

MID-TERM REPORT (February 1985)

Project Title: From Mercantile to Industrial Cultures

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As originally proposed, the strategic access to this project was to be through two communities, Jains and Parsis, with possible inclusion of others (especially Vaisnava Banias) depending on time, access, and evolution of the project. Ahmedabad was proposed as the primary research site for the Jains; Bombay as a second site, particularly for the Parsis.

The first half of the project has been a very rewarding exploratory series of initiatives. Upon arrival in Ahmedabad, I was pleasantly surprised to discover that in the last two years a series of complementary field projects (both in Gujarat and Rajasthan) have been launched, especially on the side of my project having to do with the Jain community. It appears that the entire field of Jaina studies is on the verge of an exciting transformation towards empirical and social anthropological understanding. This empirical interest moreover is not merely restricted to anthropologists, but seems to be a primary concern now of historians and textualists as well, which promises a well-rounded growth of the field. As a newcomer to Indian studies, I feel fortunate to be in on these developments. At the same time, it thus became even more urgent to attempt initially to get a broad feel for the community so as to situate and integrate these different efforts.

The project so far may be divided into two halves: A) Orientation: Sept-Nov; Ahmedabad, Rajasthan; B) More Detailed & Systematic Work: Dec-Feb.

A. Orientation: September - November

After an initial week in Delhi, the first month and a half in Ahmedabad involved the following initiatives:

1) Initial contacts with:

- a. leaders of the Jain and Parsi communities, particularly the heads of the Anandji Kalianji Pedhi and the Parsi Panchayat;
- b. leaders in the textile industry: current and former industrialists, the Mill-Owners Association, and the Ahmedabad Textile Industry Research Association (ATIRA)
- c. the academic community: M.S. University of Baroda, Ahmedabad Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Gujarat Vidyapith, the B.J. Institute of Indology, ATIRA, the B.M. Institute, and the L.D. Institute of Indology.

2) General orientation in Ahmedabad: viewing the Spodek film on Ahmedabad at the Alliance Française; exploring the historic sites of Ahmedabad; museums and cultural institutions: Calico Museum, Darpana Academy, Gandhi Ashram, Utensils Museum, etc.

3) Initial field trip outside Ahmedabad to Taranga Hills and Mehsana with the managing director of the Anandji Kalianji Pedhi, plus follow up interviews about this trust, and the pilgrimage sites under its management

4) Initial contact with Jaina sadhus and sadhvis, especially a group of Terepanthe nuns

5) Introduction to a relatively new Jain community with two temple-uprashaya complexes, several housing societies (roughly 400 households), a community of largely mid-level businessmen in the cloth and garments trade, many originating in the past generation from rural western Mehsana district



- 6) Visit and interviewing of management of a major Jain-owned textile mill
- 7) Observation of a series (3) of chppdi pujas located at different levels of society
- 8) Preliminary efforts to sketch genealogies of industrial elite families
- 9) Expanding a set of contacts in the professional stratum, especially among Jains who seem no longer so tightly tied into the traditional business-communal network
- 10) Participation in the general ceremonial events of Navrattri, Dassera, Divali, and Moharram
- 11) Locating language materials
- 12) Library work

In November a survey trip was taken to various sites in Rajasthan. The high points in terms of the research project were meeting a group of Digambara monks and their followers in Ajmer, meeting 3 Stanakvasi and Terepanthe acharyas and their followers in Jodhpur, plus visiting temples and pilgrimage sites in Osian, Jaisalmer, and Mt. Abu. Jaipur, Udaipur, and Chittorgarh were also visited: several contacts and leads in Jaipur, especially, were identified for potential follow-up.

#### B. More Detailed Work: Nov-Feb.

Nov.-Dec.: This period was utilized to expand the network of contacts through a series of interviews; and to begin a genealogical mapping of the old textile elite (Vaisnava as well as Jain). We were able to attend and closely observe a wedding. And more generally, we also made contact with several voluntary and Gandhian-inspired organizations through our Jain contacts. One of the more interesting of these is the work of the Jain monk Santabalji, who quite unlike other Jain monks, devoted himself to Gandhian work among (non-Jain) villagers.

Jan.: A trip to Bombay was used to initiate further contacts (and renew old contacts) among the Parsi community. We attended the World Zoroastrian Congress-- which provided a synopic view of current developments in the community; interviewed two Parsi industrialists; met four Parsi priests (interviewing one at some length); checked in at the Cama Institute of Oriental Studies, Zoroastrian Studies, and the Parsi Panchayat. We attended a Parsi wedding. All these occasions provided leads for a return to Bombay after March.

Jan.-Feb.: The period since our return from Bombay has seen a rapid deepening of our participation in the Jain community on three fronts:

- 1) Social organization:
  - a. new community formations: we have had an introduction now to a series (7) of new temples built in the last decade or so by new housing societies, and have participated in their activities
  - b. old caste organizations: we are in the process of collecting histories, statistics, and accounts of older forms of organization, especially at the moment: the Visa Oswals, the Desa Srimalis, and two "27 village" marriage circles
- 2) Economic organization:
  - a. further visits to large and small scale industries
  - b. initial visits to the cloth markets
- 3) Religious organization:
  - a. we have witnessed and interviewed participants in a series of rituals, most importantly a diksha, and a celebration of completion of 100 days ayambili fasting; also home shrines
  - b. we have gone with pilgrims to two important pilgrimage centers: Sankeshvar, and Mahudi-Vijaypur
  - c. in the course of this we have met a further series of (mainly Svetambar



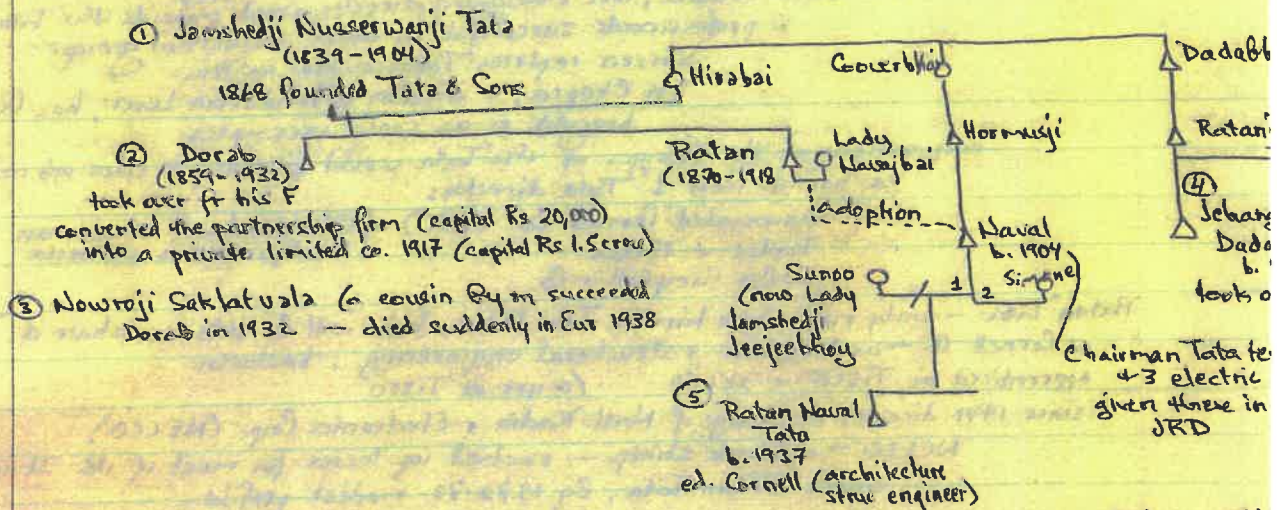
murti-puja) acharyas.

Concurrently:

- 4) Library work is proceeding
- 5) Translations (with a translator) of several historical documents and histories from Gujarati are being ~~done~~ done
- 6) Language classes are being pursued.



TATAS



Oct 1980, after 42 yrs at helm, JRD Tata launched a search for his successor: Oct 21 apptd Ratan Tata head (chairman) of Tata Industries (the flagship + w/ Tata Sons the head of the Tata group)

contenders (over past 30 yrs Tatas have nurtured a bank of top level executives):

- \* Nani Palkhivala, 62, constitution & tax lawyer, former Indian ambassador to the US
- \* Rusi Mody, 63, head of Tata Iron & Steel Co (TISCO)
- \* Sumant Moolgavkar, 75, head of Tata Engineering & Locomotive Co. (TELCO)
- Freddie Mehta, 53
- + Naval Tata, 77, the #2 man in the hierarchy (+ too old)
- \* Ratan Naval Tata, 44, son of Naval Tata (\* 2 key contenders)

Palkhivala - obstinate opponent of Mrs Gandhi, staunch supporter of Janata Party, w/ Mrs Gandhi back in power, + an indus group dependent on the goodwill of still has the stature & respect

vege of massive modernization & diversification programme (combined sales in 1980-81 crossed the Rs 2,000 crore)

wh will push them past the Birla group wh overtook them a few yrs ago in ass TISCO (Tatas prime unit) in next 3 yrs will spend > Rs 210 crore on moderniz ensuring at least 15% in current turnover of Rs 520.8 crore

TELCO in next 3 yrs will ↑ output fr 36,000 vehicles to 56,000 vehicles/yr Tata electric co.s - India's largest thermal power plant (will generate 500 mw) at Tro will double the supply generated by the 3 Tata power cos

a subsidiary of Tata Chemicals has planned 2 maj fertilizer plants (one pettochem, 1 u expert → almost double the group's present size over next 5 yrs

decentralized management - Tata's no longer an empire, more a commonwealth maj decisions trad decided by directors of Tata Industries & Tata Sons

both are private holding & investm cos closely held by the Tata family + charitable trusts floated by them

no longer have much legal power over the empire, but - old Boys club chief exec officers automatically are on board of Tata Indust a select few → board of Tata Sons

so Ratan Tata's election as hd of Tata Industries is a stepping stone → head but does not in itself assure how much power he will w

1970 (April 9) abolition of managing agency sys

tightly controlled Tata group reduced → nominal partnership

Tata Sons cont → dictate broad policy thro the directors & execs who were intensely loyal → JRD

Tata Sons holds only 3% of the shares of TISCO & TELCO (the 2 maj only 10% of Tata Oil Mills (TOMCO) + Tata Chem 10% in the electric companies

as 45% held by institutional lenders, banks, quasi-govt bodies privately owned blocks of shares in some units as much voting no real threat to JRD's hold - institutional vote trad supported him receives monthly reports on every Tata promoted co.

but is a historical & moral feature, not a legal rt + n increasing autonomy of units

TELCO - chairmanship 5 yrs ago → Moolgavkar, widely regarde responsible for growth & success - makes his own decis insiders claim he don't even take Tata sons Board mtg



Vallabhbhai - a Tata-promoted co., Tata Sons owns 18% (= largest private block)  
chairman Atmar Hydari is a non-Tata man  
recent aptd of Sareen fr ITC as chief exec } likelihood will cease  
A.H. Tobaccowala, last managing director, went outside the Tata hierarchy } to be Tata fieldman  
& professionals successful in other industrial groups:  
Sareen replaces Tobaccowala as Pres  
SK Chopra, a director of Hindustani Lever, has been  
brought in as senior vice-pres.

corporations on the fringes of the Tata world following its ethos w/o actually its policies  
ea has at least 1 Tata director:

Associated Cement Co. (ACC) } Palkhivala is chairman  
Rallis & Forbes } Moolgookar is a director  
Forbes Campbell & Co.

Ratan Tata - only man above him as Tata Indus chair will be JRD as chair of Tata Sons  
at Cornell U. - architecture & structural engineering; bachelor  
apprenticed in TISCO & ILLCO (6 yrs at TISCO)

since 1971 director in charge of Natl Radio & Electronics Corp (NELCO)

NELCO - a black sheep - racked up losses for most of its 31 yrs  
under Ratan Tata, by 1972-73 modest profits

by mid 75 1/2 its accumulated losses wiped out  
consistently growth rate of 40%/yr

recession during Emergency - again -> red

bailed out of a 7-mo lockout by a massive injection of funds

(ie - baptism of fire for Ratan)

1977 given charge of century old Central India Spinning, Weaving & Manufacturing Mills  
w/in 3 yrs under Ratan - ageing co had written off its accumulated losses  
& posted profits of Rs 1 crore

until crippling recession in textile units this yr again -> red

Nov 1979 made vice-chair of sick Tata Mills in hopes of turning that co. around

interview w/ C.U. Singh & S. Dubey -

Sees his task as putting together strategic planning, not binding, but  
rationalizing consideration of opportunities

at present ideas are taken up hit & miss: if foreign mfd comes

asking if Tatas would be interested in it, no mechanism to

consider it, merely given to an individual co. to consider

which may have other things on their mind & the idea then

surfaces w/ the Kirloskars or Hindustans

acknowledgment -> JRD has been the glue holding Tatas together

but thinks a similar bond can be recreated if Tatas is seen as

promoting new business areas - if stagnant, the units will go

their own ways

JRD - aural anecdote of his Guinness process, unwavering indus instinct, & compassionate humanism,  
credited w/ putting Tata group firmly on intercont map

pioneer flyer who brought commercial aviation

patron of art world, & building up active Tata charitable trusts

b. 29 July 1904 to Ratanji Dadasaheb Tata & his fr wife Suzanne Briere, in Paris

Ratanji had some differences w/ his cousin & partner Sir Dorab Tata

& so moved -> Fr where he ran a small trading house & export firm

at Bombay's Cathedral School (vacations in Fr), 2 yrs during WW I in Yokohama, rel -> Fr

wh conscripted into army: 1924 in crack cavalry Regiment in Algeria.

apprenticed to John Peterson, the Scotsman who ran Tata Steel in the 1920s

Peterson put a desk in his own rm & for 5 yrs every paper & passed across Peterson's

desk was routed thro JRD; JRD was included in every discussion & interview

1926 Ratanji d & JRD inherited a seat on the Board of Tata Sons

by 1938 when Sir Nevrosji Saklatvala died, JRD had jockeyed himself -> position of  
head of the board

1929 - 1st Indian -> obtain a commercial pilot's licence

1930 - he & Aspy Engineer (to be 2nd chief of the air force) were competing

for the Aga Khan Trophy offered -> the 1st Indian to fly Bhu India + Eng

when JRD landed at Aboukir, Eg, found a creditfallen Engineer stranded fr lack

of a spark plug - JRD gave him a plug, Engineer beat him -> Eng

JRD quipped later "I'm glad Aspy won because it helped him get into the Indian Air Force"



Nagar Brahmins claim → Be highest in hierarchy order  
nagar Str residing in city

officials at Shival's secret  
descend & Nag → Brahmins from  
chased by snake charmers

Shrivali

↳ Shrivali or Bhinmal 80 km W of Mt Abu divid Dasa, Uba, Paraha Ladva  
6-9th cent → capital of old Gujjar Kdom S. Marwar

Oswal Baria

descend. ↳ Solanki Kings of Anhilwada (AD 942-1249)  
divid Dasa, Uba, Paraha

Porwad - suburb of Shrivali

Jain Baria { Oswal, Porwad, Shrivali, Umad

also Vaishnavas

Chaulukya (Solanki) Ter (942-1304)

Mula Raja ↑ abdicated → son  
Chamunda 997-1010 preceptor Sda did at Vajapeya sacrif

of Parikh, RE - Intro  
Hist of Gujarat  
Majumdar - Chaulukyas  
of Gujarat

Jaya Simha 1094-1143 "Siddha Raja" the most glorious sovereign - pop hero  
built Jain temples at Sidhpur + Patan still refs in folklore

Devasuri (Svetambra) defeat Kumudachandra (R S, Rajeml.) 1125 AD  
narrated by poet Vashatkarna in play Mudrika-Kumudachandra

Hemachandra Suri composed grammar at req of K  
Siddha-Naya-Shaktanuchasara  
carried in procession

no son

also son Dyashraya - acts of Chaulukya Ks  
+ illue grammar

Kumarपाल (1143-

embraced Jainism in 1160  
built 1000 temples

several old Jain temples ascribed → him incl Ajitnatha on Taranga Hill

Hemachandra wrote several works at his req incl

Lives of 63 G Men  
d. 1173

Vastupal → ~~2122~~

Minister → Viradhavala (Rana of Dholka, a feudatory area as Chaulukya  
go patron of Jainism Family decayed)

Rama = 7th incarn of Vishnu (present)  
Krishna = 8th "

pushti marg - Vishnu Swami founder

propagated by Sri Vallabhacharya

love for god, devotion + elent of pleasure rejecting austerity

→ unseemly form

→ reformist sects Swaminarayanism (Shri Sahajanand Swami  
1781-1830)

Anasuya



Ambal

Sarala Devi

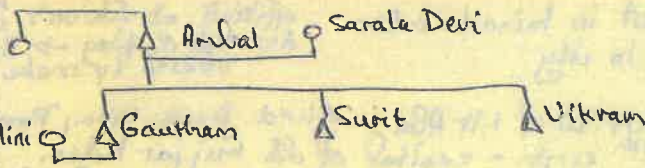
Narajivan Trust (Gandhi lit heirs)

Kamalini  
clinic

Gautham

Sunit

Vikram





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changes over 3 decades in cotton scene  
 public & coop sector w/ institutional finance ↑; private sector trade ↓  
 coop share in mfd yarn/cloth ↑; public mill takeovers  
 share of decentralized powerlooms & handlooms now > 60%  
 (cloth distrib trade - except quieter turnover - little change)

cotton = nearly 1/3 non-food crop area, import commercial crop in 10 states  
 labor intensive; now w/ high-yield varieties, India net exporter

of surplus long & extra long staple cotton  
 cotton textile indus employs 18% of total labor in mfd sector

25 lakh people employed in handloom & powerloom.

kapas (seed cotton), lint, yarn, cloth; cotton seed also → oil & cake

cotton & its prod.s earns 12% of India's total value of export:

1983-84 exported	knitted garments	Rs 1078 crores	fabrics	Rs 284 crores
	woven	" 663 "	cotton yarn	23 "
	made-ups	134 "	sewing thread	1 "

govt policies: Br laws re cultiv, mktting, ginning, pressing, transp etc  
 after WW II export mkt disrupted - floor price for cotton (→ price hike)  
 after Partition (maj cotton-prod areas went → Pak), decrease supply, price ↑  
 govt intro ceiling on cotton price → protect mfders  
 1960 govt abolished futures trade in cotton (→ stabilize price)  
 1965 RBI intro credit controls → contain & stabilize price  
 1970 govt establ Cotton Corp of India → streamline purchase, import + ex  
 1972 Maharashtra scheme for Monopoly Procurement of cotton  
 freezing of weaving capacity in mill sector → rapid growth handloom/powerloom  
 indus wh were the preserve of the private sector til last decade  
 is no longer dominated by them

1/3 of spinning capacity is in coop sector

state owned composite textile mills = 14% of total capacity

composite textile indus increasingly see sick despite avail cotton at reasonable prices

1983-84 alone: 21 mills closed

cotton occupies nearly 20 million acres of land - 25% of total world cotton area  
 but only 10% of production

low per acre productivity: 60 kg (vs 400 kg/acre in Egypt)

Pakistan's productivity is 100% higher than India's

due →: 80% of the crop is grown under rainfed conditions, much drought prone

for 33 lakh bales (1951-52) → 80 lakh bales (1983-84)

area under cotton stayed rel same: Btw 7.35 - 8.37 million ha

productivity doubled - new high yield varieties responsive → fertilizer

but not suited → rainfed areas

wide fluctuations in prod due → bch of monsoon

Gujarat, Maharashtra & Punjab = 60% of total cotton prod

fluctuations in prod pronounced in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu (rain-fed)

Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan - irrig - less fluctuation

Gujarat the largest producer - prod in lakh Bales of 170 kg ea

24.15 (1971-72), 14.65 (1972-73), 17.08 (1973-74), 14.55 (1974-75),

16.77; 16.30; 19.42; 21.01; 17.85 (1979-80)

(in area Maharashtra - largest producer = 1/3 cotton area

Gujarat 21%.

in productivity Punjab is 1st, the 5th in cotton area)

1979-80: kg/ha - Gujarat 177, Maharashtra 111, Punjab 326

Haryana 316, Rajasthan 211, Tamil Nadu 266, Andhra P 175

5 qualitative groups on basis of staple length

extra long 100% increase 1971-1980 (for 11.93 lakh Bales 170 kg ea → 22.87)

long & superior medium staple (6.91 → 6.96; 30.24 → 32.72)

decline in medium & short (10.06 → 5.92; 10.36 → 7.68)

medium staple primarily grown in Punjab, Haryana & Rajasthan under irrig  
 extra long & long staple primarily grown in GUJARAT, Maharashtra & T. Nadu - irrig



est. cost of prod Rs/Bale:

extra long	1700
long	1600
superior med	1400
med	1200
short	1000

} est on Gujarat, ~~Madhya~~, irrig  
 - est on Haryana irrig  
 } est on Gujarat + Maharashtra irrig

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est institutional credit for crop - assume 40% of farmers use institutional finance  
 those who use such finance get it for 50% crop area  
 75% of cotton crop gets institutional finance  
 aggregate institutional loans = Rs 21,285 million  
 gross cropped area = 415 million acres  
 area under cotton = 2e million acres  
 short term loan for cotton  $\frac{21285 \times 20 \times 0.75}{415 \times 24 \times .5}$   
 = Rs 3832 million or Rs 200/acre cotton

40-50% of variable costs in cotton prod met fr institutional credit

mill consumption of cotton rel stagnant since 1970s  
 Gujarat, Maharashtra + Tamil Nadu = 60% of cotton consumption  
 Centre of textile mills: Bom, A'bad, Madras incl 40% of imported cotton  
 consume of extra long staple of ind orig ↑ 12x last decade fr 226 thous Bales → 2742 " "  
 long + med staple ↑, short staple ↓  
 gen supply adequate, but short + med staple in short supply  
 1981-82 mills consumed 70.74 lakh Bales Indian + .5 lakh Bales foreign

India net export 6.47 lakh Bales - import .5 lakh Bales, export 6.97 (1981-82)  
 Kapas - Lint Sub Sys: assembly/bulking of kapas (seed cotton), ginning/processing, supply lint + mills

Kapas trade - large no. participants: big farmers, village traders, itinerant traders, taluka traders, gin owners, city lint merchants, bear agents, mill agents  
 place of transactions farms, shops, regulated + unreg mkt, gin yels etc  
 time - both pre + post harvest  
 price determination - auction, under cover, Bilat negot., tender  
 payment - immediate, adv of delivery (loans), after deliv  
 buyers are better informed > producers c mkt prices  
 quality judged by visual est.

lint trade - min unit of transaction = 100 bales (restrict # buyers)  
 both buyers + sellers equal access → mkt intellig (buyers more precise prices negotiated thru bilat discuss over samples)  
 financial dealings are formal - formal dispute resolution procedures

buyers of kapas - get it ginned + pressed, + sell mainly → traders

mainly taluka traders + ginners

city lint traders buy lint or kapas + sell → mills

mills buy direct fr farmers + get it ginned + pressed

ginning + pressing - unit gen located in small towns - most were private many coop sector last 2 decades  
 rates are fixed by Govt  
 most gin owners also in cotton trade + part of capacity used by them  
 max 15 days → gin + press 100 Bales (as little as 6 days)  
 av 3-4 days → assemble cotton for a lot of 100 Bales  
 1 roller gin in 8 hrs can prepare 1 bale of lint cotton  
 peak seas 2 shifts: 2 bales/gin - i.e unit w 25 gins can prod 100 bales  
 another day req → press the lint into Bales

village traders gen handle 500-1000 quintals of kapas/seas (Rs 2-5 lakhs/yr)

taluka " " 5-15 thous Bales = annual sales Rs 100-350 lakhs

gin owners " " 8-20 thous Bales = " " " Rs 200-500 "

city lint traders - buy kapas, get it ginned locally + sell → mills

10 such cotton firms in Bombay, operate in diff states thru agents/brokers

annual sales 20-50 thous Bales (Rs 500-1200 lakhs)

Coops - village or taluka coop common in Rajasthan, Karnataka, A.P., Punjab, T. Nadu

pooling coops - common in Gujarat + Karnataka (3-10 thous Bales)

state + natl marketing feds

Maharashtra Monopoly Scheme - farmers deliver cotton, graded, weighed, → gin

15 lakh Bales (Rs 35,000 lakhs)

Cotton Corp of India - buys cotton, has it ginned/pressed, sells → NTC mills

+ thru agents → private mills (15 lakh Bales - Rs 35,000 lakhs 1981-82)

Seasonality - harvested over a few mo of yr, but consumed thruout

av monthly consump by mills = c. 6.5 lakhs bales



G. Singh + S.R. Seetharaman 1951 - 2  
 arrivals Beg Sept when demand > supply  
 sit cont → Dec  
 Jan - May excess availability of cotton  
 Jun - Aug arrivals fall below requirements

Sept - Dec	15	26	lint (lakh bales)
Jan - Feb	20	13	by mills
Mar - May	40	20	
Jun - July	5	15	
Aug	-	7	

ie 3 mo (Mar-May) 50% of prod → mths; Jun-Aug cotton arrivals negligible  
 → cotton surpluses → be stocked for 5 months  
 cost of carrying cotton works → 2% / mo

114% godown charges  
 114% admin + incidental  
 11/2% for interest

# intermediaries ↓ - 2 decades ago many participants in cotton channel  
 today flight of private capital fr cotton  
 goals affect financial req: CCI role of buffer stock, guarantee min price → farmer  
 MHP remunerative price → farmer by passing on value added in processing + trade  
 private cotton firms: max. returns on capital invested  
 components of lending policy: interest rate, pledge, hypothecation limits, bill discounting

institutional finance for marketing

Limbdi, Gujarat - farmers beg selling standing cotton crop 3 mo before harvest  
 agree → supply x quantity at y price  
 traders may give loan if asked

Such sale of standing crops bec. unpopular

after harvest - traders while forming up purchases fr farmers simultaneously finalize sale contracts w/ lint traders  
 when farmer fails → deliver agreed quantity (due → low yield or wilful act) trader may exercise lien or ask for payment of money equivalent → undelivered amt

Kapas traders pay on the spot esp Beg of seas (in villages or mths)  
 sell → lint traders who pay immed or after a time  
 lint traders may give loans → kapas traders before the seas  
 → ensure supply of cotton  
 in excess supply periods, lint traders would delay payment → farmers, sometimes up → 3 mo

village kapas + taluka kapas traders do not get institutional finance  
 cannot take loan under pledge or hypothecation bec don't hold cotton  
 sell kapas soon after purchase, indeed oft pre-sell kapas  
 have nothing to pledge/hypothecate  
 depend on own resources/borrowings fr friends + relatives  
 may get loans fr lint traders

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Karjan, S. Gujarat - farmers deliver kapas → traders against post-dated cheques issued in the name of a stroff who is shown as the owner of the kapas  
 stroffs discount the cheques for the farmers  
 thus stroffs finance kapas trade at the expense of farmer

regulated markets in Punjab + Madhya (Muktsar, Abohar, Bhatinda) - pool sold auction  
 commission agents operate on farmers behalf + make payments immed → farmers  
 sometimes on peak or seas payments delayed few days depend financial position of comm agent  
 many comm agents also go on merchandising:  
 sell goods → farmers on credit (free of interest) on seas basis  
 in turn farmers sell all their crops thro them + keep the cash surplus w/ them  
 Comm agents also advance cash loans at market rates  
 may also own gin/press units + ∴ get adv of bank finance as well as farmers' deposits - help them finance cotton → lint stage

depend primarily on own resources + farmers' surpluses deposited w/ them  
 sales turn-over of these comm agents rapidly > 15 times  
 taluka lint traders get bank credit (get 50% of financial req from institutional sources)  
 other 50%: 1/2 fr open mkt + comm agents as loans (25-30%)  
 rest (20-25%) own funds

the adequate finance avail in market (Gujarat) traders restrict its use for fear it would expose their financial standing  
 whenever credit squeeze applied → contain price, lint traders w/draw fr buying as do kapas traders - farmers eager → dispose of cotton sell on credit  
 + when prices ↓, lint traders w/draw fr buying expecting prices → fall further again farmers sell on credit

ie in hi or low prod yrs, farmers finance the trade  
 RBI's selective credit controls have helped traders: get benefit of increase in price + finance fr farmers  
 stock turn-over of taluka lint traders Guj 4-5 times



in Punjab stock turn-over is 8-10 times  
 city (upcountry) lint traders - get credit of 1 mo fr sellers or Farmer's commission agents  
 cash sales also freq  
 get bank credit → 50% of their req  
 30-35% borrow fr open mkt  
 15-20% own capital

stock-turn over  
 8-10 times a year  
 sell cotton → mills raising hundies

When pressure → soft, extend credit of 3 mo to mills at 2% interest  
 Cotton Corp of India (CCI) - sales turn-over 1.6 - 3.3 x/yr  
 low turn-over + heavy borrowings (little own capital) → unprofit.

coops - different fr 1st decade → mobilize internal resources  
 once marketing stabilizer can gen " " thru compulsory/voluntary deposits fr members  
 145-yr old coop in Surat reg has share capital Rs 1 lakh  
 reserve fund of Rs 0.5 lakh, other funds of Rs 8.5 lakh  
 members compulsory deposits Rs 61 lakhs, voluntary Rs 16 lakhs  
 w/ regional bank borrowings, makes annual sales Rs 715 lakhs  
 most coops unable → utilize bank finance bec. of restrictive policies fr lend. → coops:  
 credit limits which mean low borrowing limits  
 no bill discounting - limit volume of trade  
 repayment w/in 90 days - limits duration  
 commercial rates - costly

city + taluka traders get 50% of their finance fr banks  
 cost of carrying 1 candy of cotton valued at Rs 5000 = Rs 200/mo (Rs 100 interest/storage + Rs 100 insurance/deterior.)  
 unit of transaction in lint mkt = 100 bales - own transaction = Rs 2.5 lakh  
 (vs edible oil unit of transaction is small + ultimate buyers are many)  
 credit in last few yrs fr banks stagnant

private traders still handle 60% cotton:

	Lakh bales of 170 kg		
	1970-71	1974-75	1981-82
CCI	0.11 (0.2)	0.33 (0.4)	11.12 (14.1)
HMP	-	17.66 (23.0)	17.36 (22.0)
coops	7.00 (11.7)	7.00 (9.1)	3.00 (3.8)
private trade	52.71 (82.1)	51.77 (67.4)	47.52 (60.1)
	59.82	76.76	79.00

of 805 textile mills (1983), 525 were spinning mills  
 308 " composite mills

1976: w/ view → encourage decentralized weaving activity, weaving capacity in composite mills frozen at 124 lakh spindles + 2.1 lakh looms

1976-83 no. of spindles in spinning mills ↑ fr 70.4 - 101.3 lakhs

68% of mills are in Gujarat, Maharashtra + Tamil Nadu  
 composite mills are conc. in Gujarat + Maharashtra

2 decades ago most mills in private sector - no longer: 120 sick mills notified last decade

6 mills (spinning) are in coop sector: 33 owned by weavers, rest by growers

95 cooperative spinning mills are at various stages of construction  
 Spinning mills required → supply 50% cone from (fr power loom) / fr coop sector, achieved  
 yarn 50% bank from (fr handlooms) / at aggr. level

6-10 days → process ← lot of cotton → yarn: 2-4 days - opening cotton, clean it, convert → slivers  
 4-6 " spinning

mill of 25,000 spindles considered viable - needs c 10-12 thous bales cotton/yr (1000/mo)

Textile Commissioner + RBI allow stock fr 3 mo req  
 but tend to stock 4-5 mo bec. Aug-Sept-Oct cotton arrivals almost dry up  
 get is per of heavy demand fr yarn: peak weaving fr festival mid-Aug on:

traders provide 2 mo extra credit facilities (at 2% interest per mo.)  
 fr 3 mo stock need Rs 120-135 lakhs - get 60% of this fr banks  
 (spinning mills w/ export commitment - stocking allowed → 5 mo)

marketing - peak per get orders in adv w/ payment  
 stock per sell yarn on credit - 15 days (lean per: 1 mo)

finished goods inventory turnover in spinning mill - c 8 times  
 channels - coop mills set up by both power loom + handloom weavers

sold → weaver take dep. on cash + carry basis  
 if credit sales, ltd → share capital invested by member weavers  
 state handloom fed. - get financing fr Natl Bank for Ag + Rural Devel  
 → stock yarn for 1 mo (was for weavers coops)

wholesalers - stock turnover 9-12 x - no institutional credit  
 50% own sources, rest borrowed fr non-inst sources  
 fr financial stress - ∴ intermediary b/w wholesaler + retailer



G. Singh. & S.T. Seetharaman 1984 - 3

retailers give yarn → master weavers on credit - cash purchase - 1% rebate  
typical retailer carries inventory of Rs 0.5 - 2 lakhs/mo - annual stock turnover  
own investment 75%, rest fr friends + rels - 6-10 times  
no exist. fr commercial banks

Some spinning mills open own retail outlets - sell yarn on cash basis 1% rebate  
margin charged at wholesale + retail level are fairly high → cover cost of  
non-institutional finance

composite textile mills - time for processing:  $1\frac{1}{2} \times$  a spinning mill

critical probl: finished goods inventory piles up

A'bad popular mills - Mahatma, Arvind, Advance - difficult → achieve stock  
turnover of  $> 4-5$  times

powerlooms - w myth of Padmasura (when injured ea drop of his blood falling on the  
ground turned → a demon): when gut attempted → restrict growth of  
powerlooms, cost → grow

prod  $\frac{1}{3}$  India's cloth req (Rs 3000 crore)

indigenous ways of managing + financing - shared by several pers/spread risk

1 pers supplies place + electrical connec

1 pers supplies loom

weaver processes yarn → cloth (Gujri sys: collects yarn (doesn't buy it) +  
delivers cloth charging the weaver's costs)

doesn't own loom or place - not in position → seek bank finance

also no labor law enforceable

bleaching, dying, printing also done w/o institutional financing

handloom - coops prod 10% of handloom output - get finance fr coop banks refinanced by  
turnover of only  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times NABARD

state + cent govt take their time → reimburse rebates, blocking working  
capital

handloom corporation - no signif impact

most handlooms depend entirely on private capital

distribution: 5 functions - phys distrib of cloth (transp, storage, repacking)

- financing of ↑

- providing mkt info → producers on changing tastes/preferences

- matching consumer req w/ prod (demanding, stocking, supplying)

- risk taking arising out of prod. failures, bad debts, price/demand ↓

emplys  $> 1$  million people - wholesalers come at prod centers

as annual sales of wholesaler Rs 75 lakhs, semi-wholesaler Rs 29 lakhs, retail Rs 3-4 lakhs  
(1979)

net returns on total funds emplyd: 19, 17.3, 28.2 % for wholesalers, semi-wh  
net margins were 2, 3 + 5% on sales + urban retailers, resp

working capital req est 140 days stock + 44 days credit

stocks remain fr e 82, 45 + 22 days at retail, semi-wholesale + wholesale

mills extend credit → cloth trade fr 33 days, wholesalers 40 days, semi-w 20 days

c 50% of stocks at retail level are on credit

urban retailers are net beneficiaries of credit

rural areas retailers likely → be net extenders of credit

as extend as much credit as get

ie wholesalers + semi-wholesalers req work capital finance =  $> 2$  mo sales

this fig for mills = 55 days (22 days stock, 33 days credit sales)

assume total vol cotton cloth sales 2000 crores

credit req for cloth trade = 330 crores

contrib of institutional finance is nil

powerloom cloth - owners who organize prod are cloth merchants/traders

sell cloth → semi-wholesalers → retailers

trade practices same as mill cloth - no inst. finance

wholesalers, semi-wholesalers, retailers do not get institutional finance



**THEATRE**

**G**IRISH Karnad's new play Bali, which is being directed by Satyadev Dubey and by Nasiruddin Shah and Rama Pathak, is quite unlike his earlier plays Tughlak and Hayavadana. Its complex structure with forays from the physical realm of action to the metaphysical realm of meditation and the Sanskritised Hindi in which it is performed make comprehension difficult. Bali had opened to poor reviews in Bombay but

rather than reveal his wife's infidelity to his mother who has come after him, he interprets a bad omen and declares that a hundred sheep be sacrificed to him from his own land. His wife, a staunch Jain, refuses to permit the sacrifice saying that since the dream did not occur the sacrifice is unnecessary. The mother insists that if the sacrifice is not performed she will take her own life.

Can a cock of dough substitute for a hundred sheep? Is the intention to kill as crucial as the actual act of violence? These are the questions Karnad sets out to explore.

What is your reaction to the reviews of Bali? Well, I don't really react to reviews, one has learnt not to react, if you invite a critic to come and review your play, it's his right to like it or not, to criticise or praise.

Do you think the play has been understood? I don't think most of the reviewers have understood the play at all. It took over 15 years to write the play - I wrote it in 1967 and it was produced in Delhi by Prema Karanth but it was not a very successful production. Then I read it out to Satyadev Dubey and he said it is a bad play, throw it away. I respect his view so I literally threw it out. And yet the basic method excited me, very much, and I

felt that if it excited me and stimulates me, there must be something in it that I had missed. So I kept on working at it. This is the play that has given me the greatest trouble in my entire writing career. I must have made at least 20 separate drafts of it. Then three to four years ago I knew I had the solution to the problem. So I rewrote the whole play from the beginning and I read it out to Satyadev Dubey. He said now it is quite good.

How was it in the first draft? Oh, it was very different. I think I myself was not very clear on how to bring out all that happens in one night in one place, it tended to be a very wordy play. Not that I have anything against wordy plays. Some of the best plays like *Don Juan in Hell* or *No Exit* are wordy. But to come back to your first question of how I respond to the reviews... when you've worked so long on a play and you

know why everything is in its place, when even actors of the calibre of Nasiruddin Shah and Rama Pathak have worked over it for seven to eight months and reviewers say it's superficial after just one viewing - I mean to say it's sad, said me very much.

Who's written the original epic? There's an original epic called *Yashastilak*. It's a seventh century Jain epic. It was re-

written in Telugu and then in Kannada, from which I drew my material. It's called *Yashastilak*. It's meant as a difference between a troubled violence and the act of violence.

The story was an attack on Brahmanical hypocrisy. In the Vedic period Brahmans used to sacrifice cattle during yagnas when they performed the fire-sacrifice. Then the Buddha and Jain influence came and the challenge had to be met. The Brahmans found that the one thing that had appealed to people most about Buddhism was non-violence so they took that over themselves by removing the very platform on which Buddhism was attacking them. So, after the seventh century, Brahmans became vegetarians.

Now even their sacrifice had to become non-violent - in plays. Instead of sacrificing live cattle they started sacrificing cattle made of dough, which are called *plithva-pashu*. Note that it is dough, not mud or clay. It is more than just an image because afterwards it is cooked and eaten, so the reference to meat is quite clear.

The myth was written at the same time that the Brahmans became non-violent. The Jains were mocking this hypocrisy. They said it was ridiculous to sacrifice cattle made of dough. The fact remains that you intend to sacrifice - the violence is in your mind.

We had to study this over and over again.

But here they're saying it's a complete experience. The Jain point of view is that it's not a half experience. Your intention is a complete experience. So once the cock intends to sacrifice the cock there's no difference from actual violence. What the queen does is another aspect of the same thing except it is no longer related to violence but to sexuality. Once she was seduced by the music, the adultery was as good as done.

There were tremendous possibilities in the myth and in my first draft I had only expressed them verbally. It hadn't been translated into action. But ultimately a play is action. The dialogue must become externalised in terms of action. That is why this theme hits at the very notion of drama. Because in drama the physical action is supposed to express what happens in the mind and the myth is about the relationship of man's mind to the physical relationships in the world around him. So the relationship between the mind and the body, which is the theme of the myth, is also a theme with which any dramatist should be concerned.

That's a very dramatic theme. The queen says there is. She deals with today's social prob-

lem. I have the nobles here. After that it's worth but at least I have the nobles here.

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many of plays like *Waiting for Godot* but also with all their dimensions.

It's (concerning sacrificed) centres on King Yashastilak who has converted to his wife's religion Jainism, with its special emphasis on non-violence. One night the queen is enraptured into making love to a sonorous voice coming from the temple. The singer turns out to be a hunchback with a scarred face and a limp. The king has followed her to the temple. She denies nothing.

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Nasiruddin Shah and Rama Pathak in Bali, a delectable of violence.



Girish Karnad, unperturbed by criticism.

Karnad's heritage and the ideology of non-violence. The cock of dough represents the compromise that doesn't work. So what happens when two opposing value systems are in conflict?

Fatalism from the king's side, yes. Not so much fatalism as an inevitable gravitating towards violence.

The conflicting ideologies are not represented by the king and queen but by the queen and the queen mother. The queen is a Jain from childhood. The queen mother is the unremitting Shaktapati, the Kali-worshipper who says

interested in it. I'm not interested in a film that hits you today and 10 years later feels exactly as if it were made in 1985.

Do you accept the way society is? No, of course not. But the reformist attitude doesn't seem to be any kind of questioning of values at all. I think my plays question values. My films also. The questioning is not of an obvious kind. In terms of what it says *Bali* is very contemporary. *Tughlak* is also contemporary. That's why they get done though they're not easy plays to perform.

They deal with the world of ideas while others attempt to make changes in the environment.

And those ideas are not relevant to our life today? Not many people comprehend them. If you take the critics as enlightened persons in the audience and you say they didn't understand (your play), not many others will stay with the struggle of trying to understand. I can't bother with them. I struggle with my plays. I expect them to struggle.

I'm not saying that what I've done is necessarily good or great. But the difficulties are such that the critics cannot accuse me of not having seen what I ultimately wanted it to be. I don't know what is a socially relevant film or play. If it means something that deals with today's social prob-

..I'm not saying that what I've done is necessarily good or great. But the difficulties are such that the critics cannot accuse me of not having seen them. To me the play has said what I ultimately wanted it to say and I'm quite content with it.'

ritualistic violence is very important. The king is the con-vert. He is caught between. His problem is that he brings the cock of dough as a compromise but then because of the intention, because of the suppressed violence in him, he begins to believe in it. It becomes a new argument for him. He starts talking of it as if it had enormous powers.

And here's this catastrophe... his teenage standing... The queen says there is. She deals with today's social prob-

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Tribal theatre

# A bridge between two sensibilities

**Tribal theatre has a vitality that is unique. The author speaks to directors Habib Tanvir and Bhanu Bharti, who are using the tribal dramatic form and working with tribal actors.**

It was afternoon and at the Pata theatre in Bombay a group of about 150 men gathered on the stage under the intense gaze of a slightly-built, grey-moustached man. Two nights before they had performed at the same end of town, acting out the story of a man who was willing to sacrifice his son for the treasure guarded by snakes; his reluctance over the loss of his

by Amrita Shah

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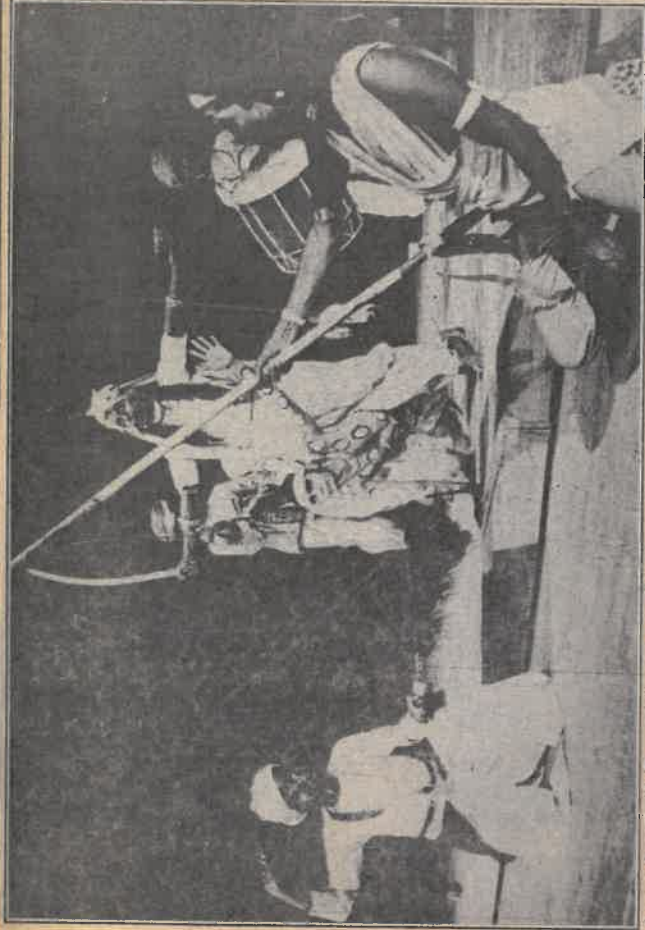
A scene from *Goon ka naam sasural*: robust performance

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A scene from *Pashu Gavairi*: return to pure theatre

his earlier method of mixing urban and rural actors was a mistake. It militated against the form, he explains. One can use the vitality of this form in a mixed cast, the city actors were somewhat less graceful and less articulate. And despite his self-confessed admiration for the production, Tanvir feels that combining the two, flawed the product. Placating further, he says, "The central character, an urban boy used his emotions, while the tribal actors used physical movements and kept their faces blank." The contrast was made even more robust: performances in *Goon ka naam sasural*.

Bharti, however, disagrees strongly with this thesis. "I am trying to build a bridge between two sensibilities," he asserts. "The process will take time, but it is possible." Getting tribals to leave their homes for an uncertain existence in theatre was not an easy

task for either director. For this the task was made doubly difficult by the fact that he was using a religious form. "These actors all went and asked the *devi* for permission," he says. "There was a brilliant performer among them who couldn't join because the *devi* refused him permission." Tanvir built up his company by scouring the Madhya Pradesh countryside. He attended *melas*, listened to women singing in the fields, watched rustic theatre and picked his performers, initially the women were hesitant. "But with repeated workshops, things got more established and their men folk let them go," he explains. Some of the members of his troupe were regular village performers. And most of the women were singers and dancers belonging to a poverty-ridden nomadic tribe.

The players do well financially. Tanvir pays them a regular salary with additional show money. And in season there is a show almost every

Surely there is a possibility that instead of promoting theatre they will become like travelling museums.

The evidence, so far, points to the contrary. Bhanu Bharti's Rajasthani group, for instance, was perfectly capable of performing a play from the south and Tanvir's company has even performed *Moliere* and Brecht in the past. Obviously they have evolved as actors and not degenerated into mere showpieces of tribal art.

As far as explaining complex themes to simple rural actors goes, it has not been so difficult. Bharti had to translate the ideas of the play into experiences within the comprehension of his troupe. Tanvir meanwhile, has followed the policy of narrating the story to his performers and letting them improvise. There is no conversation to Indian terms. The players understand these universal elements of greed, advance and love in the play and respond to them.

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son, and the harmonious, happy end where all were united by love. There was music and dance and vivid costumes.

Now, they looked drab in comparison. As lunchtime approached, the director clapped his hands and motioned the "snakes" into the wings. In response to the sharp, almost stern orders he gave in Mewari, the group dispersed.

The soft-spoken director-actor and ex-director of the Shri Ram Centre for Art and Culture, Bhanu Bharti, talking about his latest production

*Pashu Gayatri* which he had brought to Bombay for the Prithvi Festival last month, said, "Films and television are taking away the best from us. If theatre is to survive, we must return to pure theatre." Which is why he decided to stage a play in the traditional tribal theatrical form of Mewar with Bhils from the region.

Coincidentally, Habib Tanvir, the person to first work with folk artistes, was also a participant in the month long festival. His play *Gaon ka naam sasural, mera naam damaud* was an old production made up by stringing together three separate episodes based on the age-old folk tale about an old man marrying a young girl. The enthusiasm with which the Chattisgarhi performers from Madhya Pradesh played their parts was infectious with Fida Bai, the heroine, playing her part with customary brilliance. The raw vigour of the two plays came as a refreshing change to a city routinely inundated with mindless Broadway imitations.

Unfortunately neither play got the reception it really deserved. *Pashu Gayatri* did not sell out and people walked out of Tanvir's play realising that it was not the hackneyed comedy they had expected to see.

But Tanvir is used to this. For 15 years after he started experimenting with tribal theatre he played to empty halls in the cities. From 1958 to 1973, he found appreciation only in the villages of Chattisgarh.

Then unexpectedly in 1973, *Gaon ka naam sasural* became a major success. "That broke the ice," the director recalls. Successful runs, foreign tours and a Padma Shri for Tanvir followed the initial break-

through.

Bhanu Bharti's *Pashu Gayatri*, a play full of so colour and vigorous acted far better. Bharti had to a contemporary play, written by K. Panniker in 1981, performed it in the *gavri* that had fascinated him years. "I saw a *gavri* performance on the streets of Udaipur when I went there to a workshop." Bharti recalled "and I was enchanted by

Eventually he adapted the form - originally a 40-day ritualistic dramatic performance - to his requirements trained Bhils to perform in. The group performed in Udaipur, lhi, Goa and then Bombay. Habib Tanvir, on the other hand, has built up - over last 27 years - Naya Theatre, a repertory company of trained performers with two generations of actors in it. Started with IPTA (Indian People's Theatre Association) in 1950, Tanvir went on to do film writing, journalism and playwriting.

It was his trip to Europe in the '50s that made him "more Indian in outlook". That, combined with a memory of a childhood spent in Chattisgarh, urged him to find in the prevalent dramatic forms of the countryside a vehicle to present his plays.

Predictably, he went back to Chattisgarh. After conducting several workshops in the area, he took six rural actors with him to Delhi. Combining them with urban actors, he produced plays in Hindi. Gradually he realised that if it was to use a tribal form to the best advantage, he would have to employ the local dialect. In 1970 he revived two of his old productions - *Agra Bazar* and *Mitti ki gaadi* - in Chattisgarhi, using an all-tribal cast. By then he was convinced that



A scene from *Gaon ka naam sasural*: robust performance



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A scene from *Pashu Gayatri* his earlier method of mixing urban and rural actors was a mistake. "It militated against the form," he explains.

One can see the validity of this point of view in *Pashu Gayatri* where, in a mixed cast, the city actors were obviously less graceful and less at ease than their village counterparts. And despite his self confessed admiration for the production, Tanvir feels that combining the two, flawed the product. Elucidating further he says, "The central character, an urban boy used his eye and face to express his emotions, while the tribal actor



to Chattisgarh. A few conductors





From Pashu Gayatri: return to pure theatre

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The players do well financially. Tanvir pays them a regular salary with additional show money. And in season there is a show almost every

night. In addition to which the performers go home for Holi, Diwali and at harvest time. Commenting on Nava Theatre, Peter Brook once wrote: "They represent an absolute extreme of purity: a peasant company directed by a highly sophisticated man who brings them to town and takes every conceivable precaution to prevent the town from contaminating them."

Tanvir, however, is not so sure about his ability to protect them from contamination. But contact with the outside world, he feels, has in fact a positive effect on them. "Earlier they came to me with film songs," he recalls. "I had to dig into their memories for folk songs." Now, he feels, with the awareness of an appreciation for their culture, they have gone even deeper into it.

So much emphasis on tribal culture brings one to question these efforts. Is there not the danger that the efforts of these two directors will veer away from the original intentions?

Surely there is a possibility that instead of promoting theatre they will become like travelling museums.

The evidence, so far, points to the contrary. Bhanu Bharti's Rajasthan group, for instance, was perfectly capable of performing a play from the south and Tanvir's company has even performed Moliere and Brecht in the past. Obviously they have evolved as actors and not degenerated into mere showpieces of tribal art.

As far as explaining complex themes to simple rural actors goes, it has not been so difficult. Bharti had to translate the ideas of the play into experiences within the comprehension of his troupe. Tanvir meanwhile, has followed the policy of narrating the story to his performers and letting them improvise. There is no conversion to Indian terms. The players understand the universal elements of greed, avarice and love in the plays and respond to them.



# Lays

## ion values'

### Meher Pestonji about his new play Bali

done in Telugu and then in Kannada, from which I drew my material. It's called *Yashodhacharita*. It is meant as a moral tale saying there's no difference between intended violence and the act of violence.

The story was an attack on Brahmanical hypocrisy. In the Vedic period Brahmins used to sacrifice cattle during *vegetarian* when they performed the fire-sacrifice. Then the Buddhist and Jain influence came and the challenge had to be met. The Brahmins found that the one thing that had appealed to people most about Buddhism was non-violence so they took that over, there- by removing the very platform on which Buddhism was attacking them. So, after the seventh century, Brahmins became vegetarians.

Now even their sacrifice had to become non-violent - in theory. Instead of sacrificing live cattle they started sacrific- ing cattle made of dough, which are called *pishua-pashu*. Note that it is dough, not mud or clay. It is more than just an image because afterwards it is cooked and eaten, so the refer- ence to meat is quite clear.

The myth was written at the same time that the Brahmins became non-violent. The Jains were mocking this hypocrisy. They said it was ridiculous to sacrifice cattle made of dough. The fact remains that you in- tend to sacrifice - the violence is in your mind.

We had to study this epic in

really fell in love with his music. So the adultery was committed the moment she heard the music.

A half experience like *Hayavadana*...

But here they're saying it's a complete experience. The Jain point of view is that it's not a half experience. Your inten- tion is a complete experience. So once the king intends to sacrifice the cock there's no difference from actual vio- lence. What the queen does is another aspect of the same thing except it is no longer related to violence but to sex- uality. Once she was seduced by the music, the adultery was as good as done.

There were these tremendous possibilities in the myth and in my first draft I had only expressed them ver- bally. It hadn't been translated into action. But ultimately a play is action. The dialogue must become externalised in terms of action. That is why this theme hits at the very notion of drama. Because in drama the physical action is supposed to express what hap- pens in the mind and the myth is about the relationship of man's mind to the physical relationships in the world around him. So the rela- tionship between the mind and the body which is the theme of the myth, is also a theme with which any dramatist would be concerned.

There's a stark fatalism in *Bali*. The ritual of sacrifice presents the clash between the



Girish Karnad: unperturbed by criticism

*Kshatriya* heritage and the ideology of non-violence. The cock of dough represents the compromise that doesn't work. So what happens when two opposing value systems are in conflict?

Fatalism from the king's side, yes. Not so much fatal- ism as an inevitable gravitating towards violence.

The conflicting ideologies are not represented by the king and queen but by the queen and the queen mother. The queen is a Jain from childhood. The queen mother is the unrelenting Shaktapati, the Kali worshipper who says

*You've never worked on any-*

**'I'm not saying that what I've done is necessarily good or great. But the difficul- ties are such that the critics cannot accuse me of not having seen them. To me the play has said what I ultimately wanted it to say and I'm quite content with it.'**

**...thing contemporary with social- ly relevant themes?**

No. Thank god! I hope I won't.

**Why?**

Because the purely realistic surface of our existence is so boring. Other people are handling it and I'm quite hap- py to let them.

**Do you think such themes are not relevant?**

I don't know what is a socially relevant film or play. If it means something that deals with today's social prob- lems then, of course, I'm not

interested in it. I'm not in- terested in a film that hits you today and 10 years later feels exactly as if it were made in 1985.

**Do you accept the way society is?**

No, of course not. But the reformist attitude doesn't seem to be any kind of ques- tioning of values at all. I think my plays question values. My films also. The questioning is not of an obvious kind. In terms of what it says *Bali* is very contemporary. *Tughlaq* is also contemporary. That's why they get done though they're not easy plays to per- form.

**They deal with the world of ideas while others attempt to make changes in the environ- ment.**

And those ideas are not relevant to our life today?

Not many people comprehend them. If you take the critics as enlightened persons in the audi- ence and you say they didn't understand (your play), not many others will stay with the struggle of trying to understand.

I can't bother with them. I struggle with my plays. I ex- pect them to struggle.

I'm not saying that what I've done is necessarily good or great. But the difficulties are such that the critics cannot accuse me of not having seen them. To me the play has said what I ultimately wanted it to say and I'm quite content with it. After that if it is still bad, at least I have the confidence that I have done my best.