

**Indian Village Studies**  
**Village Survey No. 17**

# **KHEJURBOND**

**Socio-Economic Survey of a Dimasa Village in the  
North Cachar Hills District, Assam**

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## P R E F A C E

The present report on Khejurbond, a Dimasa village in the North Cachar Hills District of Assam presents the findings of the first-point survey conducted by this Centre in January-February, 1978. The data relate to the calendar year 1977.

Khejurbond is exclusively inhabited by the Dimasas. The Dimasas are, numerically and politically, the dominant tribe in the North Cachar Hills District. The important feature of the village economy is that it depends on both shifting and wet paddy cultivation. Wet paddy cultivation in that area was introduced in the early part of this century; but the Dimasas have not shown proper aptitude for its development. The wet paddy cultivation is done in the flat valley land under the irrigated condition. There is scope for diversification of the village economy by way of taking up small scale poultry and piggery farming along with cultivation. But the villagers have not yet availed of the opportunity. There is also scope for development of horticulture and sericulture in the area.

The village has shown significant change in the traditional occupational pattern as a result of the implementation of the developmental programmes in the area. This appears to have diverted the attention of some of the people from agriculture to the newly emerged sources of income. It seems that the village leadership and external guidance in all round development of the village economy are lacking.

Like other studies of the Centre, the present report is also prepared under my general guidance and supervision. The report has been jointly written by Shri Durgeswar Borah and Shri Satyendra Nath Buragohain. Dr. Umananda Phukan has gone through the draft report and offered suggestions for its improvement. The report is typed by Shri Nogen Chandra Bora, Shri Manik Chandra Dutta and Shri Kamal Chandra Borah. Shri Noren Deka mimeographed the report. I am thankful to all of them.

I would like to offer my thankfulness to the Deputy Commissioner, the North Cachar Hills District, Haflong and his staff for their kind help in making necessary arrangements for field investigation. I would also offer our thanks to the Soil Conservation Officer, Haflong, the District Agriculture Officer, Haflong and his staff and the Executive Engineer, North Cachar Hills Irrigation Division, Haflong for their kind help to our field staff.

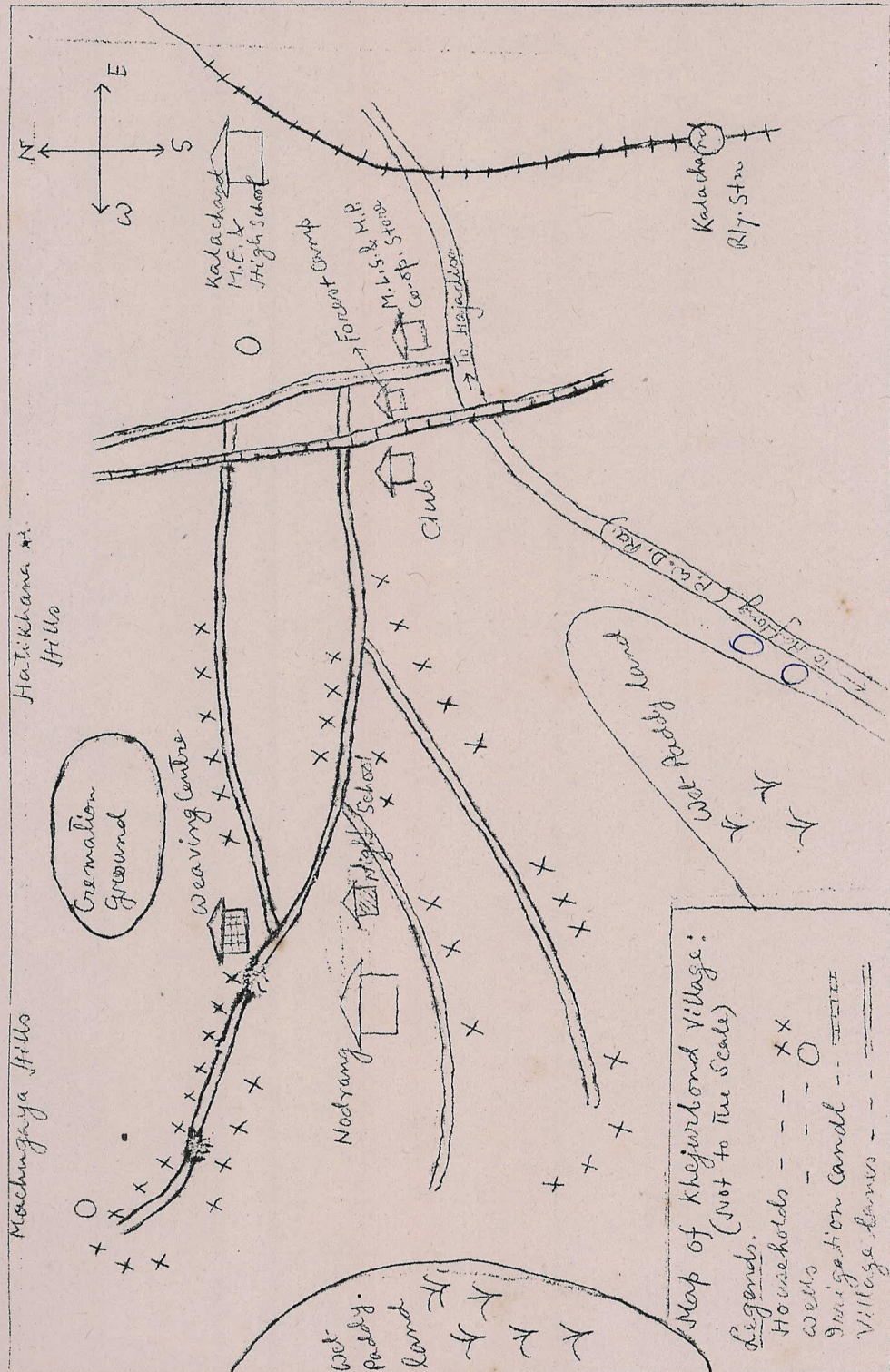
Last but not the least, I must express my gratefulness to the villagers of Khejurbond who actively cooperated with our staff in field investigation.

March, 1979.

Dr. P.D. Saikia.  
Director.

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Machungya Hills

Hatikhana Hills

Cremation Ground

Weaving Centre

Nodrang

Night School

Club

Foremost Camp

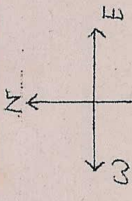
M.L.S. & M.P. Co-op. Store

Kalachand M.E. & High School

Water-Roady Land

Kalachand Rly. Stn

To Hajira



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1. Introduction :

1.1. The Dimasas are one of the two major hill tribes of Assam. The other major hill tribe is the Karbis (Mikirs) of Karbi Anglong District. An attempt has been made in the present report to study the socio-economic characteristics of the Dimasas. The study is based on data collected from Khejurbond, a typical Dimasa village of the North Cachar Hills District which was selected purposively.

1.2. The investigators stayed in the village during the time of survey to observe the people and their way of life. Besides interviewing the heads of the households with the help of the household schedule, some other members e.g. housewives, young boys and girls were also interviewed. The investigators also participated in some socio-religious functions held in the village during their stay there. The reference year for the study is the calendar year 1977.

1.3. Many difficulties were faced during the time of investigation and these could be overcome only after establishing rapport with the village elders like the mouzadar, village headman and some other influential persons of the village. The investigators had to depend on interpreters for the interviews as most of the respondents did not know any language other than their own. However, attempt has been made to collect reliable information from the respondents.

#### 2. Introduction to the District :

2.1. Prior to the annexation to British India in 1832 A.D. the North Cachar Hills (along with Cachar district)

was under the kingdom of the Kacharis. Before independence the North Cachar Hills was a sub-division of Cachar district. The "United District of North Cachar and Mikir Hills" was formed in 1951 with the North Cachar Hills and Mikir Hills (now Karbi Anglong) as the two sub-divisions. According to the provision of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India two independent District Councils named as the North Cachar Hills District Council and Mikir Hills District Council were constituted for the new district. The North Cachar Hills district Council was inaugurated on 29th April, 1952. Ultimately, on 2nd February, 1970 North Cachar Hills got the status of a separate district under the name "The North Cachar Hills District."

### 3. Geographical Feature :

3.1. The North Cachar Hills District has an area of 4890 sq.km. It is surrounded in the west by Meghalaya and part of Karbi Anglong District, in the east by Nagaland, Manipur and part of Karbi Anglong District, in the North by the Nowgong District and in the south by the district of Cachar.

3.2. The N.C.Hills formed the uneven hilly region constituting the eastern part of the Jaintia Hills ranging an elevation of 600 to 900 metres and the northern part of Barail range with an elevation ranging from 1000 to 1200 metres. Physiographically, N.C. Hills District may be divided into three main divisions, viz. (i) the low lying areas, i.e. the narrow river valleys, (ii) the high hills of Barail range and (iii) the plateau of Gunjung Khorongma and Garampani areas.



3.3. Diyung and Jatinga are the two main rivers of the district. Diyung river originates from the northern side of Barail range and flowing towards north meets the river Kapili at Diyungmukh. Langlai, Mahur, Mupa Langting and Lunding are the principal tributaries of Diyung. The other river Jatinga which flows south westward from the southern part of Barail range meets the Barak river in Cachar District. Kayng is the only main tributary of Jatinga.

3.4. Limestone and coal are the two important minerals of the district. But so far these minerals have remained untapped.

3.5. The soils of N.C.Hills district are hill soil. The soils vary from sandy loam to clayee loam in texture. The soils are usually acidic in reaction, somewhat deficit in potash and phosphates; but rich in nitrogen and organic matters. Owing to the porosity of soil in most of the hilly areas, the capacity to retain water is less and hence it is problematic to erect reservoir or dam for irrigation purposes in the district.\*

3.6. The district has an area of 63,333 hectares of reserve forests. The main forest reserves are (i) Langting-Mupa, (ii) Khrunging and (iii) Barail. Besides the reserve forests, there are extensive area of unclassified forests. The forest reserves of the district are rich in valuable trees, canes, bamboos, etc..

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\* Statistical Hand Book, North Cachar Hills District, 1976.

3.7. Rainfall is very heavy during the months from April to August (Table 1.1). But rainfall is not evenly distributed throughout the district and climate is also not uniform throughout the district. Haflong, the district headquarters and a hill resort experiences moderate climate for most part of the year excepting the months of December, January and February when it becomes fairly cold. Comparatively, Maibang is warmer than other parts of the district. The average mean maximum temperature at Haflong varies from 24°C to 26°C and mean minimum varies from 17°C to 19°C.

#### 4. Population Characteristics :

4.1. According to 1971 Census the total population of N.C.Hills District was 76,047. The ratio of female per 1000 males was found to be 841 which is the lowest sex ratio in Assam. The density of population for the district as a whole is 16 persons per sq.km. which incidentally is also the lowest in Assam.

4.2. The decadal growth rate of the district during 1961-71 was 40% against 34.9% for Assam. It is significant to note that the other hill district of the state, viz. Karbi Anglong experienced the highest growth rate (68.3%) in the state during the said decade.

4.3. The percentages of tribal population in the district in 1961 and 1971 Censuses were 79.53 and 69.15 respectively. Thus, registering a decline of more than 10% in the tribal population of the district. The decadal growth rate of tribal population in the district during 1961-71 is only 21.71% against 40% for the district as a whole.

Table 1.1  
Average Rainfall in N.C. Hills District.

Year	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	December
1972	nil	02.2	19.8	254.2	364.5	647.4	206.8	123.9	70.3	21.9	00.0	00.4
1973	07.2	82.9	06.8	357.7	502.9	498.5	342.3	302.7	106.7	165.2	202.6	214.7
1974	nil	nil	139.2	166.1	155.9	723.4	392.5	274.5	105.8	93.8	69.5	nil
1975	nil	23.2	29.5	225.8	418.9	216.3	352.2	158.5	156.0	180.7	121.8	00.0
1976	07.3	91.0	323.9	347.1	195.0	702.8	296.0	263.1	121.7	54.5	13.8	00.0
1977	nil	33.8	128.4	589.1	295.1	140.6	153.8	267.5	28.5	82.7	23.1	24.7

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Source : Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Haflong.

4.4. The total urban population of N.C.Hills District in 1961 was 3265 and this rose to 6197 in 1971 showing a decadal growth rate of nearly 90%, but only 6.8% of the total population of the district.

4.5. The percentage of literacy in the district increased from 17.10 in 1961 to 27.25 in 1971. This percentage of literacy compares favourably with the State average of 28.3.

4.6. The percentage of Hindu population in N.C. Hills district decreased from 79.50 in 1961 to 77.03 in 1971 whereas the Christian population increased from 19.44% in 1961 to 21.87% in 1971. Thus the district witnessed a decline of 2.5% Hindu population during 1961-71. On the other hand, it experiences an increase of about 2.5% in the Christian population. This might be because of either conversion of more tribal people into Christianity or a higher growth rate among the Christians or both.

#### 5. Agriculture :

5.1. There are about 480 villages in the North Cachar Hills District. About 80 per cent of the rural population of the district are directly or indirectly engaged in agriculture. Paddy is the main crop both in jhum and permanent type of wet cultivation. Shifting cultivation covers about 70.00 per cent of the total cultivated area of the district. Paddy, the principal crop is grown in jhum areas either as a single crop or as mixed crop along with other crops like maize, zinger, chillies and other vegetables.

5.2. A sizeable portion of the cultivated area is devoted to the cultivation of rape and mustard seeds, sesamum,

cotton, etc. These crops are mainly grown in jhum fields. Pineapple, orange and banana are also cultivated on the hill slopes in certain pockets of the district.

5.3. Wet cultivation is confined mainly to the flat lands of the narrow river valleys of the district. Besides the valley land, some scattered areas in the foot hills and lower hill slopes in the form of terraces are also available for wet rice cultivation. The total cultivable area of the district is about 21,287 hectares; but area available for wet rice cultivation is about 4500 hectares only.\* Area available for settled cultivation is very much limited and the average land holding per family is less than one hectare. The soil is reported to be fertile, the average production of wet rice is about 30-40 quintals per hectare depending on the rainfall. In the absence of timely rain, production of rice drops considerably. The irrigation is available to a very limited area.

5.4. The soils of the hill slopes of the district are found to be suitable for growing coffee, rubber and tea. The Assam Plantation Crops Development Corporation has taken initiative to popularise the cultivation of these crops in the district. It is expected that if the people accept to cultivate these crops, their economy would improve.

5.5. Under the H.Y.V. Programme both paddy and maize are taken up. But much progress was not achieved in covering larger areas under the H.Y.V. seeds and ensuing adoption of improved package of practices. Attempts have been made for the development of the sugarcane cultivation in the district with the object of

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\* Statistical Hand Book, North Cachar Hills District, 1976.

feeding the proposed sugar mill in N.C.Hills District. But excepting the Diyangmukh area, response from farmers was poor. Sugarcane cultivation are scattered and the area is of insignificant proportions.

6. Irrigation :

6.1. Irrigation in N.C.Hills was taken up during the First Five Year Plan (1951-52 to 1955-56) and it was started in the year 1954-55. There are two types of irrigation schemes in the North Cachar Hills District, viz. (i) flow irrigation scheme and (ii) lift irrigation scheme. Upto the end of 5th Five Year Plan (1974-79) 6294.40 hectares of land were proposed to be brought under irrigation of which 4152.00 hectares were actually benefited by irrigation. All the irrigation schemes, so far taken in hand in the district are only minor irrigation schemes.

7. Industry :

7.1. The North Cachar Hills District has no industry worth the name. Weaving, a household industry, is practised in almost all tribal households in their own traditional method. Introduction of fly shuttle looms replacing traditional loin looms in many a village is a significant improvement in weaving industry in the district. The Department of Sericulture and Weaving has taken up programme for installation and development of Eri silk and Tassar industry. Large area of the district has already been covered by eri and mulberry plants. There is potentiality in the district to produce quality cotton. The need of establishing a cotton ginning and pressing mill is felt in the district.

At present, cotton produced in the district are sent to Silchar for ginning and pressing.

7.2. The Assam Hills Small Industrial Development Corporation established a Fruit Preservation Centre at Jatinga near Haflong in 1976. The Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary has established a Dairy Farm at Garampani in 1973.

7.3. The North Cachar Hills District will have the 350 MW Kapili Hydrel Project and it is likely to be commissioned in 1982. A proposal to establish a sugar mill at Maibang and an Oil seed crushing mill at Maibang Langting area are being finalised.

#### 8. Education :

8.1. The total area of the North Cachar Hills District is 4890.0 sq.km. Total population of the district according to 1971 Census was 76,047 persons. The rate of literacy in that year was 27.25% against 17.10% in 1961.

8.2. Primary education facility in the year 1976 was available within a radius of 2 km. in 421 villages of 480 villages in the district. This indicates considerable expansion of primary education facility among the rural population. The trend of expansion of middle and secondary education facility in the district is also encouraging.

#### 9. Medical Facility :

9.1. Medical facility to the rural people in the district is quite inadequate. Medical facility within a radius of 5 km. was available in 1976 to only 27.5% (132) villages of the district. The geographical location and inaccessibility of most of the villages are the main

handicaps in covering the rural population with minimum medical facility.

10. Drinking water supply :

10.1. Like medical facility supply of drinking water to the rural population is also a problem for the district. The Public Health Engineering Department was able to provide drinking water through pipe, ring well or tube well only to 70 villages by the end of 1976. Procuring drinking water is a problem for many a village in the district particularly in the winter season.

11. Communication :

11.1. Inadequate transport communication facility stands as the most important bottleneck for implementing the various developmental schemes in the district. It is gathered that motorable road communication upto a distance of 5 km. is available only for 243 (50%) villages of the district in the year 1976. It is learnt that considerable progress has recently been made in new road construction by the P.W.D. Departments of the State and the District Council. However, it is the only hill area where Rail communication is available. The Junding-Badarpur Railway line passes through the district.



## CHAPTER II

### THE VILLAGE SETTING

#### 1. Location of the Village :

1.1. The village Khejurbond is situated at a distance of about 60 kms. from Haflong, the district headquarters of the North Cachar Hills District. It is about 7 kms. from Maibang, the nearest township. The residential area of the village is located on a flat high land\*.

#### 2. Village Layout :

2.1. Khejurbond village is situated on a flat high land near the foot hills. The distance to the nearest river Diyung by the shortest route will not be less than one km. But some of the wet land belonging to the villagers are located within one Km. from the village. The distance to the jhum fields varies.

2.2. The houses of the villagers of Khejurbond are erected in the traditional semi-circular pattern leaving open space at the centre where the village Nodrang is located. Like many other Dimasa villages, in Khejurbond also the houses are constructed closely in a compact way. Some irregularity in the semi-circular pattern is, however, observed in the case of the households that are erected later as a result of separation of families. It is found that the households belonging to different clans (Sengfongs) are more or less scattered. However, the families belonging to the original settlers are living in the semi-circle.

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\* The name Khejurbond means date-palm(khejur) forest (bond). This indicates that area might have had considerable number of 'Khejur' trees. However, presently there were no date-palm tree in the village.

2.3. The M.E. School and the High School are situated towards the east of the village whereas the L.P.School is situated towards south of the village. The cremation ground is located on the north west of the village. Though different places are fixed for different pujas some of the pujas particularly the rituals relating to death ceremony are observed on the south west side of the village. Immigrant family to the village has to take permission of the Karigabsas, the first clan to establish the village, for settlement in the village.

### 3. Communication :

3.1. Communication to and from the village is not difficult. The nearest Rly. Station Kalachand on Lunding-Silchar-Badarpur line is only about one km. from the village. The Haflong-Hajadisa P.W.D. Road is also passing by the side of the village. Plying of buses on this road is not so regular, particularly in rainy season. So the villagers usually avail the train services.

3.2. The condition of the approach road and road inside the village is good. On this road even heavy vehicles can easily ply. However, the road becomes difficult for vehicular traffic <sup>m</sup> to the rainy season.

3.3. The Kalachand Post and Telegraph office situated near the Rly. Station offers services of Savings account also.

### 4. Health and Sanitation :

4.1. It appears that the general health of the people of Khejurbond is satisfactory. No epidemic in the village during the last 5 years was reported. However, incidence of Malaria is common.

4.2. A Public Health Sub-Centre was established at Kalachand in August, 1976 to serve about 21 villages including Khejurbond. The Sub-Centre is run by a Pharmacist. It is usually inspected or visited by the District Health Officer once in a month. The nearest Hospital is at Maibang at a distance of 7 km. from the village.

4.3. The Public Health Sub-Centre supplies usual basic available medicines to the patients free of cost. It appears that generally the people do not rely much on the medical treatment and hesitate to come to the Sub-Centre for the second time for curing their ailments. When required medicines are not available in the Sub-Centre, the pharmacist either prescribes or refers the case to the Maibang Hospital. It was reported that the patients rarely liked to purchase medicines on their own but liked to go to Maibang Hospital when referred to.

4.4. The common diseases in the area as reported by the pharmacist are malaria, dysentery, diarrhea and skin diseases. Malaria is more frequent amongst the outside labourers working here than local people. As a measure of preventing malaria, spraying of D.D.T. is done in the village twice a month by the Anti-malaria Department. There is also provision of taking blood smears in slides in the Kalachand Sub-Centre for detecting malaria. From the records of the Sub-Centre it is found that the number of patients visiting the Sub-Centre has been increasing every year since its inception. Number of patients attending the Sub-Centre increases from March to July and decreases from August. Number of patients is found to be lowest in the month of January.

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4.5. The pharmacist of the Sub-Centre is sometimes called in by the villagers. In serious cases or in complicated maternity cases doctor from Maibang is called in. In most of the cases, the traditional Pujas and rituals are performed prior to visiting hospitals. Sometimes rituals are performed simultaneously with medical treatments.

4.6. Drinking water is a problem for the people of Khejurbond, particularly in the winter season. There are four kutchra and semi-pucca wells in the village. But in winter season these wells usually dry up. So the people fetch water from Mahur river which is about 2 km. from the village.

4.7. No drainage system worth the name is there inside the village. But as the village is situated on a high flat land, water-logging does not occur even in rainy season. No family is in the habit of using any type of latrine. Squating in the jungle is the usual way. Household pigs serve as the scavengers.

#### 5. Education :

5.1. Educational facilities upto H.S.L.C. standard are at easy reach of the village. There are one L.P.School, one Middle English School and one High English School near the village. These schools are situated on the border of the village. So the students of Khejurbond need not go far for their education. The H.E. School named Kalachand H.E. School was established in 1975 and is still in venture stage while the Kalachand M.E.School established in 1971 has been getting ad-hoc grants from the Education Department. The medium of teaching in these schools is

Bengali. Recently, English was also introduced as a medium of teaching for the willing students in the L.P.School. For college education the students are to go to Haflong or other places outside the district.

5.2. In order to remove illiteracy from amongst the inhabitants an Adult Education Centre was started in Khejurbond in 1970. It continued upto 1976. In the initial years the number of students increased gradually. In 1976, the number of students rose to 55. Most of the students were adult women and young boys. It was reported that no adult male person attended the Centre where classes were held in the evening. One teacher drew the salary of three (Rs.200/in all).and imparted teachings. The medium of instruction in the Centre was Bengali for the first five years. Trouble started in the Centre when English was introduced as a medium of teaching in 1975. Then in 1976 Hindi was also added as the third medium. This might have complicated the situation and led to eventual closure of the school in 1976.

#### 6. Marketing :

6.1. The weekly market at Kalachand helps the villagers of Khejurbond and other surrounding villages to sell their surplus agricultural products and to procure their necessary commodities. There is another weekly market at Maibang (7 km.) which is also visited by many of the people from Khejurbond. The Kalachand Branch of the Maibang Large Scale Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society Ltd., also serves the Kalachand area including Khejurbond efficiently. Besides selling essential commodities to the villagers and

procuring cotton, etc. from them, agricultural loans are offered to the members of the society. For purchasing articles not available at Kalachand and Maibang one has to go to Haflong to which train communication is very convenient. Besides these, there are some small shops at Kalachand for day to day articles of general use.

7. Brief History of the Village :

7.1. Khejurbond village came into existence in 1924 when the father of the present Khunang (village Headman) migrated to this area in search of land for wet rice cultivation. He came from a place near Noblaidisa about 11 km. from Khejurbond. The patri-clan of this family is Karigabsa. After the Karigabasas, members of other patri-clans immigrated and settled in Khejurbond are (in chronological order) Khemprai-1930; Nunisa-1931; Hapheila-1931; Khersa-1938; Jibragede-1968; and Bodosia-1972. All these families immigrated to Khejurbond only in search of land for wet rice cultivation. The distance to their places of origin does not exceed 16 km. from Khejurbond.

7.2. The name of the present site of the village was Khejurbond prior to the immigration of the present dwellers. Formerly, a bigger area covering some other neighbouring villages was known as Khejurbond. The oldest village in the neighbourhood of Khejurbond is reported to be Mothibra by elderly persons of Khejurbond. According to them Mothibra village was established during the reign of the Dimasa Kings. After the introduction of wet rice cultivation in the nearby valley of Diyung river Dimasa people from different areas of the district migrated to this area

and established new villages at different points of time. Some of them are Solikantapur, Champak nagar, Natun Kalachand, Kramthongdolia, etc.

7.3. According to the prevailing Dimasa custom the entire house sites of the village belong to the Karigabsas, the first family who settled in present Khejurbond. Any other Dimasa family desiring new settlement in Khejurbond must take the permission from the Karigabsa family. But in case of jhum land such permission is not necessary. Any new family allowed to settle in the village, naturally gets the right to occupy a piece of land within the village Simana. Every Dimasa village has a particular area of land for jhum cultivation. The boundary demarcating the jhum area from other villages is called Simana. Usually a person is not allowed to cultivate within the Simana meant for a particular village to which he does not belong. But a person from another village is allowed to do so initially for one year provided he requests the Village Council owning the jhum land.

8. The name Kalachand :

8.1. The mouza,\* under the jurisdiction of which Khejurbond falls is called Kalachand mouza. Now the whole

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\*Mouza : Like the Assam plains, a mouza in the N.C.Hills District is constituted with several contiguous villages. Every mouza is under the charge of a mouzadar whose primary duty is to collect land revenue and house tax on behalf of the government. For land tenure the district authority follows the North Cachar Hills Land and Revenue (Adoption of Assam Land and Revenue Regulation and Rules) Act, 1953. Wet land may be owned on annual or periodic lease for which revenue at the rate of Rs.1/- per bigha (0.33 acre) per annum is to be paid. Patta is issued for such land to the owners. For the jhum land no revenue is charged; but every household has to pay a house tax of Rs.4/- per annum. The house-tax is collected by the village headman and then deposited to the mouzadar. On the other hand, land revenue is directly collected by the mouzadar. The present mouzadar of Kalachand mouza hails from Khejurbond village.

area covering more than 20 neighbouring villages of Khejurbond is known as Kalachand. There is a legend behind the name Kalachand.\*

8.2. The railway station and the P. & T. office also came to be known as Kalachand. Of course, there was some controversy as to what should be the name of the Railway Station. People from Khejurbond and their supporters wanted Khejurbond to be the name of the station whereas people from Kalachand and their supporters wanted it to be known as Kalachand. Both the parties gave a tough fight moving the top Railway authorities for the name of the Station. However, at last the people of Kalachand won the battle.

9. A Brief History of Introduction of Wet Rice Cultivation in the Area :

9.1. The exact year of introduction of wet rice cultivation in Khejurbond area is not within memory of the aged villagers. They could, however, inform that it must have been introduced either during the later part of the first decade or in the early part of the second decade of the present century. It is, however, likely that wet rice cultivation was introduced during the first decade of this century.

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\* Before the introduction of the Luming-Silchar-Badarpur Railway line a very rich person named Kalachand Jibragede was living near the present Kalachand Railway Station. He had no son. But he was the owner of a very big herd of buffaloes. He was so popular in and around the area that people felt proud to identify themselves as neighbours of Kalachand Jibragede. People coming to this area from other parts used to say that they were coming to Kalachand. In this way the name of the village of which Kalachand Jibragede was a resident came to be known as Kalachand. Later on the whole mouza and the area became known as Kalachand.



9.2. It is gathered that the idea of introducing wet rice cultivation in Kalachand area was given to the Dimasa people by the then Civil S.D.O. of Haflong. At first, the Dimasas who were residing in the area started reclaiming and levelling land on either sides of river Diyung (Mahur). Later on, Dimasa people from other areas also came to the place in search of land for wet rice cultivation. In one of the places in Kalachand where now wet rice cultivation is practised there was a Dimasa village named Warigloudi. This village is no more there. Residents of that village migrated to newly settled neighbouring villages.

9.3. The first local man who took the leading role in collaboration with the then Civil S.D.O. was Dorposing. As he was the head Gaon Bura of his village he named it after him as Dorposingpur. After his death his son Solikanta succeeded him and the village was renamed after him as Solikantapur. Even to this day that village is known as Solikantapur. Dorposing, along with the then Civil S.D.O. prepared plans for reclaiming land for wet rice cultivation. On the whole, the villagers reclaimed and levelled the land at their own cost and occupied it as their own for cultivation. It was gathered that paddy seeds in the initial years were supplied to the farmers by the government.

9.4. Reclamation and levelling of wet rice land were done by the people themselves only with spade and dao. No machinery was used for the purpose to the last moment. In the manner of jhum cultivation a family demarcated an area and reclaimed and levelled it and later it became their own land.

9.5. For the first six years of wet rice cultivation land was tilled only with spade. Then buffalo was used. One person used to draw the buffalo /es and another took hold of the plough. This system continued for about 10 years. After this one person could plough with a pair of buffaloes or with one buffalo. Bullocks have been used to draw plough very recently, i.e., approximately about 10 years back.

9.6. Transactions of wet rice land is made even now only among the Dimasas. No non-Dimasa is allowed to purchase land in the area. But non-Dimasas are allowed to cultivate as share-croppers. Even then there is a feeling among the local Dimasas that the non-Dimasas should not be allowed even as share-croppers.

10. Irrigation in the wet rice cultivation land :

10.1. Irrigation was a must in the wet rice cultivation in the area from the very beginning as the rain water dries up immediately because of the proximity to the Diyung river. Arrangements for irrigating the paddy fields were made by the farmers at their own. They constructed dams on the river Diyung and necessary canals were also dug to the paddy fields by themselves. For this purpose, each family had to contribute one worker for one boa(4 bighas) of wet rice land. When more workers for the construction of dams and canals were necessary, two workers per boa had to work. Thus, the whole arrangement for irrigation was made in a mutual cooperative basis. The Civil S.D.O. of Haflong was instrumental in planning the whole irrigation system.

10.2. Irrigation in Khejurbond and in other parts of the N.C.Hills District where wet rice cultivation is practised

is most essential as the topography and the nature of the soil is such that rain water percolates quickly into the sub-soil strata and runs off to nearby rivers. So the irrigation systems in the N.C.Hills District are mainly meant for providing water to the Kharif Crop from June to November. Owing to the scarcity of sufficient water in the rivers so far covered by the minor irrigation schemes in the district during winter season it is not possible to help Rabi cultivation by irrigation. Moreover, the local tribal people are also yet to take initiative to go for wet cultivation during Rabi season.

10.3. The irrigation system constructed by the local farmers at Kalachand was not sufficient to provide water to the entire area and so it could not help in bringing more area under wet cultivation. The input in terms of labour man-days was also very high because of the temporary nature of the irrigation system as the turbulent Diyung river used to wash away the dams often during the time of flooding. So the Irrigation Division of <sup>the</sup> N.C.Hills, Haflong took over the charge of the irrigation systems in Kalachand along with other parts of the district during the First Five Year Plan (1951-52 to 1955-56).

10.4. As soon as the Government declared its intention of taking over of the irrigation systems at Kalachand the local people gave up the practice of constructing dams, etc., for irrigating their farms. On the other hand, it was not possible on the part of the Government Department to complete the irrigation schemes within a year. As a result, wet rice cultivation could not be done in Khejurbond area

for three years from the beginning upto the time of completion of the irrigation scheme by the Government Department.

10.5. At present there are two types of Minor Irrigation Schemes in N.C.Hills District. They are : (1) Flow Irrigation Scheme, and (2) Lift Irrigation Scheme. The irrigation scheme which has been serving Khejurbond village is of the latter type. It was constructed at a total cost of Rs.3,58,733.00 with the expectation of irrigating 120 hectares of land. But in actual practice, the only canal under this scheme, which is 2.55 km. in length from the river has been benefiting an area of 40 hectares only. Improvement of this scheme is reported to be under investigation. The average annual expenditure in maintenance of the Khejurbond Lift Irrigation Scheme including repairs to machineries, cost of P.O.L., w/c establishments, etc. is Rs.93.967.00.

10.6. While writing about the irrigation facilities in the wet rice land of the farmers of Khejurbond, something about the other irrigation schemes existing in Kalachand area as a whole is to be reckoned as because the people of Khejurbond do possess wet land in other villages also besides Khejurbond. Similarly, people from other villages also own land within Khejurbond village. There were 7 irrigation schemes including Khejurbond irrigation scheme in Kalachand area. Of these 5 were flow irrigation schemes while the rest two were lift irrigation schemes. The total length of canals under these schemes is 21.34 km. and these canals supply water to 1028 hectares of land. The average

cost of laying irrigation systems in Kalachand area is estimated to be in between Rs.4,000/- to Rs.4,500/- per hectare and the average annual maintenance cost comes to Rs.400.00 per hectare.\*

11. Mode of Production :

11.1. All the hill tribes of N.E.India practise shifting cultivation on the slopes of the hills. The Dimasas are no exception to this. As the introduction of wet rice cultivation in the Dimasa villages of the N.C. Hills District is of recent origin, the people there have not yet been able to adjust entirely to the new system. On the other hand, supply of suitable land for wet rice cultivation is insufficient. So dependence on jhum cultivation is still continuing. In other words, the Dimasas of Khejurbond still practise jhum cultivation simultaneously with wet rice cultivation.

11.2. It must be mentioned here that the problem of scarcity of wet land is the main cause of the presence of only a few surplus paddy growers in the village though they practise jhum cultivation and wet paddy cultivation simultaneously. The problem of scarcity of jhum land has also becoming acute. It has been mentioned earlier that for each village there is a demarcated area called Simana where the people of that village practise their jhum cultivation. But with the shortening of the jhum cycle to three years and rise in population, clearing of jhum area according to one's own need has become a myth in Khejurbond. The people of Khejurbond

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\* Source of data on irrigation - The Executive Engineer,  
N.C.Hills Irrigation Division, Haflong.

maintain some sort of ownership right over jhum land in a somewhat loose sense. The land cleared and cultivated by a particular family in a year can never be cleared and cultivated by any other family in the subsequent jhum cycle without due permission from the former family. And as land is scarce, permission is usually not given. Again, the number of Dimasa family is multiplied along with the marriage of a boy. As soon as he establishes his new household everything including economic activities is maintained separately from that of his parents. As a result, the jhum land under the occupation of a man gets separated among his married sons. This has rather increased the problems of fragmentation and of availability of jhum land. On the whole, it is a fact that jhum land has also become scarce among the villagers of Khejurbond.

11.3. The important crops produced in jhum land are paddy, cotton, sesamum, mustard seeds, vegetables, etc. Paddy is sown in the jhum land in mixture with some vegetables. Cotton, sesamum and mustard seeds are cultivated separately as monocrops. Though paddy is produced both in jhum land as well as in wet land, there are only a few surplus farmers in the village. On the other hand, cotton is exclusively cultivated as a cash crop. Major portion of income from agriculture of the farmers comes from the sale of cotton. Sesamum and mustard are also two cash crops; but the area under them is small and hence production is not so significant in the village economy.

11.4. The villagers could have improved their economy had they taken to Rabi crops in wet rice land. But for this,

there are two major handicaps. The first one is the lack of irrigated water during the season. The second one, which is by no means less significant is that of stray cattle - particularly buffaloes. The Dimasas let loose their cattle after harvest of the Kharif crop. In a sense the buffalo population of the Dimasas may be characterised as semi-wild.

11.5. As an alternative measure to the destructive jhum cultivation the Soil Conservation Department of the N.C.Hills District constructed terraces in 865.0 hectares of land in the district. But it was learnt that the available hill slopes in and around Khejurbond are suitable only for dry terracing because of the lack of source for irrigation. The Soil Conservation Department has not yet taken up any Scheme of dry terracing in the district. The Department reclaimed 212 hectares of land and brought 1812 hectares under afforestation during 1969-70 to 1977-78. The same Department brought 104.4 hectares, 3.0 hectares and 8.7 hectares of land of the district under coffee, rubber and black-pepper plantation respectively during the said period. But so far, Khejurbond village has not ~~yet~~ been touched by any of these schemes, perhaps, for the non-suitability of soil.\*

11.6. The people of Khejurbond could have earned a lot from the milk of their buffaloes. But because of their tradition, they do not milk a buffalo or a cow. The buffaloes are reared mainly for drawing the plough. Rearing

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\* Source of data of this paragraph is the Office of the Divisional Officer, N.C.Hills Soil Conservation Division, Haflong.

of cows was a taboo among the Dimasas. Even now, it was reported, many Dimasa villages do not rear cows at all. In Khejurbond, only a few households have started rearing cows. A rich Dimasa possesses a big herd of cows at a separate farm located at about 3 km. from the village. Those cows are looked after there by some non-Dimasas hired for the purpose. These labourers besides looking after the cows milk them also. It was reported that the owner does not take anything earned from the sale proceeds of milk.



### CHAPTER III

#### A SOCIOLOGICAL NOTE ON THE DIMASAS.

##### 1. Introduction :

1.1. The North Cachar Hills District is the abode of several tribal groups, viz. the Bietes, Kukis, Hmars, Karbis, Nagas, Kholmas, Khasis and Rangkhols besides the Dimasas. The total population of the district in 1971 was 76,047. The other hill tribes, unlike the Dimasas mostly dwell on hill tops and their individual population is much lower than that of the Dimasas. The percentage of Dimasa population to the total district scheduled tribe population is 51.88 and that to the total district population is 35.87. So the Dimasas are the most dominant tribe in the district.\*

##### 2. A Brief History of the Dimasas :

2.1. The Kacharis are believed to be the original inhabitants of Assam. In the Brahmaputra valley the Kacharis call themselves Bodos or Bodo-fisa (son of Bodo) and in the North Cachar Hills District they call themselves Dimasas. Besides the North Cachar Hills District, Dimasa people are found in the districts of Karbi Anglong, <sup>Nongstang,</sup> Cachar and in Dimapur area of Nagaland. The total population of the Dimasas

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\* Population break up of the N.C.Hills District : (1) Dimasa-27,280; (2) Biete-1,598; (3) Kuki-4,156; (4) Hmar-4,704; (5) Karbi-3,899; (6) Naga-8,150; (7) Kholma-471; (8) Khasi-1,218; and (9) Ranghol-1,107; Total S.T. population - 52,583; S.C. population - 826; Others-22,638 and total population of the district - 76,047. Source - Election Office, N.C.Hills District, Haflong.

was 68,718 according to 1961 Census (1971 Census data about Dimasa population is not available).

2.2. Mythologically, the Kacharis trace their origin to Hidimba or Haidimba, the demoness residing in Dimapur area (now in Nagaland). While in exile, Prince Bhima, the second of the Pandavas happened to meet and marry her. As a result of their union Prince Ghatotkocha was born to them. He ruled the Kacharis with his capital at Dimapur and fought gallantly for the Pandavas in the great Kurukshetra war of the Epic.

2.3. The Kacharis are supposed to be a section of the Tibeto-Burman family. The original place of this race was somewhere between the Yarkhanddaria and the Khasgurdaria rivers in the Gobi desert of Central Asia. They came down to Assam in successive waves and settled down here permanently. They even migrated to the south as far as Tipperah hills. Gradually as their population increased in numbers, they travelled by land and water to Nilachal hills near Gauhati. From Nilachal they migrated south-east and finally settled down at Dimapur. At the beginning of the 13th century, they occupied the western portion of Sibsagar District and a large part of Nowgong District. The ruins of Dimapur still remain there as evidences of the Kachari civilization.

2.4. Both Hunter (1879) and Gait (1905) believed that at one time the major part of Assam, N.E. Bengal, Sylhet and Maimansingh formed the great Kachari kingdom. The Koches, Chutias, Lalungs, Rabhas, Morans, Garos and the Tipperah are believed to be sub-tribes of the Kacharis

(Endle, 1911; Gait, 1905; Barkataky, 1969).

2.5. Since the beginning of the 13th century the Kacharis were ruling over the western part of Sibsagar District, Nowgong District and the northern part of <sup>the</sup> N.C.Hills District with their capital at Dimapur. The Ahoms, a race of people of the great Shan family who migrated to Assam in the beginning of the 13th century A.D. attacked and defeated the Kacharis in 1536 and since then the Ahoms continuously harassed the Kacharis. As a result, the Kacharis shifted their capital to Maibang. Rudra Singh, the greatest Ahom King invaded the Kachari kingdom in 1706 and ran-sacked Maibang. The Kachari king fled to Khaspur in Cachar District and established his new capital there. Ultimately, the Kachari kingdom was annexed to the British India in 1832.

2.6. In Dimasa language Di means water or river, ma means great and sa means sons. So the etymological meaning of the word Dimasa means sons of the great river or simply river folks. There is a popular legend among the Dimasas as to how they came to be known as Dimasas and the circumstances which were responsible for their separation from the Kacharis.

2.7. Prior to 1961, the Dimasas were considered as a sub-tribe of the Kacharis. In the 1961 Census the Dimasas were recognised as a separate tribe.

### 3. Religion of the Dimasas :

3.1. The Dimasas were originally Saktas. They use to worship Siva and Durga in the name of Sibrai and Matongma respectively. Besides Sibrai and Matongma they worship

certain other gods and goddesses and spirits and ghosts. It is evident that both Aryan and non-Aryan elements are present in the Dimasa religion.

3.2. With the formal conversion of king Krishna Chandra to Hinduism in 1790 A.D. Hinduism became the royal religion in the Kachari kingdom. Some shrewd priests of Sylhet declared the king to be pure Hindu by passing him through the womb of a specially designed copper cow and this was considered as his ceremonial re-birth. Meanwhile the Vaisnava sacred book "Naradiya Purana" was translated by Bhuboneswar Bachaspati (1733) of Srihatta into spoken dialect and the holy Bhagawat Purana was read and explained daily in the royal court.

3.3. At present the Dimasas are Hindu by religion. Even then, they continue to perform certain religious rites in their traditional way. Most of the hill tribes of the N.C. Hills were converted to Christianity. But the Dimasas, unlike them, did not become Christians.

3.4. The Hinduised religious rites among the Dimasas of Cachar District are performed by Brahmin priests. But Brahmin priests could not cross over to the N.C.Hills as Tularam Senapati, the last independent Dimasa Chieftain, revolted against the Brahmanic system of religion. So Dimasa people belonging to different villages of the N.C.Hills have their own priest called Hojai. The office of the Hojai is not hereditary. A person who knows the art of performing the pujas can act as a Hojai.

3.5. The Dimasas still adhere to some of their traditional pujas and these are performed at different times.

according to necessity. Some of the Dimasa pujas are : (1) Naikhuraja, (2) Gerba puja, (3) Hamalai puja, (4) Saini puja, (5) Mayopa puja, (6) Demachikheiba or Duyongchibleiba, (7) Ranchandi, (8) Herendi, (9) Aluraja, (10) Landi: raja, (11) Waraja, (12) Mungrang, (13) Dilanju, (14) Daingkao, (15) Dam brama, (16) Kasame, (17) Sam biam, (18) Larikogong, (19) Desime, (20) Dakinsapuja, (21) Mainu Gerba and (22) Maibar Dingba or Maimupuja. The last three pujas are associated with jhum cultivation. Besides taking part in Durga puja and Saraswati puja, the Dimasas perform Saraswati puja at their home on any day in the evening for the welfare of the students.

#### 4. Pollution and Purity :

4.1. Pollution and purity are very closely related with any religion. At child birth pollution is observed for a month. In a sense this pollution is observed by the whole village. If a puja is to be performed within the village before the fall of umbilical cord of a new-born baby then a puja named Daocha-Ratharba has to be performed before the intending puja. This is a purificatory puja. The woman who attend the mother at time of delivery of the child performs this puja with two small male fowls in the compound of the new-born baby. The entire expenditure for the puja has to be borne by the father of the new-born child.

4.2. On the day of the fall of the umbilical cord of the baby a purificatory ceremony called Hatharba is observed. After a thorough cleaning of the household water with Tulashi (ocimum) leaves is sprinkled throughout the houses.

4.3. On a convenient day after the fall of the umbilical cord, the family concerned arrange rice beer and meat (mutton or pork) and all the villagers are entertained during the day time. Guests are also invited. On this day, money is also paid to the Hojaijek (local mid-wife) who helped in the delivery as a token of honour. The amount, however, depends on the ability of the household. The invitees may offer presents to the baby. This function is known as Bising Jiriba.

4.4. In <sup>the</sup> case of death of a person the members of the family concerned observe fast for only one day. There is no hard and fast rule of pollution when death occurred. Other people may take meal, etc. in the family concerned after 2/3 days.

4.5. A woman is not allowed to cook meal during her menstruation period. However, there is no fixed days regarding pollution in this case. She can cook meal as soon as she is cleaned of her menstrual cycle.

4.6. The Dimasas do not allow a non-Dimasa to enter inside their house. Even now, in many a Dimasa villages this custom is in vogue. Though this system of avoidance is reported to be not very old it is a fact this was introduced only to avoid pollution resulting from the entry of a non-Dimasa inside their house.

#### 5. Clan Organisation :

5.1. The lineage system of the Dimasas is basically different from other neighbouring hill tribes. The Dimasas follow a unique type of double descent. The male children always reckon their descent along the male line, i.e., father's line which is their primary affiliation to clan while the

female children always reckon their descent along the female line, i.e., mother's line which is their primary affiliation to clan. The male line of descent is called Sengfong and the female line is known as Jaddi (in some areas it is Julu or Juluk). Besides primary affiliation to his father's Sengfong a boy is related to his mother's Jaddi which is his secondary affiliation. Similarly, in the case of a girl, in addition to her primary affiliation to the mother's Jaddi, she has secondary affiliation to her father's Sengfong; but she is formally adopted to her husband's Sengfong after her marriage. They use their respective clan name as their title. But now-a-days, the women also use either their father's or husbands' Sengfong, as the case may be, as their title.

5.2. Seng means sword and befong means the handle. This indicates that the sword inheritance might have initially led to the creation of the Sengfongs among the Dimasas. The creation of the Sengfongs is reported to be of much earlier than the Jaddis. There were only 7 Sengfongs when the Dimasa kings ruled in Dimapur. The number of Sengfongs rose to 16 (12 according to some) at Maibang and later on it increased to 42.

5.3. The increase in the number of Sengfongs at Maibang was necessitated perhaps to distinguish the other tribal people who were converted to Dimasa there. Jaddis were probably created during the Dimasa reign at Maibang. The Dimasas believe that the creation of the Jaddis at Maibang was a means to prevent their forefathers from marrying women from non-Dimasa tribes of the neighbourhood.

5.4. There is another story regarding the multiplicity of Sengfongs. After the formal conversion to Hinduism, the Dimasa kings visited Kashi, Brindaban and such other pilgrimages spending lots of money. So in order to compensate the expenditure, the king awarded new Sengfongs to different groups of people and thus collected money from them.

5.5. It may be mentioned here that there is no hierarchical order among the Sengfongs and the Jaddis. But there are certain restrictions in food habits among some Sengfongs. In other words, members of certain Sengfongs are debarred from taking certain items of food, e.g., pork. But this neither increases nor decreases the status of the clan in comparison to others.

5.6. At present there are 42 Sengfongs and 42 Jaddis in Dimasa society. Meaning of all the Sengfongs and the Jaddis are not known even to the Dimasas. Some of the clan names are after the names of river, mountain, bird, tree, etc. But these are not considered as totems and so the clans are not totemistic at all.

5.7. According to Dimasa tradition two women belonging to different Jaddis never touch each others clothes, personal articles of use including hair oil, combs, etc. Because of clan exogamy, a daughter-in-law married to a family belongs to a Jaddi other than that of her mother-in-law and sister-in-law (husband's sisters). And this naturally brings together women of separate Jaddis which creates the problem of avoidance of touching each others personal articles as mentioned above. As a measure of convenience the boy



separates from his parents after his marriage.

6. Marriage and Divorce :

6.1. Marriage among the Dimasas is strictly monogamous. The Dimasas strictly observe tribe endogamy and clan exogamy in settling a marriage. As mentioned earlier a Dimasa person has affiliation to two clans. A Dimasa boy cannot marry either from his father's Sengfong or from his mother's Jaddi i.e., the Jaddi and Sengfong of the bride must be other than those of the boy's mother and father. Violation of this double clan exogamy rule leads to ex-communication. It is learnt that violation of this rule is very rare among the Dimasas.

6.2. The negotiations of a Dimasa marriage is an elaborate process. The boy's father or in his absence a close relative goes to the girl's parents for negotiating the marriage. The father may be accompanied by some other persons also. After presenting a packet of about 1 kg. salt (Sandy) the father of the boy discloses the intention of his visit. The girl's parents provisionally accept the present. The acceptance of the present indicates that the marriage might be held. But if at a later stage the girl's parents disagree to give their daughter in marriage, the packet of salt is returned. On a subsequent day, the groom's father with some other persons visits the girl's family with presents of rice-beer for finalising the marriage. In the meantime the bride's parents consult the clan members. If clan members approve<sup>of</sup> the marriage the groom's father is informed accordingly on his arrival. With much joy and happiness rice beer is consumed and a day is fixed for the

marriage. Here on this day the bride price (Kalti) is also finalised. Sometimes a third meeting is held between the boy's party and the girl's party to finalise the amount of bride price which is to be paid in cash on the day of marriage. The amount of Kalti differs depending on the economic condition of the boy's family. In Khejurbond it was found that bride price varies from Rs.30/- to Rs.225/-.

6.3. The marriage ceremony takes place at the house of the bride. If the bride groom hails from a distant village, he along with his marriage party is to arrive in the bride's village on the preceding day of the marriage ceremony. The marriage ceremony which is quite simple is performed during the day time in the courtyard of the bride. Care is taken not to finalise the date of marriage on Sunday, Tuesday and Saturday as these days are considered to be inauspicious by the Dimasas.

6.4. The people of the bride groom party leave the bride's residence after the ceremony is over leaving the bridegroom to stay there for three days. After three days the bridegroom along with his bride can go to his parents' house to stay there for a couple of days. Then the couple returns to the bride's house where he ordinarily stays for a year or until he can raise his own home. During the stay at the house of the girl, the boy has to help his parents-in-law in their domestic activities. The period of stay at one's father-in-law's residence after marriage is called 'min-ha-ba'. Of course, the period of min-ha-ba now-a-days varies according to the need of the time.

6.5. Widow remarriage is socially allowed among the Dimasas. In their society, the widow of an elder brother

can be married by his unmarried younger brother. But a man cannot marry the widow of his younger brother. Similarly, a widower can marry the unmarried younger sister of his deceased wife. But one cannot marry the elder sister of his wife. Child marriage is almost unheard of in Dimasa society.

6.6. Divorce is not unknown to the Dimasas. On reasonable ground divorce is allowed in Dimasa society. A man divorcing his wife does not get back the Kalti (Bride-price). But if a woman is divorced for committing adultery she is to pay a fine to the husband besides returning the Kalti and the presents given to her by <sup>the</sup> husband. Conversely, if divorce takes place because of adultery committed by the husband, he forfeits the right to claim the return of Kalti as well as the presents he gave. Divorce finally comes into effect along with the declaration of the Khunang, the head gaonbura. After divorce one is free to remarry performing all the customs of a fresh marriage.

#### 7. Family :

7.1. The Dimasa family is generally nuclear consisting of husband and wife and their unmarried children. Because of clan exogamy on both father's and mother's line and the restrictions imposed on using common clothes, combs, hair oil or any other things by two women belonging to different Jaddis staying of a bride <sup>permanently</sup> in her father-in-law's residence is not possible. So it is a custom for a Dimasa boy to erect his separate house after his marriage to live there with his wife. Again, even unintentional touch between a married woman and her husband's elder brother is punishable under the custom. So a Dimasa family cannot be extended

either vertically or horizontally.

7.2. A boy can stay in the house of his father-in-law during the period of min-ha-ba or so long he cannot set up his separate house. Again, there is no restriction for a widow to stay with her married daughter. Dimasa families of these types may be called Special or Irregular type of family. Because of the restrictions on staying together of two women belonging to different Jaddis, even the sisters cannot live with their married brothers. If an unmarried girl loses both the parents and if she has no unmarried brother she has either to stay separately or with her married sister. In the former case, of course, her married brother looks after her in the event of his living in the same village. Similarly, if a widower having some daughters by his first wife marries for the second time a wife whose Jaddi is different from that of his deceased wife he will have to arrange separate house for the stay of his daughters from the first wife. Because of all these factors the size of a Dimasa family is generally not large.

7.3. It is observed that the Dimasa boys prefer to erect his new house near the residence of his father-in-law after his marriage. In this way, the boy migrates to his wife's village in the case of inter village marriage. On the other hand, in the case of intra-village marriage he constructs his house near his wife's parents house. But it is observed that a boy belonging to a village where wet rice cultivation is practised does not migrate to his wife's village.

7.4. In Dimasa society father's property both moveable and immovable is traditionally inherited by the sons

equally. But there is restriction on inheritance of the father's property by the daughters. If the father dies without a son, his property naturally goes to his daughters - not necessarily to the next line of male heirs. If the father pleases, he can give certain share of his property to his daughters also. But in no case a gun can be inherited by a daughter. On the other hand, property possessed by a mother - like ornaments, clothes, money, etc., are shared only by the daughters - not by any son.

7.5. From the foregoing discussions on family it has become clear that the Dimasa family is neither patrilocal nor matrilocal. It is something in between.

### 8. Disposal of Dead Body :

8.1. The Dimasas cremate their dead bodies. A child without bearing any tooth is buried. Similarly, a person who dies an unnatural death or a woman dying during child birth or a person dying of leprosy, blackfever, etc. is buried.

8.2. After the death of a person his friends and relatives are informed of and accordingly they come to the house of the deceased. All the co-villagers also assembled at the house of the deceased leaving aside all their works. They share the works amongst themselves for the arrangement of the cremation. A cock is sacrificed or in lieu an egg is broken near the head of the dead <sup>by one</sup> male member of the family. The Dimasas believe that the soul of the cock will lead the deceased to the next world.

8.3. According to the Dimasa custom, the dead body is laid prostrate on the ground placing his head either

towards the west or the north. The body is then purified by washing with water and covered with new or clean clothes. The dead body is carried on a bier made of bamboo to the cremation ground by four men. A dead body can even be carried by women also. Those who carry (no non-Dimasa is allowed to do this) the dead body are entitled to get the legs of the animal/s, sacrificed at the post funeral ceremony. Rice beer is offered to the deceased before placing the corpse on the funeral pyre. There is no hard and fast rule as to who should set fire to the pyre. Two of the persons who carry the corpse (sons or anybody who carry) set fire to the pyre from two sides. After completion of burning a piece of charred bone is preserved for use in the shraddha ceremony.

8.4. All the personal articles used by the deceased are placed on the place of funeral. In the case of a female a complete loom and other articles of her use are kept there. It is a custom to burn all the clothes of the deceased in the funeral pyre. Similarly, in the case of unnatural death, everything personal of the deceased except immovable property and sword or gun is destroyed. The post funeral ceremony (maimu tharba) is to be performed in between the seventh day of death and the next harvest or Busu. But in the case of unnatural death, the maimutharba is to be performed just after the cremation. The restrictions and taboos associated with an unnatural death are more rigid and strict than a natural death. For example, the women of the clan of the deceased are debarred from weaving for one and a half months.

9. Nodrang :

9.1. Nodrang, the boys' dormitory, usually situated at the centre of the village plays an important part in the village organisation. Village boys from the age of 13 or 14 years upto the time of marriage are supposed to spend their nights in the Nodrang. But now-a-days, staying at Nodrang is not compulsory and most of the boys stay at their own residence. All the youths of the village irrespective of their stay at Nodrang are automatically its members. An efficient boy is selected as Nagahoja (leader) of the Nodrang. Though the girls do not enjoy the dormitory life yet their participation in the socio-cultural functions of the Nodrang is obvious. So a girl is also selected as Malahoja (female leader) who is to work jointly with the Nagahoja. But in no case a woman is allowed to enter inside the Nodrang.

9.2. Besides arrangement for sleeping, musical instruments like drum (Khram), flute (Murri) are kept in the Nodrang. During the evening the boys gather there and practise dancing and playing on the musical instruments or gossip with friends. The Nodrang becomes very active during the time of Busu, the annual harvest festival. The whole arrangement for the Busu observation including traditional dance is done by the village youths under the leadership of the Nagahoja and the Malahoja.

9.3. The members of the Nodrang readily help a widow in repair and construction of houses or help a family in cultivation if it fails to complete it in due time. For such help an appeal must be made either by the party concerned or by the village elders. The village youths -

both boys and girls work together in the farms of the villagers to collect money to celebrate Hansau Manaoba festival in the village. This festival is very expensive and so it is observed usually at an interval of at least three years. In Dimasa village, the Nodrang is the only place for the night halt of a visiting non-Dimasa as the Dimasas do not allow a non-Dimasa to enter their own residences.

10. Dimasa Villages :

10.1. The Dimasa villages of the N.C.Hills are usually situated at foot hills. Unlike the neighbouring Naga tribes, the Dimasas do not establish their villages on the top of hills. At the time of selecting a new site for a village the Dimasas give due importance to - (i) nearness to source of water, and (ii) nearness to the field of cultivation. So most of the Dimasa villages of the N.C. Hills are found to be situated near a river or a stream.

10.2. The houses are erected in a somewhat semi-circular pattern leaving open space at the Centre for the Nodrang. The houses are constructed very closely in a compact way. With the multiplication of families some irregularity in the semi-circular pattern is observed. The households belonging to a particular Sengfong do not necessarily cluster together. The families of different Sengfongs are dispersed all over the village according to their convenience. It is, of course, customary for an immigrant family to formally take permission from members of the founder clan of the village to settle in the village.

10.3. The Dimasa houses are rectangular in shape. The size of the houses varies according to the size of the



family and the economic condition. The houses are usually constructed with bamboo, thatch, cane, etc. which were formerly easily available in the nearby jungles. But now-a-days, in many a villages these materials have to be purchased. The Dimasa houses have two important parts. The front room used by the males and guests is called Nokhong and the inner room known as Noshing is used by the females and for keeping clothes, utensils, etc. A corner of the Noshing is used for cooking purposes and meal is also taken there. The granary is either separately constructed or the corns are kept somewhere inside the main house in big baskets. They raise separate sheds for poultry birds and pigs.

10.4. Unlike many other hills tribes, the Dimasas do not erect their houses on raised platform. They construct their dwelling houses on raised bed of earth like the Assamese people. The floor of the house is plastered with mud. The whole compound, which is not very big, is encircled with a high fence of splitted bamboo or ekra reeds.

#### 11. Village Leadership :

11.1. Every Dimasa village has a village council of which every adult male is a member. They have three gaonburas (village headmen) in every village in a hierarchical order. The Khunang is the head gaonbura. The deputy headman is called the Dilik and the assistant headman is called Haffaiskao.

11.2. The posts of the headmen are neither hereditary nor they are promoted from one junior post to a senior one.

They are rather elected. But if the son of a particular headman is found to be otherwise qualified he can succeed his father provided the villagers agree to it. Ordinarily an influential person from the numerically dominant male clan is made the Khunang. Care is always taken to see that the Khunang, the Dilik and Haffaiskao belong to different clans. The posts are not for the whole life also. One can retire from the office when he feels that he can no longer serve his co-villagers properly. In his place a new person is selected to the vacant post. The office of the Khunang, or the Dilik or the Haffaiskao may be challenged by the villagers if they are unhappy with him. Though normally, the villagers select their Khunang, the authority of final approval of the Khunangship is vested in the District Council without which one cannot act as a Khunang. Similar approval of <sup>the</sup> District Council, however, is not necessary in the cases of the Dilik and the Haffaiskao.

11.3. There are division of duties among the three headmen. The important duties of a Khunang are to collect house tax, to preside over village dispute cases, to receive a govt. officer on duty in the village, to organise village functions, to attend govt. offices as and when called for, etc. The Dilik is to officiate as Khunang as and when asked by the latter or during his absence. Similarly, the Haffaiskao is also to assist the Khunang in performing his duties. The Khunang, the Dilik and the Haffaiskao get no honorarium for their services. The Khunang is, of course, exempted from paying house tax and land revenue, if there is any. But in all socio-religious

functions in the village they must be invited.

11.4. Generally the decision of the village council is honoured by the villagers; but this is not binding on them. If either of the parties is unsatisfied with the decision of the village council/<sup>then</sup>the mouzadar who has the power of a third class magistrate can be approached. If the person is not satisfied with the decision of the mouzadar the case may be taken to the District Council and thereafter finally to the Civil Court and so on. Inter village disputes within the jurisdiction of a mouzadar are settled by him. If the conflicting parties happen to belong to two different mouzas, then the mouzadars of the concerning mouzas, settle the dispute. This type of case may also be taken to the District Council and then to the Civil Court; but only after the verdict of the mouzadar has been announced.

## 12. Dress and Food Habits :

12.1. The dress of the Dimasas is very simple. The males wear a kind of short dhoti (falling just below the knee) which they call Risa. The risas are coloured and the most popular colours are yellow and green. On the upper part the males put on shirt. Formerly, it is said, all adult males used to wear turban (Sidaupa) and the length of the turban cloth was as long as 30 to 45 feet. At present only a few old persons wear turban on ceremonial occasions. The Dimasas believe that in olden times their forefathers used to put on dhoti down to the ankle. According to them the use of turban and ankle-deep dhoti in their traditional dances are ample proof of their claim.

12.2. The Dimasa women require three pieces of clothes for their dress. On the lower part they wear Rigu (like Assamese Mekhela). They cover their upper part of the body with a piece of cloth called Rijamphai. They use another piece of cloth known as Rikhaousa over their heads like a veil. But Rikhaousa is not used by them all the time. All these home-made clothes are coloured and beautifully embroidered.

12.3. Now-a-days the Dimasa women put on blouse also. The school going girls simply wear the Rigu and a blouse. Most of the young boys and the urban dwellers use all types of modern garments. Wearing Sari and Mekhela chaddar like Assamese women by the Dimasa educated women is also not uncommon.

12.4. Like all other women, it is observed that the Dimasa women also have some weaknesses towards ornaments. Some of their common ornaments are Khadu (bracelet), Longbar (earring), Iaochidam (ring), Gongsam (necklace), Chandrawal (necklace), Rangbasa (necklace of silver coins), etc. Most of the ornaments are made of silver. It is reported that the Dimasas do not put on ornaments on the nose and the foot. At present no male wears anything on the ear. It is learnt that the males in olden times used to put on copper rings called khirik.

12.5. Rice is the staple food of the Dimasas. Usually they take meal three times a day. For their food the Dimasas mostly depend on their farm products. The Dimasas are very fond of home produced rice beer. They produce two kinds of rice beer, viz. Judima and Juharu. The former is much better

in taste and quality and more costly. For preparation of better rice beer they cultivate some special variety of paddy. Now-a-days distilled liquor has made its way among the Dimasas.

12.6. Naphlam (dry fish) is very popular among the Dimasas. Rearing of chicken for meat and egg is very common among them. They consume meat of pig, goat, etc. On some ceremonial occasions they take meat of buffalo also. But they never take beef. It is their tradition also not to drink cow's milk nor to rear cows. They prepare their curry with Khar (Soda) and mustard oil. They do not purchase soda from the market. It is prepared by them at home particularly from plantain tree. Tea is not yet so popular among the Dimasas.

### 13. Occupation:

13.1. The Dimasas of the N.C.Hills are mainly dependent on jhum cultivation. Besides rice and vegetables they cultivate sesamum, mustard seeds and cotton. Cotton is their most important cash crop. In addition to jhum cultivation, the Dimasas of the N.C.Hills are practising wet paddy cultivation where suitable land is available. But for want of sufficient land, the Dimasas of the N.C.Hills have not been able to completely depend on wet paddy cultivation. So jhum and wet paddy cultivation are practised side by side. Again for want of irrigation facilities, it is not possible for them to raise Rabi Crop in the wet land.

13.2. A few Dimasas, particularly from urban areas and semi-urban areas have emerged as petty contractors.

Another important feature in Dimasa economy is the emergence of casual labour or wage earner. Generally, it is difficult to find wage labourers among the hill tribes. But difficult situation in earning livelihood from cultivation, some opportunities to sell labour and contact with outside labours have paved the way to take up wage earning by some poor Dimasas.

13.3. As regards household industry, only weaving is found among the Dimasa women. They are expert weavers and they weave almost all their clothes at home. Rearing of endi silk and spinning endi yarns is also a source of additional income.

#### 14. Festivals :

14.1. Busu : The most important annual festival among the Dimasas of the N.C.Hills is the Busu\*. It is a post-harvest festival. There is no particular date for holding this festival. A convenient date is fixed by the village elders taking care that the final day of the Busu falls either on Tuesday or Saturday. This festival usually continues for three days. In finalising the date precaution is taken to avoid coincidence of Busu of neighbouring villages. This is done for the convenience of people from nearby villages to participate in each others' Busu. Generally this festival is celebrated sometime between December to February.

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\* Busu is similar to Bihu in Assam excepting the fact that Bihu has a fixed date for its celebration. There are, however, certain differences in the contents of the festival.

14.2. Busu is a community festival for the entire village. Everyone from the village irrespective of age and sex participates in it. All routine works of the village are suspended during the Busu festival. Guests and relatives from other villages are invited. People staying outside the village come home for the celebration. Sufficient quantity of food, Ju (rice beer), meat, etc. are arranged for consumption during the Busu.

14.3. In spite of the fact that people from both sexes and all ages take part in the Busu, it is basically a festival of the youth. The entire burden of organising the festival falls on the young boys and girls of the village. Under the leadership of the Nagahoja and the Malahoja (the male and female leaders of the Nodrang) all boys and girls of the village work unitedly for the success of the festival.

14.4. On the first day of the Busu some animals are killed for consumption in the community feast. A portion of the meat is distributed among the village households. In the afternoon the young boys of the village gather together in the courtyard of the Khunang (village headman) and formally announce the coming of the Busu. Some devotional songs are recited there by <sup>the</sup> middle aged villagers. Every household of the village has to contribute some quantity of Ju to be served at the Khunang's place. If the Khunang is not in a position to entertain the gathering with meat at his own cost then some other wealthy man of the village entertain the people with meat and Ju.

14.5. After completing the community feast in the evening, Busu dance begins at a specially erected pandel

near the Nodrang. No song is sung. The dancing takes place to the tune of Khram (drum) and Murry (flute). Everyone including the guests may participate in the dance and it continues for the whole night.

14.6. The second day of the Busu is very important. On this day the youngsters pay ceremonial respect to the elders. This is known as Busugaba. Some sports competitions are also organized on this day. In the evening dance continues like the first day. Visiting each others family during the three days is a custom. Visitors are entertained with Ju. Towards the end of the last night Langnungba puja <sup>is</sup> which/attended by only a few persons is performed. This puja is performed first at the entrance of the village and then at the exit. Busu dance comes to an end as soon as the Hojai (priest) moves for the puja. The guests must leave the village before the commencement of the puja. It is said that a guest who stays after the commencement of the puja has to stay for the whole year i.e. till the next Busu.

14.7. Hanseomanaba : This is a very elaborate form of the Busu. It is observed for seven days at a stretch. It is celebrated after every 3,5 or 7 years as it is very expensive.

14.8. For organizing this festival a couple of the village is selected as Gajaibao (leader). Preparation for this festival is done throughout the year. Under the leadership of the Gajaibao, the young boys and girls work together for the festival. Besides household subscription, the village youth use to collect money by working together



in the farms of such villagers who need labourers. Sometimes the village youth cultivate jhum land exclusively for the festival. Besides huge quantity of Ju, animals like buffalo, pig, goat, chicken are consumed in this festival. Uninterrupted continuation of Busu dance for the seven days and nights is a special attraction of this festival.

## CHAPTER IV

### DEMOGRAPHIC ASPECTS OF KHEJURBOND

#### 1. Total Population:

1.1. Khejurbond village consists of 40 households with a total population of 247 (123 male and 124 female) at the time of investigation in January/ February, 1978.

#### 2. The Family:

2.1. The families in the village are divided into two types, viz. nuclear and special. A nuclear family is one which consists of parents and unmarried children. A family having some relatives living together as its members is classified as special type. Table 4.1 shows that 35 families of the village belong to nuclear type and the rest 5 families belong to special type. The dominance of nuclear families is due to their traditional custom of establishing a new family for each married couple.

2.2. The distribution of households and population by size and family type of the village Khejurbond reveals that the size of the families varies from 2 to 4. The average size of a family in the village is found to be 6.2. The size is low because of predominance of nuclear type of families. The average size of the nuclear family in the village is 5.7, while that of the special family is 9.0.

#### 3. Clan Division:

3.1. The clan organisation of the Dimasas has already been discussed in Chapter III. Although the Dimasas have two kinds of clans, one patri-lineal and the other matri-lineal yet it was found that patri-clans or the Sengfongs were being commonly used in identification of households. The matri-clans (Jaddis) have their own usage. Unmarried girls also use the names of the patri-clans. It is therefore

Table 4.1  
Distribution of Population by size and Type of Families:  
Khejribond

No. of Families	No. of H.H.	Type of Families			No. of H.H.	Special			Total		
		M	Nuclear F	T		M	F	T	No. of H.H.	M	F
2	5	5	5	10	-	-	-	5	5	5	10
3	3	4	5	9	-	-	-	3	4	5	9
4	6	13	11	24	-	-	-	6	13	11	24
5	2	4	6	10	2	5	5	4	9	11	20
6	6	19	17	36	-	-	-	6	19	17	36
7	4	15	13	28	-	-	-	4	15	13	28
8	2	8	8	16	-	-	-	2	8	8	16
9	4	18	18	36	1	5	4	5	23	22	45
10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
11	3	14	19	33	-	-	-	3	14	19	33
12	-	-	-	-	1	8	4	1	8	4	12
13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<u>14</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>102</u>	<u>202</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>123</u>	<u>124</u>	<u>247</u>

convenient to classify the households according to the patri-clans in Khejurbond village. There were twelve such clans (See Table 4.2). Of these twelve patri-clans, Karigabsa Sengfong has the largest number of people (89) followed by the Khempraisa (36) and the Nunisa (27). Other clans were smaller in size ranging from 4 to 20 persons.

Table 4.2.

Distribution of Population according to clan and Sex,  
Khejurbond

Name of the Clan	No. of H.H.	No. of Persons		
		Male	Female	Total
1. Karigabsa	13	43	46	89
2. Khempraisa	6	19	17	36
3. Bodosa	4	11	9	20
4. Nunisa	3	14	13	27
5. Thaosensa	2	8	7	15
6. Hapheilasa	2	2	2	4
7. Jibragedesa	2	7	5	12
8. Johorisa	2	3	6	9
9. Khersa	2	5	5	10
10. Adasa	2	3	3	6
11. Hojaisa	1	4	7	11
12. Rajyungsa	1	4	4	8
Total	40	123	124	247

4. Distribution of Population by Age and Sex:

4.1. The distribution of population by age and sex in the village is shown in Table 4.3 which reveals that the percentages of people below 15 years of age is 46.15, 15-60 years is 47.77 and above 60 years is 6.07 only.

Table 4.3

Distribution of Population by Age and Sex: Khejurbond

Age-Group	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	P. c.	No.	P. c.	No.	P. c.
Below - 5	21	17.07	16	12.90	37	14.98
5 - 10	15	12.20	24	19.35	39	15.79
10 - 15	17	13.82	21	16.94	38	15.38
15 - 20	10	8.13	16	12.90	26	10.52
20 - 25	18	14.63	11	8.87	29	11.74
25 - 30	9	7.32	4	3.23	13	5.26
30 - 35	8	2.44	8	6.45	11	4.45
35 - 40	5	4.06	3	2.42	8	3.29
40 - 45	4	3.26	7	5.65	11	4.45
45 - 50	5	4.06	4	3.23	9	3.64
50 - 55	5	4.06	1	0.81	6	2.42
55 - 60	2	1.63	3	2.42	5	2.02
60 - 65	5	4.06	4	3.22	9	3.64
65 & above	4	3.26	2	1.61	6	2.42
Total	123	100.00	124	100.00	247	100.00

4.2. The total population of Khejurbond consists of 123 males and 124 females giving an overall sex ratio of 1008 females per 1000 males. Table 4.4 gives the sex ratio of the population according to age group. The number of females is higher than that of males in the age-groups between 5 to 20. High sex ratio is found in age group of 30-35.

Table 4.4

Proportion of Female per 1000 Male and its distribution  
by Age and Sex : Khejurbond

Age-Group	Male	Female	Female per 1000 male(Appro)
Below - 5	21	16	762
5 - - 10	15	24	1600
10 - - 15	17	21	1235
15 - - 20	10	16	1600
20 - - 25	18	11	611
25 - - 30	9	4	444
30 - - 35	3	8	2666
35 - - 40	5	3	600
40 - - 45	4	7	1750
45 - - 50	5	4	800
50 - - 55	5	1	200
55 - - 60	2	3	1500
60 - - 65	5	4	800
65 & above	4	2	500
<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>1008</b>

5. Marital Status:

5.1. Table 4.5 gives the distribution of population by age, sex and marital status. Of the total population 72 (29.15%) are married, 167 (67.61%) unmarried, 7(2.83%) widow/er and 1 (0.40%) divorced.

5.2. It may be pointed out that there was only one widower in the sample, but there were six widows. Out of these six widows, only one was below the age of 30 years and rest were above 55 years of age. There is no restriction of widow marriage in the Dimasa society. There was only one divorced female in the sample.

Table 4.5  
Distribution of Population by Age, Sex and  
Marital Status : Khe-jurbon

Age-group (Yrs.)	Married			Unmarried			Marital Status			Divorced			Total		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Below 5 Yrs.	-	-	-	21	16	37	-	-	-	-	-	-	21	16	37
5 - 10	-	-	-	15	24	39	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	24	39
10-15	-	-	-	17	21	38	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	21	38
15-20	-	1	1	10	15	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	16	26
20-25	3	8	11	15	3	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	18	11	29
25-30	4	3	7	5	-	5	-	1	1	-	-	-	9	4	13
30-35	2	6	8	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	1	1	3	8	11
35-40	4	2	6	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	3	8
40-45	3	7	10	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	7	11
45-50	5	4	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	4	9
50-55	5	1	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	1	6
55-60	2	1	3	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	2	3	5
60-65	5	3	8	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	5	4	9
65 & above	3	-	3	-	-	-	-	2	3	-	-	-	4	2	6
Total	36	37	72	86	81	167	1	6	7	-	1	1	123	124	247
	(14.57)	(14.57)	(29.14)	(34.82)	(32.79)	(67.61)	(0.40)	(2.43)	(2.83)	-	(0.40)	(0.40)	(49.80)	(50.20)	(100.00)

5.3. The age of marriage of the female is generally in between 15 to 20 years. There was no married women below the age of 15 years. The girls who are above 20 years of age are generally considered to have crossed the usual age of marriage. There are three unmarried girls in the age group 20-25 years. It is also evident that two girls in the age group of 30-40 years remain unmarried. The chances of these aged unmarried girls of getting married are almost remote. It is also found that 15 girls in the age group of 15-20 were unmarried.

5.4. The usual age at marriage of the males was found to be in between 25 to 30 years. But there were few cases of late marriages also. Out of twelve males in the age group of 25-35, six were unmarried. Two unmarried males, one each in 35-40 and 40-45 age group were also found (Table 4.5). No man married more than one wife in the village as they are traditionally monogamous.

#### 6. Literacy:

6.1. The overall rate of literacy in Khejurbond village was 30.36 per cent which compares favourably with the literacy rate of Assam. The rate is 37.40 per cent for male and 23.39 percent for female. This aspect is shown in Table 4.6.

#### 7. Educational Status:

7.1. Khejurbond village is advantageously situated in respect of educational facilities. At Kalachand, which is hardly one kilometre away from the village, there are one Lower Primary School, one Middle English School and one High School. Besides, Maibang, a growing township of the N.C. Hills district which is at a distance of about



Table 4.6.

Distribution of Population by Sex and Educational Standard, Khejurbond

Educational Standard	Male	Female	Total
Illiterate	77 (62.60)	95 (76.61)	172 (69.64)
Literate	12 ( 9.76)	3 ( 2.42)	15 ( 6.07)
Primary Standard	17 (13.82)	18 (14.52)	35 (14.17)
Upto M.E.	6 ( 4.88)	5 ( 4.03)	11 ( 4.45)
Matric Standard	8 ( 6.50)	3 ( 2.42)	11 ( 4.45)
I.A.,H.S/P.U.	3 ( 2.44)	-	3 ( 1.22)
B.A., M.A.	-	-	-
Total	123 (100.00)	124 ( 100.00)	247 (100.00)

Note : Figures within brackets indicate percentage of column total.

7 kilometres from the village also provides educational facilities. Table 4.7 shows the distribution of population in the village by age, sex and educational status.

7.2. Table 4.8 shows the educational status of the population from 15 years and above. In Khejurbond village 66.17 per cent (male 52.86 per cent and female 80.96 per cent) of adult population were found to be illiterate. Percentage of adult population with higher education was very low. Only 6.77 per cent belonged to the Matric standard and 2.25 per cent attained education above the Matric standard. There was not a single graduate in the village.

Table 4.7

Distribution of population by Age, Sex and Educational Status: Khejurbond.

Age-group	Illiterate		Literate		P.S.		M.F.		Educational Status		I.A.H.S.P.U.		Total		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	T	M	F	T	
Below 5Yrs.	21	16	37	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13(12.90)	37(11.98)
5 - 10	11	15	26	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	24(19.35)	39(15.79)
10 - 15	8	13	21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21(16.94)	38(15.39)
15 - 20	3	8	11	1	2	3	3	2	4	2	2	-	-	16(12.90)	26(11.53)
20 - 25	5	8	13	3	2	5	2	2	5	2	2	2	18(14.63)	11(8.87)	29(11.74)
25 - 30	6	3	9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9(7.31)	4(3.23)	13(5.26)
30 - 35	2	3	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3(2.44)	8(6.45)	11(4.45)
35 - 40	3	3	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5(4.07)	3(2.42)	8(3.24)
40 - 45	2	7	9	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	4(3.23)	7(5.64)	11(4.45)
45 - 50	3	4	7	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	4(3.23)	4(3.23)	9(3.64)
50 - 55	3	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5(4.67)	1(0.81)	6(2.43)
55 - 60	2	3	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2(1.63)	3(2.42)	5(2.03)
60 - 65	5	4	9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5(4.07)	4(3.23)	9(3.64)
65 & above	3	2	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4(3.25)	2(1.61)	6(2.43)
Total	77	95	172	12	3	15	17	18	35	6	5	11	3	124(100.00)	247(100.00)

Table 4.8 (a)  
Educational Status of Adult Members by Age and Sex, Khejurbond

Educational Level	Age Groups												
	15-25		25-35		35-45		45-55		55-65		65-75		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Illiterate	8 (28.57)	16 (59.25)	24 (43.64)	11 (91.67)	19 (79.16)	10 (100.00)	5 (55.56)	10 (100.00)	15 (78.95)	15 (78.95)	10 (100.00)	10 (100.00)	15 (78.95)
Literate	4 (14.29)	3 (11.11)	7 (12.73)	1 (8.33)	1 (4.17)	3 (33.33)	3 (33.33)	3 (33.33)	3 (15.79)	3 (15.79)	3 (33.33)	3 (33.33)	3 (15.79)
Primary Standard	4 (14.29)	4 (14.82)	8 (14.55)	1 (8.33)	3 (12.50)	1 (11.11)	1 (11.11)	1 (11.11)	1 (5.26)	1 (5.26)	1 (11.11)	1 (11.11)	1 (5.26)
Up to M.E.	3 (10.71)	2 (7.41)	5 (9.09)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Matric Standard	7 (25.00)	2 (7.41)	9 (16.35)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
I.A/P.U/ H.S.	2 (7.14)	-	2 (3.64)	1 (8.33)	1 (4.17)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
B.A/M.A.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	28 (100.00)	27 (100.00)	55 (100.00)	12 (100.00)	24 (100.00)	10 (100.00)	9 (100.00)	9 (100.00)	10 (100.00)	10 (100.00)	10 (100.00)	10 (100.00)	19 (100.00)

Contd.

Table 4.8 (b)

Educational Status of Adult Members by Age and Sex, Khejurbond

Educational Level	Age Groups												Total
	45-55		55-60		60 and Above								
	M	F	M	F	M	F	T	F	T	F	M	F	
Illiterate	6 (60.00)	5 (100.00)	11 (73.33)	3 (100.00)	2 (100.00)	3 (100.00)	5 (100.00)	8 (88.83)	6 (100.00)	14 (93.33)	37 (52.86)	51 (80.96)	88 (66.17)
Literate	3 (30.00)	-	3 (20.00)	-	-	-	1 (11.11)	-	-	1 (6.67)	12 (17.14)	3 (4.76)	15 (11.28)
Primary Standard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7 (10.00)	5 (7.94)	12 (9.02)
Up to M.E.	1 (10.00)	-	1 (6.67)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4 (5.71)	2 (3.17)	6 (4.51)
Matric Standard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7 (10.00)	2 (3.17)	9 (6.77)
I.A./P.U./H.S.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3 (4.29)	-	3 (2.25)
B.A./M.A.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	10 (100.00)	5 (100.00)	15 (100.00)	3 (100.00)	2 (100.00)	5 (100.00)	9 (100.00)	6 (100.00)	15 (100.00)	70 (100.00)	63 (100.00)	133 (100.00)	133 (100.00)

7.3 In Khejurbond village only 17.95 per cent persons in the age groups of 25 and above are literate and the rest 82.05 per cent are illiterate. This is somewhat strange because the Kalachand L.P. School was established in the year 1953. At least those in the age group 25-35 could have availed the primary educational facilities there. But the fact that even in this age group 54.43 per cent people are illiterate indicates that either their parents were indifferent or they themselves were apathetic towards education.

#### 8. School Going Children:

8.1. Number of school going children in different age groups and in different educational level in Khejurbond village is shown in Table 4.9. There are only 40 students in the village. Twenty four of them are in primary schools. Only 7 were attending M.E. school and 8 are attending High school at Kalachand. Only one male student of the village was attending college at Haflong. Number of female students attending high school is only 3 and no girl has ever passed

H.S.L.C examination from the village. No female student in the age-group of 20-25 years was attending high school.

8.2. There are altogether 77 boys and girls in the age group of 5-15 in the village. Out of these, only 30 boys and girls (38.96%) are attending school and the rest 47 (61.04%) are not attending school. Similarly, it may also be pointed out that there are a total number of 132 boys and girls in the age group of 5-25, and out of this only 40 (30.30%) are attending schools. Although the village is most advantageously situated as regards primary education facility the people there have shown apathy in sending their children to school. The children are used as helpers in domestic scores and certain agricultural operations and

Table 4.9  
No. of Schoolgoing Children According to Age-Group:  
Kheturbond

Age-Group (Years)	Primary			M.E.			H.E.			College			Total		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
5 - 10	4	9	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	9	13
10 - 15	6	4	10	2	3	5	1	1	2	-	-	-	9	8	17
15 - 20	1	-	1	1	1	2	1	2	3	-	-	-	3	3	6
20 - 25	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	3	1	-	1	4	-	4
Total	11	13	24	3	4	7	5	3	8	1	-	1	20	20	40

as a result their education stands neglected. However, situation has slightly changed for the better and the interest of people in educating their children is increasing in recent years.

9. Economic Status:

9.1. The working force and labour force of the village population are shown in Table 4.10. The economic status of the villagers is divided into three categories, viz. worker, helper and non-worker. A person who participates actively in economically gainful activities is considered as worker and a person who is not independently engaged in earning activity but help in productive pursuits of the family is taken as helper. Those who are not engaged in economic pursuits are considered as non-workers. Most of the helpers are school going children. Children, old and incapable persons are included in the category of non-workers. All other persons between the age-group of 15 to 65 and above are considered as labour force in the village.

9.2. Dividing the people on the basis of workers, helpers and non-workers it was found that 45.75 per cent of the population of Khejurbond could be deemed as full time workers. The percentage of workers among males is 53.98, and it was 46.02 among the females. Sex distribution by economic status shows that the number of male workers is higher to that of female workers. But among many tribal societies the percentage of female workers is found to be higher.

9.3. It will be evident from Table 4.10 that all persons in the age-group of 25 years and above excepting students were returned as workers. The non-workers were mainly children and persons above the age of 65. Thus there

Table 4.10  
Distribution of Population by Age, Sex and Economic Status  
Khejurbond

Age-Group (Yrs)	Economic Status										Total T													
	Worker					Non-Worker																		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T															
Below 5 Yrs.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
5 - 10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
10 - 15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
15 - 20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
20 - 25	15	11	17	11	11	3	2	3	2	2	4	2	10	2	2	12	15	17	15	39				
25 - 30	9	4	13	7	4	3	2	5	1	3	4	1	10	2	2	12	17	17	17	39				
30 - 35	3	7	10	7	4	3	2	5	1	3	4	1	10	2	2	12	17	17	17	39				
35 - 40	4	3	7	7	4	3	2	5	1	3	4	1	10	2	2	12	17	17	17	39				
40 - 45	4	4	8	11	9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1				
45 - 50	5	4	9	6	6	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2				
50 - 55	5	1	6	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2				
55 - 60	2	1	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2				
60 - 65	5	3	8	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2				
65 & above	3	-	3	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1				
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>(24.70)</b>	<b>(21.05)</b>	<b>(45.75)</b>	<b>(4.45)</b>	<b>(6.88)</b>	<b>(11.33)</b>	<b>(20.65)</b>	<b>(22.26)</b>	<b>(42.91)</b>	<b>(49.80)</b>	<b>(50.20)</b>	<b>(100.00)</b>



were 51 male and 55 female non-workers out of 247 individuals in Khejurbond village.

10. Members Staying Out:

10.1. Only four members were staying out from the village during the period of investigation. Three of the were working at Haflong and one boy was studying at Haflong College. These four persons were counted in the total population of the village.

CHAPTER V  
ECONOMIC RESOURCES

I. Introduction :

1.1. In this chapter, an attempt is being made to examine the economic resources at the disposal of the people of Khejurbond village. The economy based on agriculture must necessarily be dependent on the basic resource land and in fact, land is the primary resource of the people there.

2. Land : its ownership and utilization pattern :

2.1. An interesting feature in the pattern of land ownership is the co-existence of communal and private ownership as permanent wet paddy cultivation is done in owned land and shifting cultivation is practised in communal land. A discussion was already made as regards the development of wet paddy areas in the surrounding of the village and in these lands the ownership of land is permanent with heritable and transferrable rights. The land revenue is collected by Mouzadars. These wet paddy land is situated in the flat valleys. The area where Jhum cultivation is done is the communal land. This area is not cadastrally surveyed and one is free to cultivate as much land as one can. While the ownership of wet paddy land is fixed, the area under shifting cultivation varies from year to year. For the absence of records it is difficult to ascertain the precise area under the control of the village as a whole.

Table 5.1

Land Utilization in Khejurbond

Utilization	Area (in acres)	Percentage
1. Area under jhum cultivation	121.17	50.49
2. Area under homestead, horticulture and garden	22.83	9.51
3. Area under wet paddy cultivation	96.00	40.00
Total :	240.00	100.00

2.2. It was estimated that there were 240 acres of land in the village under different uses as shown in Table 5.1. Out of these, 50.49 per cent (121.17 acres) were under jhum cultivation, 40.00 per cent (96.00 acres) under permanent wet paddy cultivation and 9.51 per cent (22.83 acres) were homestead and orchards. The forest area in the village could not be estimated as it lay scattered. In fact, the village is devoid of any forest reserve. For this the people has to collect firewood from the jhum land and purchase many necessary house building materials from other areas.

2.3. It appears that out of 96.00 acres of wet paddy land only 77.33 acres were owned and revenue paying. The rest 18.67 acres were under occupancy of the households without being settled or having patta. The homestead land and Jhum land<sup>are</sup> non-revenue paying. The ownership of the homestead and orchard area is recognised but there is no direct ownership rights in Jhum land. The importance of Jhum land has not declined inspite of the fact that the

wet paddy land by and large contribute the major requirement of rice of the households of Khejurbond village. Rice is also grown in some Jhum fields. While rice is the only crop in permanently settled land, <sup>usal</sup> ~~used~~ crop mixtures in Jhum land are found. The owned land entails the question of tenancy.

### 3. Distribution of land :

3.1. Distribution of permanently settled wet paddy land is shown in Table 5.2. Of the total 40 households in the village 7 households (17.50 per cent) did not own wet paddy land. Apparently, some households might have sold out their holdings before 5 years of the date of investigation because it was found that one household sold out land within 5 years from the date of investigation. Three households were new to the village and therefore had no share of land. Another household was <sup>recently</sup> separated and the land was not partitioned at the time of investigation. The average size of owned land is 2.40 acres and the model group is 1 - 2.5 acres.

3.2. Table 5.2 indicates that there were some households which had wet paddy land without patta. Proportion of such land is small but it appears that the highest size holding had more of this type of land. These households had reclaimed this land at their own cost and made the land fit for wet paddy cultivation. This shows that people are willing to have more wet paddy land.

Table 5.2

Distribution of Settled Land According to  
the Size of Ownership Holdings.

Size Group (Acres)	No. of H.H.	(Area in acres)				
		Ownership Holdings		Total	Land leased out	Land under own cultivation
		With patta	Without patta			
Landless	7	--	--	--	--	--
Below 1 ac.	3	2.33	--	2.33	--	2.33
1 - 2.5	16	30.50	1.00	31.50	3.67	27.83
2.5-5.0	9	24.5	5.67	30.17	--	30.17
5.0-7.5	4	18.33	5.33	23.66	--	23.66
7.5-10.0	1	1.67	6.67	8.34	--	8.34
10.0-15.0	--	--	--	--	--	--
15.0 & above	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Total :</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>77.33</b>	<b>18.67</b>	<b>96.00</b>	<b>3.67</b>	<b>92.33</b>

3.3. The distribution of total holding as per size classes of holding is shown in Table 5.3. The table shows both wet paddy land and jhum land. It is apparent that all households had Jhum land. The average size of Jhum area is 3.51 acres (per household).

4. Operational Holdings :

4.1. Unlike any other hill village this village exhibited prevalence of tenancy mainly because of the fact that owned settled wet paddy land was in existence. Therefore, the leasing in and leasing out of land had to be taken into consideration for determining the operational holding. In this case operational holding include the Jhum area also. However, the tenancy was not much of significant proportion. only one household having less than 1 acre of wet paddy land leased in 2.00 acres of land and two households having land between 2.5 to 5.0, acres leased out 3.67 acres of land. The leasing was on the basis of half of the produce of land.

Table 5.3  
Distribution of Total Land According to Land Holding.

Size Group	Wet Land		Jhum Land		(Area in acres)	
	No. of H.H.	Area	No. of H.H.	Area	Total	Average land per H.H.
Below 1 acre	--	--	--	--	--	--
1.00-2.50	1	--	1	1.33	1.33	1.33
2.50-5.00	13	18.33	13	33.33	51.66	1.55
5.00-7.50	16	36.50	16	54.00	90.50	6.03
7.50-10.00	7	21.17	7	37.67	58.84	8.41
10.00-15.00	2	11.67	2	10.67	22.34	11.17
15.00-20.00	1	8.33	1	7.00	15.33	15.33
20.00 & above	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Total :</b>	40	96.00	40	144.00	240.00	6.00

Table 5.4

Distribution of Operational Holdings by  
Operational Size Groups : Khejurbond.

Size Group	No. of H.H.	Popula- tion	(Area in acres)		
			Settled farming	Jhuming	Total
Below 1 acre	--	--	--	--	--
1.00-2.50	2 (5.00)	9	--	3.33 (2.75)	3.33 (1.59)
2.50-5.00	16 (40.00)	82	28.66 (31.49)	30.68 (25.32)	59.34 (29.97)
5.00-7.50	16 (40.00)	106	33.67 (37.00)	59.33 (48.96)	93.00 (43.83)
7.50-10.00	3 (7.50)	21	12.00 (13.19)	13.50 (11.14)	25.50 (12.02)
10.00-15.00	3 (7.50)	29	16.67 (18.32)	14.33 (11.83)	31.00 (14.61)
15.00 & above	--	--	--	--	--
Total :	40 (100.00)	247	91.00 (100.00)	121.17 (100.00)	212.17 (100.00)

4.2. Table 5.4 shows the distribution of operational holding by size classes of operational holding groups at Khejurbond village. The Table also shows the percentage distribution of area. Table 5.5 shows the average per household and per capita of operational holding by size-classes. Per household size of operational holding ranges from 1.66 acres to 10.33 acres, the average being 5.30. The per capita operational holding is between 0.37 to 1.21 acres, the average being 0.86 acre. This shows that the distribution is unequal but inequality is not very high.

Table 5.5

Distribution of Operational Holdings per family and per capita According to Size-Group of Operational Holdings.

Size-Group	No. of H.H.	No. of persons	Area under operation (in acres)	Average operational holdings per family (in acres)	Average land per capita (in acres)
Below 1'ac.	--	--	--	--	--
1.00-2.50	2	9	3.33 (1.57)	1.66	0.37
2.50-5.00	16	82	59.34 (29.97)	3.71	0.72
5.00-7.50	16	106	93.00 (43.83)	5.81	0.88
7.50-10.00	3	21	25.50 (12.02)	8.50	1.21
10.00-15.00	3	29	31.00 (14.61)	10.33	1.07
15 & above	--	--	--	--	--
Total :	40	247	212.17 (100.00)	5.30	0.86

4.3. The use of the land under different purposes is indicated in Table 5.6. This includes land under homestead and orchards besides own land and Jhum land. Total area actually used is thus 240 acres (See also Table 5.1) and out of this area under homestead and orchard is 22.83 acres. This homestead and orchard is at comparatively at higher elevation than the wet paddy land. It may be indicated here that some parts of the homestead is being used for growing vegetables.

4.4. It may be pointed out that the wet paddy land in Khejurbond village is irrigated. But irrigation water is



Table 5.6

Distribution of Land According to Size-group of Operational Holdings.

Size-Group (in acres)	No. of H.H.	Total Land	(Area in acres)								
			Owned land	Settled Land Land leased in leased out	Current fallow	Area sown (settled land)	Jhum land	Homestead & orchard	Area sown (jhum land)		
Below 1 acre	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
1.00-2.50	2 (5.00)	4.16 (1.73)	--	--	--	--	4.16 (2.89)	0.83 (3.63)	3.33 (2.75)		
2.50-5.00	16 (40.00)	70.51 (29.38)	32.33 (33.68)	--	3.67 (100.00)	--	28.66 (31.49)	7.50 (32.85)	30.68 (25.32)		
5.00-7.50	16 (40.00)	100.17 (41.74)	31.67 (32.99)	2.00 (100.00)	--	--	33.67 (37.00)	9.17 (40.17)	59.33 (48.96)		
7.50-10.00	3 (7.50)	27.50 (11.46)	12.00 (12.50)	--	--	--	12.00 (13.19)	2.00 (8.76)	13.50 (11.14)		
10.00-15.00	3 (7.50)	37.66 (15.69)	20.00 (20.83)	--	--	3.33 (100.00)	16.67 (18.32)	3.33 (14.59)	14.33 (11.83)		
15.00 & above	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total :	40 (100.00)	240.00 (100.00)	96.00 (100.00)	2.00 (100.00)	3.67 (100.00)	3.33 (100.00)	91.00 (100.00)	22.83 (100.00)	121.17 (100.00)		

available only in the winter paddy season.

5. Agricultural Tools and Implements :

5.1. The type of tools and implements used by the people reflects their technical advancement in agriculture. Cultivation in Khejurbond village is done in the traditional line and hence all the tools and implements used in cultivation are traditional. In this connection, it is interesting to note that the Dimasas of Khejurbond are practising both jhum and wet cultivation and hence their agricultural tools and implements cover both type of cultivations. For such a society, the number and nature of tools and implements bear a close relationship with the number of workers and the nature of pursuits.

5.2. Table 5.7 shows the total number of tools and implements found at the time of investigation. Important

Table 5.7

Agricultural Tools and Implements in Use :  
Khejurbond.

<u>Sl.No.</u>	<u>Tools and Implements</u>	<u>Number in use</u>
1.	Desi Plough	67(36)
2.	Spade	71(40)
3.	Hoe	83(36)
4.	Harrow	27(22)
5.	Sickle	143(40)
6.	Dhenki	33(33)
7.	Morter and Pestle	16(16)

(Figures in brackets indicate No. of Households  
owning the implements)

agricultural tools and implements possessed by the villagers of Khejurbond are deshi plough, spade, hoe, dao,

harrow, sickle, etc. Daos and hoes are considered most essential for jhum cultivation while plough, harrow, spade, etc. are used for wet paddy cultivation in the plains. The use of dhenki in the village is more popular than mortar and pestle (Samtho-Rimin). However, 16 households of the village possessed mortars and pestles for husking paddy. The agricultural tools and implements are available in local markets wherefrom the villagers generally purchase their requirements.

#### 6. Livestocks and Poultry :

6.1. Apart from land, the other important economic resources of the village are livestock and poultry birds. Buffaloes, pigs, goats are important livestock population of village Khejurbond. The cow population is very much limited. There are only 10 bullocks and 8 cows in the village. Except a few families, the others do not possess cow. Among the Dimasas, the rearing of cow was a taboo. But, recently, a number of Dimasa families have adopted cattle rearing, mainly because of their growing tendency to use bullock power for tilling the soil. Of course, there are many instances that cows owned by this tribe are locked after by others. Rearing of mithun (*bos-frontalis*) is not in vogue among the Dimasas. But the neighbouring tribes like Zemi Nagas and Thado Kukis rear semi wild mithuns. The population of mithuns, is gradually decreasing. On the other hand, the buffalo rearing is very popular among the Dimasas. It is to be noted that about 90.00 per cent of buffaloes of the N.C.Hills district is owned by the Dimasas. They are reared in a semi-wild condition. They are impounded for certain period of the year, particularly during harvest

and before harvest. In other periods, they are generally let loose. Most of the buffaloes are neither milked nor used in drawing cart. Only a few buffaloes are engaged in tilling the soil. Buffaloes are simply reared as property and source of meat. One of the causes of non-development of agriculture and horticulture in the Dimasa areas is faulty nature of buffalo rearing.

6.2. A general distribution of livestock and poultry is shown in Table 5.8. All these are of local breed. The fowls are of very ordinary breed. Rearing of fowls are very popular amongst the people. They do not prefer rearing of ducks. Only one family in the village possesses a single duck. The number of pigs and goats are also small.

Table 5.8

Number and Value of Livestocks and Poultry Birds : Khejurbond.

Sl.No.	Name of the animal/poultry	No.	Value(Rs.)
1.	Bullocks	10(3)	4,850.00
2.	Cows	8(4)	1,290.00
3.	Buffaloes	133(32)	40,745.00
4.	Goats	61(12)	3,005.00
5.	Pigs	38(24)	3,320.00
6.	Fowls	592(36)	5,011.00
7.	Duck	1(1)	3.00
Total :			67,924.00

(Figures within bracket indicate No. of H.H. owning the animals and poultry birds).

6.3. Sacrifices of animals like pigs, goats, buffaloes and poultry birds at most of the rituals is a tradition among the Dimasas. They generally need a good number of

poultry birds and even eggs for various sacrifices.

6.4. It is observed that though livestock and poultry farming is not a commercial enterprise with any of the households in Khejurbond, occasional sale of these products is not uncommon among them.

## CHAPTER VI

### Economic Activities

#### 1. Introduction:

1.1. In this chapter, some economic activities with which the villagers are associated are analysed. The economic activities of Khejurbond village - relate mainly to cultivation of crops and some other activities, such as handicrafts etc.

#### 2. Agricultural Enterprise :

2.1. The agricultural pursuits of the people of Khejurbond village include settled cultivation of wet paddy in the valley land, and jhuming in the hill slopes. The other tribes of the N.C.Hills eg. Zemi Nagas, Hmars and Kukis are mainly dependent upon jhum cultivation. On the other hand, the Dimasas of N.C. Hills are practising simultaneously both wet and jhum cultivation. It is a fact that the Dimasas occupies a major part of valley areas in the N.C. Hills District.

2.2. Paddy as food crop and cotton as cash crop are the main field crops of the villagers of Khejurbond. For wet paddy cultivation, plains paddy fields are ploughed in May, June and July. The ploughing (Hadi-Haliba) is done generally four times or even more. Seed bed is prepared on small plots of land and seeds are sown in May/June prior to the preparation of fields. After one and a half month of germination, the grown up seedlings are uprooted from the nurseries and carried to the already prepared paddy fields. The transplanting operation (Maisa-Kaiba) is mainly done during June and July. Harvesting (Mairaba) of wet paddy starts generally in the first part of November and it continues to the last part of December. The harvested paddy

is collected at mandu\* where threshing is done by buffaloes.

2.3. The Dimasas grow several varieties of paddy. The wet paddy varieties are - Barlam, Soyamora, Therabali, Maiju, Sadhuki, Bitkuti, Duburi Sajap, etc. The Maiju and Duburi Sajap varieties of paddy are largely used for preparing rice beer. Similarly, several varieties of jhum paddy are also raised by them. These are - Galang Jara, Maithu Thai, Bairing, Gundui, Mairathai, Maiju etc. All the above varieties are local. They usually follow their traditional methods of cultivation. However, the lift irrigation scheme at Kalachand provides plenty of water for successful wet paddy cultivation in Kalachand area.

2.4. In jhum cultivation the first operation i.e. the jungle cutting (Hi-oba) starts in the months of February/March. Then they allow the jungle for drying up for sometime. The burning operation (Hasoba) actually starts in the months of April/May which is followed by sowing operations in June/July. In case of cotton (Khun) cultivation, the sowing operation starts in June and continues till July. Weeding (Samfiba) in jhum is done generally two to three times. The first weeding starts just after the germination of the seeds which is followed by ~~another~~ one or two weeding after some weeks of the first weeding. The harvesting (Mai-roba) of jhum paddy takes place in September/October. Cotton is usually harvested during the month of January.

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\* A temporary shed in paddy field where the farmers use to take rest during agricultural operation. It also serves the purpose of a watch house. The harvested paddy is temporarily stored in the mandu for threshing. In jhum field also mandu is erected for similar purposes.

3. Area and Production of Crop :

3.1. The data regarding area, production and value of some important crops grown in the village are given in Table 6.1. It shows that the area under paddy(both wet and jhum paddy areas) is 145.50 acres or 66.64% of the total cropped area of the village. However, the area under wet paddy cultivation (91 acres) is much higher than the area under jhum paddy cultivation (54.50 acres). In the jhum land some vegetables like gourd, brinjal, arum, chilli, cucumber etc. are grown in mixture. But in case of cotton, sesamum and mustard, separate plots of jhum land are used. Cotton covers an area of 64.67 acres or 29.62% of total cropped area of the village.

Table 6.1

Area, Production and Value of Principal Crops, Khejurbond

Names of Crops	Area (acres)	Production (Qtl.)	Value (Rs.)	Output per acre (Qtl.)
1. Paddy (wet)	91.00(41.68)	724.47	40,020	7.96
2. Paddy (jhum)	54.50(24.96)	109.36	7,325	2.01
3. Cotton	64.67(29.62)	74.83	52,763	1.16
4. Sesamum	2.66( 1.22)	2.97	950	1.12
5. Mustard	5.50( 2.52)	11.76	3,250	2.14
Total	218.33(100.00)	-	1,13, 308	-

3.2. In the reference year, an area of 91.00 acres was cultivated with wet paddy. A total of 724.47 quintals of paddy was produced. This gives a per acre yield of 7.96 quintals. But the yield of paddy per acre from jhum



is quite low (2.01 quintals only). However, they have special preference of raising some varieties of dry paddy which are not grown in wet field. Bairing and Maiju varieties of paddy are largely used for preparing rice-beer. The cultivation of H.Y.V. of paddy is not yet popular among the villagers.

3.3. After paddy, cotton is the most important crop among the Dimasas of the N.C. Hills district of Assam. It is seen from Table 6.1 that village Khejurbond is also not an exception to this. Cotton is a good source of cash to the villagers. In 1977, an area of 64.67 acres of jhum land was cultivated with cotton. A total of 74.83 quintals of cotton was produced. This gives a per acre yield of 1.16 quintals.

3.4. The cultivation of sesamum and mustard are confined to a limited scale, the cultivated area being 2.66 (1.22%) acres and 5.50 (2.52%) acres respectively. Altogether 2.97 quintals of sesamum and 11.76 quintals of mustard seed were produced. This gives a per acre yield of 1.12 quintals sesamum and 2.14 quintals mustard.

3.5. Besides the crops shown in Table 6.1 the villagers also grow some quantity of other garden crops such as banana, bean, papaya etc. Due to difficulties of collecting data on this aspect, the area under the garden crops could not be given. But the soil of the homesteads is not much favourable for growing these crops. Watering of these crops is also difficult.

Table 6.2  
Area, Production and Value of Principal crops by Size group of Operational holding : Khejribond

Size group in acres	No. of H.H.	Paddy (wt)		Paddy (Thru)		Cotton		Sesamum		Area in acres		Production in quintal	
		A	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A	V	A	P
Below 1 acre													
1.00 - 2.50	2	-	-	2.33	8.21	550	-	-	1.00	0.40	150	1.33	3.36
2.50 - 5.00	16	28.67	216.11	14,475	14.00	34,34	2,300	18.00	20.90	14,290	0.33	1.10	400
5.00 - 7.50	16	33.67	265.00	17,750	29.33	45.90	3,075	28.33	33.03	23,503	1.33	1.47	400
7.50 - 10.00	3	12.00	94.06	6,300	2.17	10.08	675	11.33	9.70	6,890	-	-	-
10.00-15.00	3	16.66	149.30	10,495	6.67	10.82	725	7.00	11.20	8,080	-	-	-
15.00 and above	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	40	91.00	724.47	49,020	54.50	109.36	7,325	64.67	74.83	52,763	2.66	2.97	950
													5.50
													11.76
													3250

A= Area in acres  
P= Production in quintal  
V= Value

In ruddes  
Mustard seed

3.6. Distribution of area, yield and value of some major crops grown in the village according to size groups of operational holding is given in Table 6.2. Paddy and cotton are cultivated by almost all the households in the village. The cultivation of sesamum and mustard are done only by a few households. As staple food crop, the villagers invariably prefer the cultivation of paddy to other crops. Next to paddy, cotton occupies a prominent place. Raw cotton always finds a good market and therefore, it is cultivated entirely for sale.

3.7. The per acre output of principal crops by operational holdings is shown in Table 6.3. The highest yield rate of 8.96 quintals wet paddy per acre was found in the highest size group, i.e., 10.00 - 15.00 acres and lowest 7.54 quintals per acre in lowest size group (2.50-5.00 acres). However, the yield rate depends on variety of paddy grown and grades of land. In case of cotton also the highest yield rate of 1.60 quintals per acre was found in the highest size group i.e. 10.00-15.00 acres. The lowest yield rate of 0.86 quintal cotton per acre was found in the size-group 7.50-10.00 acres.

Table 6.3  
Per acre output of Principal crops by operational Holding,  
Khejurbond.

Size group (acres)	Jhum paddy	Wet paddy	Cotton	Sesamum	Mustard
Below 1 acre	-	-	-	-	-
1.00 - 2.50	3.52	-	-	0.40	2.53
2.50 - 5.00	2.45	7.54	1.16	0.33	0.17
5.00 - 7.50	1.56	7.87	1.17	1.11	2.08
7.50 - 10.00	4.65	7.84	0.86	-	-
10.00- 15.00	1.62	8.96	1.60	-	-
15 and above	-	-	-	-	-
Total :	2.01	7.96	1.16	1.12	2.14

4. Agricultural Inputs:

4.1. Input in cultivation generally implies expenses made for production of crops. These may include cost of seeds, fertilizers, manures and pesticides, family labours, draught power, hired human labours, agricultural tools and implements etc. However, the agriculture in Khejurbond village has remained traditional. No chemical fertilizer has been used in Khejurbond. Because of obvious difficulties in estimating all inputs only value of seeds and cost of hired agricultural labours have been taken into consideration in the present study.

4.2. The use of hired labour in cultivation is an important aspect of the village and it is shown in Table 6.4. Attention of the people are divided between cultivation of crops in wet paddy land and jhum land. Jhum being a labour intensive enterprise it takes away a considerable family labour. In Khejurbond and nearby areas there are sufficient number of labours belonging to immigrant Bengali and Bihari communities. Some migrant agricultural labours are reported to be available in the area. The Dimasa farmers use to employ such workers as hired labours for cultivation of wet paddy. Some people attribute this as the inherent dislike of the hill people for wet paddy cultivation. This might be true to some extent, but it is also a fact that family labour is not sufficient to carry out operations in jhum and wet paddy land simultaneously. It was also observed the comparatively better off households engage more hired labours than the others. Whatever the case may be engagement of hired labour is much higher in Kalachand.

Table 6.4  
Hired Labour Input in Agriculture, Khejribond

Size group (acres)	No. of H.H.	Mature of cultivation	Permanent/contract cash (Rs.)	Casual (Rs.)	Total of 4 & 5	Total of wet, jhum and cotton of each size group (Rs.)	Average per household input
Below 1 acre	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1.00 - 2.50	1	1. Wet paddy	150	-	150	150(1.57)	150.00
		2. Jhum paddy	-	-	-	-	-
		3. Cotton	1890	35	1925	-	-
2.50 - 5.00	5	1. Wet paddy	195	120	315	2240(23.45)	448.00
		2. Jhum paddy	2305	100	2405	-	-
		3. Cotton	400	500	900	3455(36.18)	575.83
5.00 - 7.50	6	1. Wet paddy	-	150	150	-	-
		2. Jhum paddy	675	-	675	-	-
		3. Cotton	-	-	-	-	-
7.50 - 10.00	3	1. Wet paddy	870	-	870	1545(16.18)	515.00
		2. Jhum paddy	1260	-	1260	-	-
		3. Cotton	400	-	400	-	-
10.00-15.00	1	1. Wet paddy	500	-	500	2160(22.62)	-
		2. Jhum paddy	-	-	-	-	-
		3. Cotton	-	-	-	-	-
15.00 and above	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total :	16	1. Wet paddy	6130(64.19)	135(1.41)	6265(65.60)	-	-
		2. Jhum paddy	950(9.95)	500(5.23)	1450(15.18)	9550(100.00)	596.87
		3. Cotton	1565(16.29)	270(2.83)	1835(19.22)	-	-

4.3. The employment of hired labours is found to be done on casual and contract basis. Daily wage of a male casual agricultural labour was Rs. 6.00. The contract system is particularly adopted in case of wet rice cultivation. An amount of Rs. 70.00 per bigha is paid for operations starting from ploughing the land to the stage of transplanting. An amount of Rs. 15.00 per bigha is charged by the contract labours for harvesting the crop.

4.4. Table 6.4 shows that 16 households (40.00%) of the village used hired or contract labourers in agriculture. It gives a picture of total input of Rs. 9550.00 of which 65.60 per cent accounts for wet paddy and rest 34.40 per cent for jhum cultivation. Thus, it appears that the farmers of the village used more hired labourers in wet cultivation than in jhuming. The Table also shows that the labour input in contract system (90.53%) is much higher than casual system (9.47%).

4.5. It is evident from the table that 6 households in the size group of 5.00-7.50 acres spent Rs. 3455.00 i.e. 36.18 per cent of the total hired labour input in the village. The next higher labour inputs in agriculture are Rs. 2240.00 (23.45%) and Rs. 2160.00 (22.62%) which covered 5 and 1 households in the size group of 2.50-5.00 acres and 10.00-15.00 acres respectively. 3 households belonging to 7.50-10.00 acres showed an expenditure of Rs. 1545.00 i.e. 16.18% of the total labour input in the village.

4.6. The input in hired labour is found to be lower in the case of families with smaller farms than comparatively with larger farms. The only one household in the size group of 10 - 15 acres engaged hired labours at the expense

of Rs. 2160.00. However, the average per household hired labour cost for the concerning families is estimated to be Rs. 596.87.

5. Production and Disposal of Crops :

5.1. The total production and disposal of crops by size-group of operational holdings in Khejurbond village are presented in Table 6.5. The production column on paddy shows figures which have included output obtained from both settled farming and jhum cultivation. In case of paddy, out of total production, 724.47 quintals are from settled farming and only 109.36 quintals are obtained from jhum cultivation. Sesamum, mustard and cotton mainly relate to the output obtained from jhum cultivation.

5.2. The villagers are found to preserve the major portion of their paddy production for home consumption. There are only a few surplus paddy growers in the village and they sell the surplus paddy in the nearby market as and when necessary.

5.3. Cotton, sesamum and mustard seeds are produced almost exclusively for sale. A good portion of these cash crops are generally sold almost immediately after harvest. No attempt is made ordinarily, to hold the goods in the expectation of higher prices. Thus the cash income flows to the village at one period of the year. Among these crops cotton provides the major share of the cash to the households of the village. In value terms the commercial sector is found to be even more important than the subsistence sector.

Table 6.5. Production and Disposal of Crops by Size-group of operational Holding Khejribond

Size group in acres	No. of H.H.	Paddy		Cotton		Sesamum		Mustard		Arum		Chilly	
		Q	V	Q	V	Q	V	Q	V	Q	V	Q	V
Below 1 acre	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1.00 - 2.50	2	8.21	550	-	-	0.40	150	3.36	900	-	-	-	-
2.50 - 5.00	16	250.45	16775	20.90	14,290	1.10	400	1.12	300	3.30	165	0.13	13
5.00 - 7.50	16	310.91	20885	33.03	23,503	1.47	400	7.28	2050	8.65	432	0.15	15
7.50 - 10.00	3	104.14	6975	9.70	6,890	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.00-15.00	3	160.12	10725	11.20	8,080	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15.00 & 1 above	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	40	833.83	55,850	74.83	52,763	2.97	950	11.76	3,250	11.95	597	0.28	28

P = Production      B = Balance      D = Disposal

Contd.



Table 6.5

Production & Disposal of crops by size-group of perational Holding  
 Khejurbond

Size-group in acres	No. of H.H.	Disposal by sale										Balance										
		Paddy	Cotton	Sesamum	Mustard	Arum	Chilly	Paddy	Cotton	Sesamum	Mustard	Arum	Chilly	Q	V	Q	V	Q	V			
Below 1 acre		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
1.00 - 2.50	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8.21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.36	-	
2.50 - 5.00	16	2.98	200	18.66	12790	0.90	330	-	-	-	-	247.47	2.24	0.20	-	-	-	-	-	1.12	3.30	0.13
5.00 - 7.50	16	4.48	300	33.03	23503	1.47	400	5.97	1700	1.20	60	0.10	10	306.43	-	-	-	-	-	1.31	7.45	0.05
7.50 -10.00	3	-	-	9.70	6890	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.00-15.00	3	12.32	1320	11.20	8080	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	147.80	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15 & above	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	40	19.78	1820	72.59	51263	2.37	730	5.97	1700	1.20	60	0.10	10	814.05	2.24	0.60	-	-	-	5.79	10.75	0.18

5.4. The disposal pattern of cash crops indicates that most of the people are market oriented. The cash crops are found to have good market outside the village. In this connection, it is important to note that the Maibang L.S. & M.P. Co-operative Society Limited at Kalachand procures a good portion of the cash crops produced by the villagers at reasonable prices. Moreover, some trading agents at Kalachand and Maibang also use to purchase the products from the villagers. Further, the easy transporting facilities (both railway and road transport) available at Kalachand and Maibang help the villagers to dispose their surplus crops.

6. Weaving :

6.1. Besides cultivation and livestock, weaving is an important source of income. The womenfolk spend their leisure time in their looms. Now-a-days, fly shuttle looms are very common in the village. However, the throw shuttle variety is also common, but loin loom is not at all popular among them. Almost all the Dimasa womenfolk are expert in weaving. The number of looms possessed by a household depends upon the number of adult women and girls in the family.

6.2. The Dimasa women prepare major part of their necessary dresses at their own looms. Risa , Rigu , Rijamphai , Rikhausr , etc. are the usual products produced by Dimasa women at their looms. Rigu and Rijamphai are two very important traditional dresses of womenfolk, the price of a piece of these dresses varies from Rs. 30/- to Rs. 60/- depending upon its quality and colour.

6.3. Several households of the village rear endi worms and prepare fine endi cloths (Rahendi) at their looms. In addition to the endi<sup>yarns</sup> prepared at home, mill made cotton yarns are purchased from the local markets for preparing various dresses. The womenfolk hardly purchase cloths from the market.

6.4. The distribution of handloom products is shown in Table 6.6. It shows the quantity and value of handloom products produced in one year. Most of the articles, thus produced are primarily meant for domestic use by the members of the family. Sale of these house-made articles is very rare.

Table 6.6

Production and value of Handloom Article : Khejurbond.

Sl.No.	Name of the Articles	No.	Value (Rs.)
1.	Risa	100 (33)	1,500
2.	Rigu	121 (34)	3,630
3.	Rijamphai	65(16)	1,950
4.	Rikhausa	50(17)	600
5.	Rahendi (Endi-chadder)	12 (8)	960

(Figures in the brackets indicate No. of H.H. owning the Articles.)

6.5. It is also important to note that a Mahila Samiti, consisting of 30 members was formed in the village in 1975. The Samiti received a grant of Rs. 1000/- for its house construction and 20 fly shuttle looms from government sources at different times. The shed of the Mahila Samiti is sufficient only for two looms. So the rest

18 fly shuttle looms were distributed among some of the needy members of the Samiti for their use. Some women of the village procured fly shuttle looms either free of cost or at subsidised rates from the Development Block. Yarns received free of cost from the weaving Deptt. or purchased by the Mahila Samiti were distributed among its members. Half of the products made from such yarns are to be deposited to the Samiti and these are sold in the market. However, the satisfactory progress of the Samiti is yet to be achieved. The Samiti's function and progress were in initial stage at the time of investigation.

## CHAPTER VII

### INCOME, EXPENDITURE AND LEVEL OF LIVING

#### 1. Introduction :

1.1. The data presented in the last two chapters give an idea of the economic resources and activities of Khejurbond village. In this chapter, the economic conditions of the households and the village as a whole are examined with reference to income and expenditure. The consumption pattern, indebtedness, housing conditions, possession of durable consumer goods etc. indicate, in a fair measure, the standard of living of a household.

1.2. The nature and quantum of income and pattern of expenditure of a community fairly are indicative of its economic life. But the collection of such data from rural areas presents formidable problems, particularly when there is no system of account keeping. Despite limitations, attempt has been made to give a fair picture of the income and expenditure and level of living of the people of Khejurbond.

#### 2. Village Income :

2.1. The village income means the aggregate of the values of goods and services produced by the individual members during a reference period. In estimating the village income of Khejurbond, the value of most of the home produced agricultural goods (e.g., paddy, cotton, sesamum, mustard etc.), livestock and poultry, remuneration of services and income from professional sources are taken into account. The annual village income from various sources

are residual income only. The net income could not be calculated as data on family labour and other indirect cost items could not be ascertained.

Table 7.1

Percentage Distribution of Village Income  
from Different Sources :Khejurbond.

Sources of Income	Total Annual Income (Rs.)	Percentage
1. Wet paddy cultivation	41,246	23.47
2. Jhuming	57,751	32.85
3. Livestock & Poultry	925	0.53
4. Agricultural Wages	5,120	2.91
Agricultural Income	1,05,042	59.76
5. Non-Agricultural wages	1,200	0.68
6. Salary	10,314	5.87
7. Profession & Services	56,000	31.86
8. Rent	3,212	1.83
Non-Agricultural Income	70,726	40.24
Total :	1,75,768	100.00

2.2. The percentage distribution of village income from different sources is presented in Table 7.1. It indicates that agriculture contributed 59.76 per cent of total village income of which only 3.44 per cent was the share of agricultural wages, livestock and poultry. The income from jhuming (32.85%) is higher than that from the wet paddy cultivation (23.47%) and it is because of the fact that cotton grown in the jhum land fetches a good portion of income. The non-agricultural income gives 40.24 per cent of the total village income of which the income from profession and services holds a very significant position

contributing 31.86 per cent of total village income. A few individuals of the village are contractors of the District Council. Earning from salaried jobs is found to be 5.87 per cent of the total income of the village. Rent from leased out land and rented house contributes 1.83 per cent (Rs.3212.00) of the total village income. Two households that leased out land received Rs.812.00 and two other households having rented houses near Kalachand Railway Station earned RS.2400.00 as house rent during the reference year. The semi-urban centre at Kalachand is providing the scope for earning house rent for those who have houses there. The residual income of agriculture has been estimated on the basis of the total cash sales plus imputed value of production at farm harvest after deducting the inputs in seeds and hired labours.

2.3. The distribution of income from different sources by size classes of operational holdings is shown in Table 7.2. The average per household and per capita income for Khejurbond are found to be Rs.4,394.20 and Rs.711.61 respectively. The table shows that the average per household income in the cases of all households barring those belonging to the operational size group 10.00-15.00 acres is lower than the average per household income for the village as a whole. Per household average income for the 7.5 per cent households in the size class of 10.00-15.00 acres is estimated to be Rs.15,448.67 which is much higher than the village average. Besides higher size of operational holdings, income from rented houses and sufficient earnings from profession and services in this size class are responsible

Table 7.2(Continued)

Distribution of Income from Different Sources by Operational Holding : Khejurbond.

Size Group (Acres)	No. of H.H.	No. of Persons	Source of Income			(Income in rupees)			
			Salary	Profession & Services	Rent	Total Income	Per Household	Per Capita	
Below 1 acre	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
1.00-2.50	2 (5.00)	9	--	4,200 (64.29)	--	6,533 (100.00)	3,266.50	725.89	
2.50-5.00	16 (40.00)	82	6,684 (10.93)	21,800 (35.63)	1,772 (2.90)	61,177 (100.00)	3,823.56	746.06	
5.00-7.50	16 (40.00)	106	3,630 (7.46)	--	--	48,649 (100.00)	3,040.56	458.95	
7.50-10.00	3 (7.50)	21	--	--	--	11,563 (100.00)	3,854.33	550.62	
10.00-15.00	3 (7.50)	29	--	30,000 (62.70)	1,440 (3.01)	47,846 (100.00)	15,948.67	1,649.86	
15.00 & above	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total :	40 (100.00)	247	10,314 (5.87)	56,000 (31.86)	3,215 (1.83)	1,75,768 (100.00)	4,394.20	711.61	



Table 7.2  
of  
Distribution/Income from Different Sources by Operational Holding :  
Khejurbond.

Size (Group (Acres)	No. of H.H.	No. of Persons	(Income in Rupees)					
			Wet Paddy	Jhuming	Sources of Income Livestock & Poultry	Agricultural Wages	Non- Agricultural Wages	
Below 1 acre	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
1.00-2.50	2 (5.00)	9	--	1,343 (20.56)	40 (0.61)	950 (14.54)	--	--
2.50-5.00	16 (40.00)	82	12,070 (19.73)	16,096 (26.31)	565 (0.92)	1,580 (2.60)	600 (0.98)	--
5.00-7.50	16 (40.00)	106	14,750 (30.32)	26,769 (55.08)	320 (0.66)	2,580 (5.30)	600 (1.23)	--
7.50-10.00	3 (7.50)	21	5,423 (46.90)	6,140 (53.10)	--	--	--	--
10.00-15.00	3 (7.50)	29	9,003 (18.82)	7,403 (15.47)	--	--	--	--
15.00 & above	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Total :</b>	40 (100.00)	247	41,246 (23.47)	57,751 (88.85)	925 (0.53)	5,120 (2.91)	1,200 (0.68)	--

Continued ;

Table 7.3

Distribution of Income from Different Sources by Occupational Classes :  
Khejurbond.

Occupational Classes	No. of H.H.	Sources of Income ( Income in Rupees )							Total Income	Percentage of total Income
		Wet Paddy	Jhuming	Live-stock & Poultry	Agricultural Wages	Non-Agril. Wages	Salary	Profession & Services		
Solely Jhumia	1 (2.50)	--	2,127 (100.00)	--	--	--	--	--	2,127 (100.00)	1.21
Mainly Jhumia	23 (57.50)	18,969 (26.43)	42,605 (59.34)	410 (0.57)	2,400 (3.34)	1,200 (1.67)	5,400 (7.52)	--	71,796 (100.00)	40.85
Settle Farmers with Jhuming	8 (20.00)	12,572 (65.85)	5,134 (26.90)	155 (0.81)	600 (3.14)	--	680 (3.30)	--	19,091 (100.00)	10.86
Profession & Services	5 (12.50)	8,273 (11.28)	6,328 (8.63)	320 (0.44)	--	--	--	56,000 (76.38)	73,321 (100.00)	41.71
Salariated Job	1 (2.50)	716 (11.92)	1,009 (16.79)	--	--	--	4,284 (71.29)	--	6,009 (100.00)	3.42
Agricultural Wages	2 (5.00)	716 (20.91)	548 (16.00)	40 (1.17)	2,120 (61.92)	--	--	--	3,424 (100.00)	1.95
Total :	40 (100.00)	41,246 (23.47)	57,751 (32.85)	925 (0.53)	5,120 (2.91)	1,200 (0.63)	10,314 (5.87)	56,000 (31.86)	1,75,768 (100.00)	

for the higher average per household income. It must be noted here that because of the presence of these three households with an excellent earning from profession and services the per capita income has gone up considerably. However, the per capita income in the cases of the families in the size classes of 5.00-7.50 acres and 7.50-10.00 acres are much lower than the village per capita income. The total absence of profession and services in these two size classes is the cause of low per capita income.

2.4. Table 7.3 shows the distribution of village income from different sources by occupational classes. It is seen that 57.50 per cent households in the village belonging to the occupational class 'mainly jhumia' shared 40.85 per cent of the total annual income of the village. The occupational class 'settle farmers with jhuming' covers only 8 households (20.00%) with 10.36 per cent of the total annual income of the village. In this connection, it is important to note that 12.50 per cent of the total households belonging to the 'profession and services' class covers 41.71 per cent of the total annual income of the village. Income of the households belonging to the occupations solely jhumia, salaried job and agricultural wage earner is not so significant in the village total income. But the emergence of the occupations like salaried job, agricultural wage earner as well as profession and services is important in the case of a tribal village. Similarly, the presence of only one household in the solely jhumia occupation is also significant.

2.5. The distribution of annual income per household, per capita and per worker by occupational classes is shown in Table 7.4. It is seen that the per household, per capita

Table 7.4

Distribution of Annual Income per Household, per Capita and per Worker by Occupational Classes, Khejurbond.

Occupational Classes	No. of Households	No. of Persons	No. of Workers	Total Income (Rs.)	(Income in rupees)		
					Per house- hold (Rs.)	Per Capita (Rs.)	Per Worker (Rs.)
Solely Jhumia	1	6	2	2,127.00	2,127.00	354.50	1,063.50
Mainly Jhumia	23	146	71	71,796	3,121.57	491.75	1,011.21
Settled Farmers with Jhuming	8	39	20	13,091	2,386.38	489.51	954.55
Profession & Services	5	30	10	73,321	14,664.20	2,444.03	7,332.10
Salaried Job	1	12	5	6,009	6,009.00	500.75	1,201.80
Agricultural Wage Earner	2	14	5	3,424	1,712.00	244.57	684.80
Total :	40	247	113	1,75,768	4,394.20	711.61	1,555.47

and per worker income of the occupational class of 'profession and services' are highest among all the occupational classes in the village. This has raised the overall per capita income of the village. The Table shows that the average household and per worker incomes are Rs.4,394.20 and Rs.1,555.47 respectively. The per capita income of the village as a whole is Rs.711.61.

2.6. The distribution of households by levels of income and occupations is given in Table 7.5. It shows that 11 households (27.5%) have average annual earnings below Rs.2000.00. The per capita income of Rs.270.38 for these families indicates that they are very poor. Similarly, 10 households (25.0%) in the income group Rs.2000 - 3000 and 2 households (5.0%) in the income group Rs.4000-5000 have per capita income of Rs.492.40 and 476.96 respectively. They are also on the verge of poverty. Thus, it is found that the per capita income of 51.42% (127) of the people belonging to 57.50% households is below Rs.500.00. On the other hand, the same Table shows that only 4 households (10.00%) of Khejurbond are having average annual household income above Rs.7000.00. The per capita income of the households in the income groups Rs.7000-8000 and Rs.8000 and above (Rs.1,529.40 and Rs.2,740.41 respectively) is much higher than the overall per capita income. The total number of persons belonging to these two income groups is only 27 i.e. 10.93% of the village population. The per capita income of 12 households (30.0%) belonging to income groups Rs.3000-4000, Rs.5000-6000 and Rs.6000-7000 is in between Rs.562.18 and Rs.711.18. The population for these households constitute 37.35% of the total population of the village.

Table 7.5  
Distribution of Households by Level of Income from Different Sources :: Khejribond.

Income Group (Rs.)	No. of H.H.	No. of Persons	Sources of Income (Income in Rupees)					
			Wet Paddy	Jhuming	Livestock & Poultry	Agricultural Wages	Non- Agric. Wages	Salary
Below 1000	2	5	1,648 (91.91)	145 (8.09)	--	--	--	--
1000-2000	9	52	2,770 (20.34)	7,452 (54.72)	195 (1.43)	2,390 (17.55)	--	--
2000-3000	10	50	6,316 (25.65)	15,904 (64.60)	--	1,170 (4.75)	600 (2.44)	630 (2.56)
3000-4000	5	28	8,375 (46.60)	7,370 (41.30)	360 (2.02)	1,200 (6.72)	600 (3.36)	--
4000-5000	2	20	4,922 (51.60)	4,617 (48.40)	--	--	--	--
5000-6000	4	39	5,104 (23.28)	10,171 (46.39)	50 (0.23)	--	--	2,400 (10.95)
6000-7000	3	26	3,896 (21.07)	6,949 (37.58)	--	360 (1.95)	--	7,284 (39.40)
7000-8000	1	5	1,687 (22.06)	--	--	--	--	--
8000 & above	3	22	6,586 (10.92)	5,143 (8.53)	320 (0.53)	--	--	--
<b>Total :</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>41,246 (23.47)</b>	<b>57,751 (32.85)</b>	<b>925 (0.53)</b>	<b>5,120 (2.91)</b>	<b>1,200 (0.68)</b>	<b>10,314 (5.87)</b>

Table 7.5(Continued)  
Distribution of Households by Level of Income From Different Sources : Khejribond.  
(Income in Rupees)

Income Groups (Rs.)	No. of H.H.	No. of Persons	Profession & Services	Sources of Income		Total Income	Per Household Income	Per Capita Income
				Rent	Income			
Below 1000	2	5	--	--	1,793 (100.00)	896.50	358.60	
1000-2000	9	52	--	812 (5.96)	13,619 (100.00)	1,513.22	261.90	
2000-3000	10	50	--	--	24,620 (100.00)	2,462.00	492.40	
3000-4000	5	28	--	--	17,845 (100.00)	3,569.00	637.32	
4000-5000	2	20	--	--	9,539 (100.00)	4,769.50	476.95	
5000-6000	4	39	4,200 (13.15)	--	21,925 (100.00)	5,481.25	562.18	
6000-7000	3	26	--	--	18,491 (100.00)	6,163.67	711.19	
7000-8000	1	5	5,000 (65.39)	960 (12.55)	7,647 (100.00)	7,647.00	1,529.40	
8000 and above	3	22	46,800 (77.63)	1,440 (2.39)	60,289 (100.00)	20,096.33	2,740.41	
Total :	40	247	56,000 (31.86)	3,212 (1.83)	1,75,768 (100.00)	4,394.20	711.61	

2.7. The Table shows that the average annual household income of only 13 households (32.5%) is higher than the average per household income for the village as a whole. The population of these 13 households constitute 45.34% of the total population of the village. On the other hand, the per capita income of the households belonging to the income group Rs.7000-8000 and Rs.8000 and above is higher the village per capita income and the persons of these households (4) constitute only 10.93% of total population of the village. The higher per capita income in their cases have become possible because of the considerable income from profession and services. On the whole, the overall per capita of the village is quite satisfactory. However, this cannot be strictly compared with the State per capita income due to limitations mentioned earlier.

2.8: Table 7.6 shows the distribution of primary occupational classes and their associations with subsidiary occupations. The Table clearly shows that 17 out of 23 households belonging to the 'mainly jhumia' are associated with settled farming. Association of households in this group with 3 households having livestock and poultry, 5 households with agricultural wages, 2 households with non-agricultural wages, 2 households with salaried jobs and 1 household with profession and services. Similarly, other occupational classes are also more or less associated with some other occupations.

### 3. Expenditure:

3.1. The quantum of income alone does not signify the standard of living of a particular household or community if the level and pattern of consumption expenditure are not taken



Table 7.6  
 Distribution of Occupational Classes and their Association with  
 Subsidiary Occupations, Khejurbond.

Occupational Class	No. of H.H.	Associated with							
		Jhuming	Settled Farming	Live-stock & poultry	Agricultural Wages	Non-Agricultural wages	Salaried job & Profession Services	Rent	
Solely Jhumia	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	
Mainly Jhumia	23	--	17	3	5	2	2	1	
Settled Farmers with Jhuming	8	8	--	1	1	--	1	--	
Profession & Services	5	4	4	1	--	--	--	2	
Salaried Job	1	1	1	--	--	--	--	--	
Agricultural wage Earner	2	2	1	1	--	--	--	--	
<b>Total :</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

into consideration. It is also necessary to examine how and to what extent the earned income is utilized for consumption purposes.

3.2. In estimating total annual expenditure for each household, home produced goods consumed at home are taken at their imputed value at prevailing market prices. A short account of the volume of household expenditure is presented in Table 7.7. Although, the data represent annual expenditure on different heads, the data in case of certain items of consumption such as food, fuel and lighting, intoxicants, etc. are based on the expenditure incurred in the month preceding the month of investigation. On the other hand, expenditure on cloths, education, medical, ceremonials etc. are collected for one year.

Table 7.7

Annual Expenditure in Different Heads :  
Khejurbond.

<u>Heads of Expenditure</u>	<u>Value in Rupees</u>	<u>Percentages</u>
1. Food :		
(a) Cereals	87,898	58.92
(b) Non-cereals	17,667	11.84
----- Sub-total :	1,05,565	70.76
2. Intoxicant :	15,170	10.17
3. Fuel & lighting	2,565	1.72
4. Dress	8,626	5.77
5. Education	2,747	1.84
6. Medical	1,714	1.15
7. Entertainments & ceremonials	8,755	5.87
8. Travelling	1,354	0.91
9. Services	237	0.16
10. Others	2,458	1.65
----- Sub-Total :	43,626	29.24
----- Total :	1,49,191	100.00

3.3. Table 7.7 shows that in Khejurbond food items cover 70.76 per cent of the total annual expenditure. Expenditure under food items includes both cereals (rice, etc.) and non-cereals (sugar, pulses, tea, etc.). Next to food item, intoxicants hold a significant position (10.17 per cent). The villagers consume a large quantity of rice beer, particularly on ritualistic and festive occasions. Except rice beer, the other intoxicant items such as bidi, cigarette, tobacco, etc. are also largely used by them.

3.4. The other important items of expenditure are fuel and lighting, dress, education, medical, entertainment, etc. Fuel and lighting includes the cash expenditure on kerosene, match, etc. Expenditure on entertainments and ceremonials includes expenses incurred in festivals, e.g., Busu, various pujas for curing illness, death ceremonies, etc. The villagers still have deep faith in the traditional pujas for curing their ailments. Most of the people perform these pujas even if they approach a doctor. Some of the pujas are quite expensive. As a result of this entertainment and ceremonials accounts for 5.87% of the total expenditure. Only 1.72 per cent of total expenditure is accounted for fuel and lighting.

3.5. The people of the village spend very less in education and medical treatment. The low percentage of expenditure on education (1.84%) may be due to the fact that the requirements of expenditure is not much for students from lower primary to H.S.L.C. standard. Similarly, the people of the village are not so much interested in medical treatment, and hence the expenditure on medical is

**Table 7.8**  
Annual Expenditure in Different Heads According to Occupational Classes,  
Khejurbond.

Occupational Classes	No. of H.H.	( Expenditure in Rupees )													
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
		No. of Cereals	Food Cereals	Non-Cereals	Fuel & Cereals	Lighting	Intoxi- cant	Foot- wear	Educa- tion	Medi- cal	Enter- tainment & ceremo- nials	Trave- ling	Ser- vices	Others	Total expen- diture
Solely Jhumia	1	1,858	312	101	318	45	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,634 (1.76)
Mainly Jhumia	23	51,637	9,203	1,203	9,315	3,521	353	719	6,060	447	79	963	83,500 (55.97)		
Settled Farmers with Jhuming	8	16,777	3,015	475	1,858	1,453	200	135	615	42	53	512	25,135 (16.85)		
Profession & Services	5	9,274	3,963	474	3,065	2,712	2,034	760	1,330	845	90	797	25,349 (16.99)		
Salaried Job	1	3,715	546	113	313	640	160	--	250	--	--	186	5,928 (3.97)		
Agricultural Wage Earner	2	4,637	623	199	296	255	--	100	500	20	15	--	6,645 (4.46)		
<b>Total :</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>87,898</b> (58.92)	<b>17,667</b> (11.84)	<b>2,565</b> (1.72)	<b>15,170</b> (10.17)	<b>8,626</b> (5.78)	<b>2,747</b> (1.84)	<b>1,714</b> (1.15)	<b>8,755</b> (5.87)	<b>1,354</b> (0.91)	<b>237</b> (0.16)	<b>2,458</b> (1.64)	<b>1,49,191</b> (100.00)		

negligible (1.15%). However, for persons suffering from ailments, medicines are obtained from nearby sub-health centre at Kalachand or from Maibang Hospital free of cost. It is needless to say that they also perform various rites and rituals to propitiate respective spirits and deities to get relief from various ailments.

3.6. Table 7.8 shows the annual expenditure under different heads according to occupational classes. It is found that the occupational class of 'mainly jhumia' accounts for 55.97 per cent of the total annual expenditure of the village followed by the occupational classes of 'profession and services' and 'settled farmers with Jhuming' accounting 16.99 per cent and 16.85 per cent respectively. The Table also shows that the other occupational classes, i.e., 'solely jhumia', 'salaried job' and 'agricultural wage earner' accounting 1.76% , 3.97% and 4.46% of the total expenditure of the village.

3.7. Per household, per worker and per capita annual expenditure of the village is shown in Table 7.9, which reveals that the per capita expenditure of the occupational classes of 'profession and services' and 'settled farmers with jhuming' are Rs.844.73 and Rs.644.48 respectively and are much higher than the village average expenditure of Rs.604.01. Except these two occupational classes, all other groups have got per capita expenditure below the village average expenditure.

3.8. Rice is the staple food for the Dimasas. The adult individuals usually take rice two to three times a day, but the young children take it three to four times a day. Therefore, per capita annual and per day consumption of rice is as high

Table 7.9  
Distribution of Annual Expenditure per Household, per  
Capita and per Worker by Occupational Classes,  
Khejribond.

Occupational Classes	No. of H.H.	No. of Persons	No. of Workers	Total Expenditure (Rs.)	Per Household (Rs.)	Per Capita (Rs.)	Per Worker (Rs.)
Solely Jhumia	1	6	2	2,634	2,634.00	439.00	1,317.00
Mainly Jhumia	23	146	71	83,500	3,630.43	571.92	1,176.06
Settled Farmers with Jhuming	8	39	20	25,135	3,141.87	644.48	1,256.75
Profession and services	5	30	10	25,349	5,069.80	844.73	2,534.90
Salaried Job	1	12	5	5,928	5,928.00	494.00	1,185.60
Agricultural Wage Earner	2	14	5	6,645	3,315.00	474.64	1,329.00
<b>Total :</b>	40	247	113	1,49,191	3,729.78	604.01	1,320.27

Table 7.1C  
 Distribution of House Units by Occupational Classes,  
Khejurbond.

Occupational Classes	No. of Households	Residential	Kitchen	Granary	Loomshed	Others	Total
Solely Jhumia	1	1	-	-	-	-	1
Mainly Jhumia	23	23	6	-	1	-	30
Settled Farming with Jhuming	8	9	1	-	-	-	10
Profession & Services	5	5	2	1	-	-	8
Salaried Job	1	1	-	-	-	-	1
Agricultural Wage Earner	2	3	-	-	-	-	3
Total :	40	42	9	1	1	-	53

Table 7.11

Occupationwise Squarefeet Distribution of Residential Unit, Khejurbond.

Occupations	No. of Households	Residential Unit With				Total	Per Household	Per Capita
		Thatched Roof and Bamboo Wall	C.I. Sheet Roof and Bamboo Wall	C.I. Sheet Pucca Wall, Pucca Floor				
Solely Jhumia	1	810	--	--	810	810.00	135.00	
Mainly Jhumia	23	14,525	--	--	14,525	631.52	99.49	
Settled Farmers with Jhuming	8	5,270	--	--	5,270	658.75	135.13	
Profession & Services	5	2,800	918	900	4,618	923.60	153.93	
Salaried Job	1	810	--	--	810	810.00	67.50	
Agricultural Wage Earner	2	1,298	--	--	1,298	649.00	92.71	
<b>Total :</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>25,513</b>	<b>918</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>27,331</b>	<b>683.28</b>	<b>110.65</b>	



as 215 kg. and 0.589 kg. respectively. Next to rice, per capita consumption of intoxicant also occupies a prominent position.

3.9. The residential houses of Khejurbond usually follow a common structural pattern. Most of the houses in the village are of simple pattern and these are made of wood, bamboo, thatch etc. Only two households have C.I. sheet roof and one of these have pucca wall with pucca floor. Distribution of house units by occupational classes is shown in Table 7.10. Out of the total number of 40 houses in the village, residential houses have covered 42 numbers. It is important to note that there is no separate granary in the village except in the case of one household. The people generally use one part of their residential units to keep their 'maikho' (bamboo made big basket) where they preserve their paddy.

3.10. Table 7.11 shows the nature of residential houses and their distribution by occupations. Out of total floor space of 27,331 sq.ft. covered by the residential houses in the village, 25,513 sq. ft. or 93.35 per cent are covered by houses made of bamboo and thatch. Only 1,818 sq.ft. residential houses in the village have roof covered with C.I. sheet and one of these houses is made of pucca wall and pucca floor. The floor space per household varies from 638.41 sq. ft. to 923.60 sq. ft. according to occupational class and the per household floor space covered by the occupational classes of 'profession and services' and 'salaried job' are higher than the average per household sq. ft. of the village. The average floor space per capita is 110.65 sq. ft.

4. Consumer Durable Goods :

4.1. Table 7.12 shows the number of durable consumer goods in the village. It is evident that 4 households own radio sets, 13 households own guns and 6 households own watches. Among modern furniture chair, table and cots were found to be in use. This indicates that a process of change has already set in. But there is not a single bicycle or bullock cart in the village. The use of bicycle and bullock cart will be quite feasible in the locality.

Table 7.12

Durable Consumer Goods in Use  
Khejurbond.

<u>Name of the Articles</u>	<u>No.in Use</u>
Radio	4 (4)
Gun	13 (13)
Watch	6 (6)
Patromax	6 (6)
Torch	33 (32)
Table	27 (20)
Chair	57 (22)
Cots	30 (21)
Almirah	4 (2)
Brass Utencils	309 (20)
Lantern	26 (19)
Umbrella	37 (25)
Aluminium Utencils	119 (23)
Chinacookery	91 (13)
Diesel Truck	1 (1)
Sewing Machine	1 (1)

( Figures within brackets indicate No.of  
H.H. owning the Articles ).

5. Indebtedness :

5.1. It is needless to say that small farmers of the village are facing economic hardship and such poor families take loan from co-villagers or traders of the locality. But it is difficult to collect accurate data on indebtedness as the people donot like to diclose their burden of debts for the

sake of social prestige.

5.2. It is important to note that the Maibang Large Scale and M.P.Cooperative Society Limited, Kalachand, also offered opportunity to the villagers to take agricultural loan with maximum limit of Rs.300.00 and minimum of Rs.60.00. Two villagers of Khejurbond borrowed Rs.150.00 each from the said co-operative during 1977. The rate of interest of the Co-operative was 12%. In this connection, it should also be mentioned that 15 individuals of the village enrolled themselves as share holders of the Cooperative during the year 1976-77.

5.3. It is learnt that there is no professional money lender in and around the village. However, one person holding important position in the village, took a loan of Rs.5000.00 from a trader of Maibang just to meet some urgent expenditure on business. The same person, who happens to be a businessman took a loan from Bank in 1976 for purchasing a new diesel truck. His outstanding loan at the bank stands at Rs.20,000/- at the time of investigation. Besides these two other persons of the village borrowed Rs.750.00 from co-villagers during 1977.

#### 6. Purchase and Sale of Assets and Livestock :

6.1. Table 7.13 shows the extent of purchase and sale of assets and livestock during the year 1976-77 by different occupational classes. During this period, the amount spent on purchase is Rs.3710.00 and the amount received from sale is Rs.2240.00. One household of occupational class, the 'solely jhumia' has purchased 3 acres of land at Rs.1400.00 and one 'mainly jhumia' family has purchased 2 acres land at Rs.700.00 and 3 households of the same occupation have purchased livestock at Rs.910.00. The 'profession and services' class

Table 7.13

Purchase and Sale of Assets During 1976-77,  
Khejribond.

(Figure in Rupees)

Occupational Classes	Purchase			Sale		
	Land	Livestock	Total	Land	Livestock	Total
Solely Jhumia	1400(1)	--	1400(1)	--	--	--
Mainly Jhumia	700(1)	910(1)	1610(4)	1000(2)	40(1)	1040(2)
Settled Farmers with Jhuming	--	--	--	--	700(1)	700(1)
Profession & Services	700(1)	--	700(1)	--	500(1)	500(1)
Salaried Job	--	--	--	--	--	--
Agricultural Wage Earner	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total :	2800(3)	910(3)	3710(6)	1000(2)	1240(3)	2240(5)

Note : Figures within brackets indicate number of households involved.

(one household) has also spent Rs.700.00 for purchasing land. On the other hand, in the sale of assets too, the occupational classes of 'solely jhumia' (one household) and 'mainly jhumia' (2 households) cover 44.64 per cent of the total amount of sale. One household each from the occupational classes settled farmers with jhuming and profession and services has shown Rs.700.00 and Rs.500.00 respectively as expenditure on livestock in the reference year. The sale of livestock covers 55.36 per cent of the total amount of sale.

## CHAPTER VIII

### Summary and Conclusion

1. In the foregoing Chapters, the socio-economic life of the Dimasas of Khejurbond village of the North Cachar Hills District has been discussed. The village is situated at a distance of about 7 km. from Maibang, the old capital of the Kachari Kingdom and at present an administrative centre of the district. The village is inhabited exclusively by the Dimasas. The field investigation for the study was done in January and February, 1978 and the data relate to the year 1977.

2. The Dimasas are the most dominant tribe in the North Cachar Hills District both numerically as well as politically. A sizeable section of the Dimasas is also found in the adjoining districts of Nowgong, Karbi-Anglong, Cachar and in Dimapur area of Nagaland.

3. Unlike the other neighbouring hill tribes the Dimasas prefer to build their villages on the foot of the hills instead of the top. The economy of the North Cachar Hills District is mostly dependent on shifting cultivation. But, many Dimasa villages of the district practise wet paddy cultivation depending upon availability of suitable flat valley land. Rice and cotton are the most important crops grown in jhum fields. Cotton is an important cash crop. The other crops grown in jhum field are sesamum, mustard and vegetables.

4. There are altogether 40 households in Khejurbond with a total population of 247 of which 123 are males and 124 are females. The average size of the families is found

to be 6.2. Nuclear family is common among the Dimasas. Of the 40 households 35 are nuclear and the rest 5 are of special type.

5. The Dimasas present a unique system of double descent and for this they have separate patri-clans (Sengfong) and matri-clans (Jaddi). Khejurbond is inhabited by people belonging to 12 patri-clans. Avoidance of both patri-clans and matri-clans in selecting a marriage partner is a must. Of the total population in the village 29.15% are married, 2.83% widow/er and only 0.40% is divorced. No case of early marriage was found in the village. Usually the girls and the boys get married in between the ages of 15 to 20 years and 25 to 30 years respectively. In Dimasa marriages bride-price is compulsory.

6. Educational facilities upto H.S.L.C. level are within easy reach of the village. The rate of literacy for the village is 30.66%. The proportion of illiterates among adult population is 60.17%. Most of the people above 50 years are illiterate. In spite of the availability of educational facilities illiteracy among children in the age group 5-15 years is 61%. Of the total population 45.75% are workers, 11.33% are as helpers and the rest 42.91% are non-workers.

7. There are two types of <sup>land, viz.</sup> upland used for jhum cultivation and wet paddy land. The former type of land is revenue free; but at present, ideal jhum land has become scarce in the village. The wet paddy land may be divided into two categories, viz. (1) those with patta and (2) those without patta. For patta land one has to pay revenue at the rate of Re.1/- per bigha (0.33 acre). The scope of bringing

more land under wet cultivation is limited as the area under cultivable waste has already been reclaimed.

8. Of the total land of the villagers 96.00 acres are under settled farming i.e. wet paddy cultivation, 144 acres are under jhum cultivation while 22.83 acres are under homestead and orchards. The average size of land holding per household is 6.00 acres. The average size of wet land per household is 2.91 acres. Leasing out and leasing in of wet land is not very high but its emergence is significant for a tribal village.

9. Total land under operation of the villagers is 218.33 acres of which 91 acres are settled land and 127.33 acres are jhum land. Jhum cultivation is by and large, universal among the Dimasas. In the reference year 31 households cultivated wet paddy; of which one landless household cultivated on leased in land. Three households did not cultivate their wet land and two of them leased out their land. The average per household and per capita operational holdings were 5.46 acres and 0.86 acre respectively. No HYV of crops and improved agricultural implements was found to be in use in the village. Cultivation of crops are done in traditional methods.

10. The percentages of land under wet paddy, jhum paddy and cotton to the total operational holdings are 41.68, 24.96 and 29.62 respectively. Only 1.22% and 2.52% of the total land were brought under sesamum and mustard respectively. The total cropped area under wet paddy is found to be more than jhum land under paddy. Yield of paddy per acre in wet land and jhum land <sup>are</sup> 9.76 quintals and 2.01 quintals respectively.



Average yield of cotton, the principal cash crop is found to be 1.16 quintals per acre. The yield per acre of sesamum and mustard are 1.12 quintals and 2.14 quintals respectively. There are only a few surplus paddy growers in the village. Most of the cotton, sesamum and mustard are sold in the local market immediately after harvest. Holding back of these cash crops for higher prices is almost not thought of by the villagers of Khejurbond.

11. Although there is scope for taking up livestock and poultry farming as commercial enterprises nobody has taken interest in them. Even milking of the buffaloes is uncommon. The Dimasa women are good weavers. Most of the clothes of their daily use are woven at their own looms. Fly shuttle looms have, of late, become popular in Khejurbond; but traditional looms also have not lost ground.

12. Of the total village income, 59.76% is derived from agriculture and 31.86% from 'profession and services'. Contributions of 2.91%, 5.87%, 1.83% and 0.68% of total income from agricultural wages, salaried jobs, rent and non-agricultural wages respectively are significant for a tribal village. Income from jhum cultivation (32.85%) is found to be higher than that from wet paddy cultivation (23.47%), which indicates the importance of jhum cultivation in the village economy. The average per capita, per household and per worker income in the village in the reference period are Rs.711.61, Rs.4,394.20 and Rs.1555.47 respectively. However, these figures would have been much less had there been no family with the occupation of profession and services. Occupationwise the highest income (41.71% of the village total) comes from the Profession and Services followed by the

Mainly Jhumias (40.85%). The two households of agricultural wage earners have lowest (1.95%) income in the village. The solitary household returned as solely jhumia has no income at all from any other sources other than jhuming. Maximum association with subsidiary occupations is found in the case of the households under the mainly jhumia occupation. Almost all the households have association with either jhum or settled farming. The percentage of families having annual income below Rs.4000.00 is 65% while 10% families enjoy an average annual income of above Rs.7000.00. The per capita income of 89% persons of the village is lower than the average per capita income for the village.

13. In the expenditure side, 70.76% is incurred in food items. Expenditure on intoxicants including rice beer constitute 10.17% of the annual expenditure. Expenditure on education and medical treatment is very insignificant. The annual average per household and per capita expenditure is found to be Rs.3729.78 and Rs.604.01 respectively. Highest per capita expenditure (Rs.844.73) is found in the occupational class of the profession and services followed by the settled farmers with jhuming (Rs.644.48). The lowest per capita expenditure is found in the occupation of agricultural wage earners. On the whole, the per capita annual expenditure of 72.06% persons of the village belonging to occupations other than settled farmers with jhuming and profession and services is below the average per capita expenditure (Rs.604.01) for the village as a whole.

14. The present dwellers of Khejurbond initially migrated to this place to take up wet paddy cultivation as their main occupation. This implies that they were ready to

work themselves in the wet paddy fields. But our data show that 65.60% of the total expenditure on hired labour input in the reference year was incurred only in wet paddy cultivation. The use of hired labour in significant proportion in wet paddy land may be attributed to the deep attachment of the villagers to the shifting cultivation, shortage of family labour, engagement in non-agricultural pursuits like salaried jobs and profession and services, availability of cheap hired labours and also a sort of dislike for work in wet paddy land.

15. Most of the residential houses of Khejurbond are constructed with thatched roofs and bamboo walls on the ground. More than 50% of the households have wooden furniture and a few families possess luxury goods like transistor sets. Possession of a gun is considered by the villagers as a matter of prestige. There are as many as 13 guns in the village. Some families have invested their surplus earnings in purchasing wet paddy land while some needy families have sold out their wet land. Purchase and sale of livestock particularly, buffalo is common in the village.

16. There is no professional money lender in the village. But a few cases of indebtedness were found in the village at the time of investigation. The sources of loan are either co-villagers or businessmen or the Cooperative Society. The solitary case of taking a bank loan for purchasing a diesel truck is, of course, noteworthy for such a village.

Concluding Remarks :

17. Khejurbond village was established primarily for the availability of facilities for wet paddy cultivation in

the nearby valley along with shifting cultivation. So the basic occupation of the villagers is expected to be a cultivation. But the location of the village with good communication and developmental activities in the district particularly, construction and repairing of roads and irrigation canals have attracted some people from Khejurbond to take up other occupations. As a result some people in the village have given up working in the fields. This <sup>has</sup> led to their greater dependence on hired labours. Most of the hired labourers in the area are non-Dimasa outsiders. In spite of that, some poor Dimasas have also taken up agricultural wage earning as their occupation. The emergence of agricultural hired labours is a new phenomenon in a tribal society.

18. The richest man in the village has also taken up transport business by purchasing a diesel truck financed by a bank. Similarly, salaried job and income from rent are also new sources of income for the village.

19. From the fact that wet paddy land and irrigation system were developed by the people themselves at the beginning, Khejurbond seems to be an ideal village for agricultural development. The records of the Diyung Valley Development Block show that some facilities of improved agriculture were extended to Khejurbond and its neighbouring villages. H.Y.V. paddy was also stated to be introduced in demonstration plots in the village by the Agricultural Department. But the findings from the survey donot show any use of these facilities in Khejurbond in the reference period. Nobody from the village was using chemical fertilisers nor any H.Y.V. seeds in the said period. The villagers feel that their wet paddy lands are naturally fertile enough and so no

fertilizer is necessary. It might also be a fact that emergence of new occupations as mentioned earlier has also distracted many from agricultural occupations.

Suggestions :

20. From the village survey data, the following suggestions can be made under the present situation for all-round socio-economic development of Khejurbond village.

(I) For the healthy development of the village economy attempt should be made for the development of agriculture in the village. As reported by the Soil Conservation Officials only dry terracing is feasible in and around Khejurbond. On the other hand, there is no plan with the Department at present to bring any area under dry terracing. So the scope for bringing new land under permanent cultivation is negligible. Under the circumstances, ways and means may be found out to utilize the existing wet paddy land more efficiently. The villagers should be persuaded to grow Rabi crops in the land where wet paddy is cultivated.

(II) Growing of pineapple and lemon (citrus) would also be profitable in the area. One enlightened farmer of Khejurbond has already started a pineapple and lemon farm. The other farmers should also be encouraged to grow such horticultural crops.

(III) Some farmers of neighbouring villages of Khejurbond were found to have made considerable profit from sugarcane cultivation. As there is a proposal with the District Authority for setting up a sugar mill at Kalachand, it is high time for the people of Khejurbond to introduce sugarcane cultivation on the lower slopes of their jhum fields.

(IV) Buffalo population is found to be quite large in Khejurbond though they are not milked. Rearing cows and taking milk was a taboo among the Dimasas. But now this custom is not strictly observed. A few households of Khejurbond have started rearing cows; but the cows are not milked by them. Some buffaloes and cows of Khejurbond are milked by non-Dimasas without any payment to the owners. These non-Dimasas happened to be care-takers of the cattle of the concerned families. The Dimasas of the village may, therefore, be encouraged to adopt milking of buffaloes and cows and to sell the milk at the nearby urban area.

(V) There is no social bar in the Dimasa society against piggery and poultry farming. So the villagers may profitably take up piggery and poultry farming with improved breeds for which there is ample scope.

(VI) Weaving in fly shuttle looms should be encouraged as market for the products exists.

(VII) There is scope for expansion of sericulture, particularly endi and silk in the village. There is a silk rearing sub-centre at Khejurbond under the charge of a sericulture Demonstrator. The Sub-Centre covers an area of 10 acres of land for castor plantation <sup>to</sup> provide castor leaves to the neighbouring villages for rearing endi. Moreover, there is an Endi Seed Grainage to procure endi cocoons. So the villagers may take up endi rearing on a regular basis.

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APPENDIX-I

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