to Khalil was not a scandal to Sharif rather he appreciated as the couple was found happy. He rather cited a marriage event as uncommon in which parents forced a girl to marry a certain person. He wishes that girls should be treated equal to the boys in all aspects including the right of property. Sharif takes education and personal qualities as the basis of marriage selection and Kabin should be registered as a right of women. He thinks that marriage should be simple without unnecessary rituals and expenditure, and there should be no dowry. He prefers marriage age for boys should be 26 to 30 years and for girls around 20 years. Sharif holds the view that women should maintain their own sanctity but should not always confined to house under strict 'purdah' and they should be allowed to hold positions in the public life.

Educational affairs: To Khalil economic security is the principal goal of education. He does not prefer 'school education for females. He thinks that 'Madrasah' scholars should not compromise with school education and the impact of school education on madrasah education is not good. He thinks that traditional social

values are breaking down and it is not good for society. He thinks that earlier days were golden. He does not favour co-education. About adult education, he holds the view that it is the fancy idea of the government for vote. Sharif, in contrast, feels that adult education is the crying need of the day and co-education can run. He thinks that society is changing and though apparently there are problems but ultimately they will be solved. He takes change for better. He thinks school education has an impact on 'madrasah' education and its consequences will be good for society. Sharif takes education as a means to be cultured and good citizen of the country.

Religiosity: Khalil says his 'namaz' (Prayer) five times daily. He prefers to visit 'Pirs', 'dargah' and does not like the use of machine for religious purposes as performing Hajj by aeroplane. He distributes his 'zakat', 'sadqah' to mosque and madrasah. He thinks that fate is pre-determined by God, man can not change it. He believes that having no children at all or no male child is a curse from God to the oppressors. He cited example in this respect. He takes floods, epidemics as 'gajab' (curse) from God to punish the

unbelievers. He prefers a religious life and beliefs that religion can improve one's fortune. Khalil does not prefer artificial animal insemination and takes it anti-god act. In contrast, Sharif thinks that man's life is not pre-determined and it can be changed by his own endeavour. To him having or not having a child is biological not a curse from God. He is not very regular in observing religious rites and rituals but he thinks that modern technological devices can be used for religious purposes. He distributes his 'zakat' 'sadqah' to poor relatives and neighbours and for social works like construction of roads, bridges, establishment of schools. He thinks that artificial animal insemination is very necessary in these days. He does not believe that epidemics or cyclone, floods, droughts etc. are created by God rather they are due to germs or environment or change in weather cycles. Sharif also does not believe that religion can improve one's fortune and he prefers an activist's life.

Occupations: Khalil prefers agricultural occupations for his children. He prefers to buy land with the income if he has. He prefers loans from private sources rather than banks and co-operatives as banks

and other offices follow formal procedures and it takes time. He finds officials are not fair and he does not like to submit the documents to these officials. At the early stage he did not like the modern agricultural inputs and now he uses them as they increased production. He complains about irregularity and corruption in the distribution of agricultural inputs. Sharif, in turn, prefers, a non-agricultural job for his children. He spends his income to educate his children. He prefers loans from banks and co-operative societies. He adopts agricultural modernization inputs and believes it can make the country self-sufficient in food. He is actively associated with "Grow more food" campaign.

Social hierarchy and mobility: Khalil takes family background as the basic criterion for measuring one's social status. He thinks that certain Unchu (high) bangshas (families) are losing their status as they are getting poor. He does not like to have a modern sanitary latrine as it is not descent to have a latrine closer to dwelling houses. He has no contact with urban centres. Sharif, on the other hand, thinks that one's social standing depends on one's educational

and personal achievements. He explains that some unchu baris/bangshas (high families) are loosing their social status as they could not keep pace with modern changing society due to lack of education whereas some nichchu baris (low families) attained social status due to their educational attainments. He is optimistic in his attitudes towards this word. He prefer modern sanitary systems for health care. He has contact to the urban centres officially and through relatives and friends. He thinks that contact between urban and rural communities are good for the whole of society.

Polity and Participation: Khalil prefers that village leaders (Sardars) should be from traditional unchu (high) bangsha (family) and should be of old age. He is not very particular in exercising his right of voting and he does so according to somebody's influence. He is not interested in any public works. He has no communication with the rural development projects and takes this venture of the government to collect votes as mentioned earlier. But Sharif prefers the selection of leaders on the basis of their spirit of social work, education and other qualities. He is very particular in exercising his right of franchise

and participating in public and rural development works as 'Swanarvir' project (self-reliant) 'food for works' programme. He is related to national level political party. He has communication with leaders at local and national for personal and socio-political interests.

The foregoing profiles give a general view of the impact of education on attitudes, values, role and status of two villagers. Both the respondents had more or less same origin but they differentiated a lot due to educational attainments. These case studies show that education has an impact on society and it helps the societies to change. These facts will further be analysed in Chapter V in analysis and interpretation of whole data for the study.

4.9 SUMMARY:

Above discussions throw some light about the villages and villagers under study. The villages are under strain of change due to many factors both exogenous and endogenous. In former epoch traditional Unchu(high) family members would dominate the village affairs by their informal authority as that of brahmins in Sripuram (Beteille, 1966), 'Khandans' in Meherpur (Chowdhury, 1978), Chowdhuries in Nayanpur

(Karim, 1976). But presently irrespective of family background villagers with educational attainments, income, personal qualities, are found important in the village. Villagers with education irrespective of income, occupation, bari (family) status are found to be less superstitious, modern and change oriented in their attitudes, values and roles in the society.