

The Census, Social Structure and Objectification in South Asia

I

The bulk of social and cultural anthropological field work has been done in colonial settings. In a very real way the subject matter of anthropology has been the study of the colonized. A category of 'colonized people' is imprecise and difficult to specify, but it would in my terms include groups such as the American Indians and Africans transplanted to the New World, people who were physically uprooted and placed in new locations and relocated in newly created stratification systems, to the peoples of much of Africa, South and South East Asia—in which the effects of colonial rule have been more indirect and are mainly felt through political and economic innovations growing out of the colonial rulers' aim to control products of colonized labour rather than the labour itself. Anthropologists, when they have been concerned with the process of colonialism, have emphasized the political and the economic effects of alien rule and have mainly described structural changes in the affected societies. Thus far, there has been little attention paid in the study of colonialism to the culture of the colonized.

In use, the concept 'culture' in its more recent meanings, to denote an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life'

—rather than older definitions of culture, which are broader and tend to emphasize the idea of culture as a 'way of life' encompassing social as well as cultural systems—is more common. In the terms I am using here, culture equals symbol systems.

Historians in general have been much more sensitive than have anthropologists to the problem of changing culture in colonial societies. Historians of India see cultural change in standard terms of intellectual history. They have been concerned, if I may use a slightly out of date term, with the 'impact' of Western thought on Indian culture. Ten years ago this was viewed as a replacement of Indian ideas, concepts, and symbols by Western ones. Students of recent India talked about Westernization, by which they meant the results of the borrowing by the Indian élite of Western ideas about 'attitudes towards life'. The 'Bengal Renaissance' can be taken as an example of the process of Westernization. The idea of a 'Renaissance' is clearly Western in origin; it draws directly on Western historical experience as well as on the Western form of historical thinking, which is linear, in which it was possible for Humanists to see the past in relation to themselves and to think of a process by which the past is redefined, and purified and selected aspects of it utilized for models or prescriptions for behaviour in the present. Eighteenth and nineteenth century European scholars developed the idea of the Renaissance to denote a particular period in Western history and the development of a distinctive culture associated with that period. In the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries both indigenous Asian scholars and intellectuals as well as some Western historians viewed the development of intellectual stances among groups in Chinese, Indian and Islamic societies as the same kind of experience that Western Europe went through in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. There has been an attempt to broaden the concept of 'Renaissance' to cover the movement of cultural change brought about by the contact of Asian societies with the ideas and forms of thought developed in Western Europe. I would list the following as characteristic of these intellectual trends in Asian societies.

The sense that a small, educated and articulate group had in

these societies that they were living in 'a new era', a dawn, a rebirth of culture, is well conveyed by Amiya Charan Banerji.

Superstition and cruel customs played havoc in Hindu society. The burning of widows in those days was a common practice. The poor meekly submitted to the tyrannies of the rich. The woman suffered terribly from many unjust and oppressive customs. She was completely dominated by man. Modern science had not yet begun to dispel ignorance, superstition and blind faith. The Hindu orthodoxy formed almost an immovable barrier on the path leading to progress and development. This was the set-up of the Hindu society specially in Bengal when Rammohan Roy appeared on the scene. His was the mighty genius who tore to pieces the arguments advanced by orthodox pundits in support of idolatrous and superstitious practice and of the cruel custom of *Satiada*. In religion, in education and in the political sphere he gave the start to national awakening about one hundred and fifty years ago. He was indeed the father of the Indian Renaissance. During the period of the Renaissance, a galaxy of inspired religious leaders, great social reformers, noble patriots, eminent political thinkers and mighty literary geniuses appeared in India and especially in Bengal.²

The quotation from Banerji also highlights another major theme of cultural renaissances, certainly as typical of the Bengal case, and that is the need for purification of religious thought and practice. The Bengali intellectuals of the nineteenth century sensed that there was a quintessential Hinduism, which over the centuries had become encrusted with superstition and other unhealthy accretions.

A third theme related to the need to 'purify' Hinduism was to make it consonant with European ideas of rationality, empiricism, monotheism and individuality. Many Bengalis by the middle of the nineteenth century saw the development of ambivalence, that they couldn't totally integrate a purified Hinduism with Western rationality. On the one hand this led to what was perceived as hypocrisy—or as one writer put it—'There are those who believe one way and practice in another, who celebrate the *puja* in the morning and dine of veal cutlet and sausage in the evening.'³

This ambivalence, this view of the modern Indian between

East and West, becomes a central theme in the Renaissance view of its own culture and comes down to the recent past in the writings of men like Jawaharlal Nehru:

I have become a queer mixture of the East and the West, out of place everywhere, at home nowhere. Perhaps my thoughts and approach to life are more akin to what is called Western than Eastern, but India clings to me, as she does to all her children, in innumerable ways; and behind me lie, somewhere in the subconscious, racial memories of a hundred, or what ever the number may be, generations of Brahmins. I cannot get rid of either that past inheritance or my recent acquisitions. They are both part of me, and, though they help me in both the East and the West, they also create in me a feeling of spiritual loneliness not only in public activities but in life itself. I am a stranger and alien in the West. I cannot be of it. But in my own country also, sometimes, I have an exile's feeling.⁴

This theme of ambivalence was put in even more stark and personal terms by Pratap Chandra Mazumdar, a leader of the Brahmo Samaj, a religious reform movement, in 1879, after he had heard Ramakrishna, a 'traditional' rustic mystic and divine:

What is there common between him and me? I, a Europeanized, civilized, self-centred, semi-sceptical, so-called educated reasoner, and he, a poor, illiterate, shrunken, unpolished, diseased, half-idolatrous friendless Hindu devotee? I, who have listened to Disraeli and Fawcett, Stanley and Max Muller, and a whole host of European scholars and divines; I, who am an ardent disciple and follower of Christ, a friend and admirer of liberal-minded missionaries and preachers, a devoted adherent and worker of the rationalistic Brahmo Samaj—why should I be spellbound to hear him?⁵

The ambivalence was tied with a discovery or rediscovery of the past. This would seem to be almost necessary in terms of the ambivalence created by a view of the culture of the present as being one that the intellectuals could not fully accept since they had incorporated an European view **into** their own. Following our Bengal example, if the intellectuals accepted the European based view of their present, which emphasized the aberrations of the society and its religious system, then

they would have to reject their own culture or be hypocrites. However, if they could find in their past a 'golden age' and time when their own religion and society were superior, then they could argue that Indian civilization at a point in the past was the equal of Western society and that the rebirth inherent in the idea of a Renaissance was a rebirth of their own traditions and not only a borrowing from the West. It became imperative for nineteenth and twentieth century Indians to develop a knowledge of their own past, the form of which might be couched in Western historical terms but the intent of which was often to provide a rationale to counter the pressure of Western cultural imperialism.⁶

In the twentieth century, with the development of nationalism, there was a concerted effort on the part of both political and cultural leaders to use historical figures, movements and symbols derived from the historical record of India as a means of relating the struggle against the British to the Indian past. In western India the efforts of B. G. Tilak and his followers to revive the interest of Maharshtrians in Sivaji,⁷ Bankim Chandra Chatterji's use of historical themes in his novels, particularly in *Anandamath*,⁸ Savarkar's *First War of Indian Independence*,⁹ which viewed what the British historians call the Indian Mutiny of 1857–9 as the first Indian struggle for freedom against the British: all of these can be seen as part of a process by which Indians could view their own history, identify with it and use it in the development not only of political nationalism but in order to try to define their own identity. The phenomenon, which I have been illustrating, has its counterpart in most parts of the world.¹⁰

To speak only of a Western impact or of modernization, to see the process of cultural change and the development of new cultural identities as a kind of by-product of an historical experience whose major thrust has been political and economic, is to miss some of the significance of what has happened. Not only have the colonial peoples begun to think of themselves in different terms, not only are they changing the content of their culture, but the way that they think about their culture has changed as well. The Indian intellectuals of

Bengal in the nineteenth century and then the whole Western educated class of Indians in the twentieth century have objectified their culture. They in some sense have made it into a 'thing'; they can stand back and look at themselves, their ideas, their symbols and culture and see it as an entity. What had previously been embedded in a whole matrix of custom, ritual, religious symbol, a textually transmitted tradition, has now become something different. What had been unconscious now to some extent becomes conscious. Aspects of the tradition can be selected, polished and reformulated for conscious ends. Gandhi saw *ahimsa* (non-violence) as quint-essentially Indian and shaped it into an effective political weapon. B. G. Tilak and Aurobindo Ghose, early nationalists, selected from Hindu traditions concepts and ideals which could be worked into a new kind of national religious ideology. They reinterpreted the Bhagavad Gita into what has become for many modern Indians an authoritative expression of Hindu thought. They argued it was the Hindu's *dharma* to further nationalism; by implication they argued, on the basis of their interpretation of the Gita, that violence was justified in a righteous cause and that nationalism was a religiously given righteous cause. Gandhi also contributed to the 'objectification' of the message of the Gita and the process by which the Gita is now looked upon as a kind of Hindu bible, as the single most authoritative expression of Hinduism."

In the current analysis of symbol systems by anthropologists, the effort is to see underlying structures, to seek coherence in the statements made by informants, to seek the relationship of cultural categories as expressed in myth and rituals, and often to put together cultural expressions which on the surface appear to be contradictory. In working with informants or in the analysis of texts of particular myths or folktales, or in records of particular rituals, the anthropologist usually does not have the materials to study directly how the particular symbols or symbol clusters or cultural categories came to be associated, how they are maintained and how they change. Explanations, when they are made in this form of analysis, may call upon explanations which are rooted in some idea of human nature or are related to particular types

of societies, or they are seen as based on psychological differences.

The historian of ideas of literate societies can trace symbols through time but frequently has difficulty in relating the changes in symbol systems directly to changes in the society, or if he can he frequently is not interested in doing so and treats ideas and their symbolic expression as *sui generis*. Historians frequently talk of the 'climate of opinion', the zeitgeist, the 'feeling of an age' or the *weltanschauung*, but infrequently tell us how they are established, maintained and transmitted.¹² In the study of India there are a number of obvious contexts to probe if one is interested in the process of objectification and in the process of the reformulation of Indian culture in the recent past. Educational institutions have attracted the attention of historians,¹³ also Western style scholarship,¹⁴ the development of printing and literary societies,¹⁵ the study of the recent history of modern Indian languages,¹⁶ and studies of the courts and the legal system have contributed to the process of objectification.¹⁷

Central to the process of objectification have been the hundreds of situations that Indians over the past two hundred years have experienced in which precedents for action, in which rights to property, their social relations, their rituals, were called into question or had to be explained. It was the act of questioning the need for explanation to themselves or to the British which lies at the heart of the process. As a means of exploring the process of objectification, as a case study of how the process developed, I will briefly describe the structure and function of the Indian census. I think the census makes a good case study of the process for several reasons. First, it touched practically everyone in India. It asked questions about major aspects of Indian life, family, religion, language, literacy, caste, occupation, marriage, even of disease and infirmities. Through the asking of questions and the compiling of information in categories which the British rulers could utilize for governing, it provided an arena for Indians to ask questions about themselves, and Indians utilized the fact that the British census commissioners tried to order tables on caste in terms of social precedence.¹⁸

II

THE PRE-HISTORY OF THE CENSUS 1780-1820

The history of the Indian census must be seen in the total context of the efforts of the British colonial government to collect systematic information about many aspects of Indian society and economy. The first problem the British faced was the development of information on the collection of revenue with the acquisition of the right to collect revenues from some of the territories in Bengal. In 1769 the British appointed fifteen revenue supervisors for the districts of Bengal and Bihar from which they had the right to collect revenue. The supervisors' task was to supervise Indian tax officials who were to do the actual work. Henry Verelst, Governor of Bengal, drew up instructions for the supervisors, which among other things stressed the necessity for the collection of information on the history of the districts, and on the history of leading families and their customs as these affected their positions in relation to landholding. The supervisors were to obtain complete rent rolls for the districts based upon direct collection of information from local zamindars and revenue officials. They were also to report on the agricultural and craft production of the districts.¹⁹

It appears that the instructions for the collection of information were never systematically carried out by the supervisors but these instructions were taken by nineteenth and twentieth century scholars as the symbolic founding of activities that eventually developed into the various Gazetteer series published in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²⁰ Coincident with the attempt to develop systematic information centred on the nature of landholding, revenue assessments, and crude information on trade and agriculture—topographic surveying, exploration and the drawing of accurate maps began to develop rapidly.²¹

In the early decades of the nineteenth century special inquiries usually concerned with the functioning of the administration of justice or revenue were directed to be undertaken either by the Court of Directors, by the Board of Control in London or by the Governor General in India. Typical of such an effort was the request of the Earl of Moira (Gov-

ernor General of India, 1812–23) late in 1814 to district judges directed to the question of the functioning of the courts but incidentally calling for information on the population of their districts and brief descriptions of the economy and society of the districts.²² With the acquisition of new territories through annexation or military conquest, individual officers of the Company attempted to summarize pre-existing records which might yield quantitative information of a social and economic sort; they combined with this the qualitative assessments of population, land area, agricultural and craft production, and discussions of history and government, often based on reports of subordinate officials.²³

Characteristically, these kinds of materials were heavily weighted toward political history, with particular emphasis on the reigning royal houses and to questions affecting the assessment and collection of land revenue. Fortunately though, they contain either in separate sections or in passing descriptions of the main castes and tribes in the region, which are larded with normative judgements about their qualities. Estimates of population are frequently given but it is hard to find the basis on which these estimates are made. For Maratha territories, the estimates seem to have been developed out of the revenue records rather than by direct census enumeration.²⁴

The first full-scale effort to produce a Gazetteer of India was that of Walter Hamilton, *A Geographical, Statistical, and Historical Description of Hindostan and the Adjacent Countries*, 2 vols, London, 1820. Hamilton's aim was to 'reduce the Geography of Hindostan to a more systematic form than had yet been attempted . . . and at the same time to present a description of its internal economy.' Hamilton organized his Gazetteer in major territorial blocks, largely following the Mughul provinces and districts. The Gazetteer was based on what published materials there were; for geographical information his main source was Major James Rennel's *Memoir of a Map of Hindooostan*, which was published in 1793, on articles which had appeared in *Asiatic Researches*, in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, and on manuscript materials found in the India Board. The usefulness of Hamilton's Gazetteer was in the location of many places relatively accur-

ately in terms of latitude and longitude, in brief historical sketches of the principal states and towns, in mileages between locations and in the assembling of what population estimates existed at the time.

EARLY ATTEMPTS AT POPULATION ESTIMATES AND THE TAKING OF CENSUSES 1820–70

Walter Hamilton in his Gazetteer estimated the population of India at 123 million. Hamilton was not too clear on what this estimate was based and refers in a general way to reports of the India Board. Apparently these were partially made up of responses in 1801 submitted by collectors to the Board of Revenue for Bengal, as well as of the work of Buchanan. These cover the Presidency of Bengal and it is not clear how he arrived at figures for the rest of India.²⁵

As part of the materials submitted to the House of Commons in connection with the investigation carried on at the time of Charter renewal in 1831–2, Thomas Fisher, searcher of the Record at the East India House, provided a figure of 89 million for the population of British India. His figures were based on reports for Lower and Upper Bengal submitted in 1822 and 1826 by the superintendents of police. The method used for the Upper Provinces was based on the enumeration of villages and the multiplication of that figure by the average populations for villages.²⁶ Mountstuart Elphinstone, using these figures and then estimating the population of territories not reported on by Fisher, came up with a figure of 140 million.²⁷

In the first decades of the nineteenth century there were efforts made to conduct censuses of various Indian cities. One of the earliest reported censuses was done of Banaras in 1801 by Zulficar Ali Khan, kotwal of the city of Banaras, done at the request of the judges of the Appeal Court. He based his estimate on the purported number of houses which he counted by type, whether stone or mud, and the number of stories. He then arrived at an average figure for each type of dwelling and came up with the grand total of 582,000.²⁸ It is this figure on which Hamilton based his estimate of 600,000 for the population of Banaras, which he published in

his Gazetteer in 1820. The figure of 600,000 and above continued to be used for the population of Banaras in the middle of the nineteenth century.²⁹

It is clear that this was a gross overestimate on the part of Zulficar Khan, who according to James Prinsep (who carried out a census of Banaras in 1827–8) used the high figure to enhance the importance of his position as kotwal. Prinsep was Mint Master in Banaras and secretary of the short-lived Committee on Local Improvements in Banaras. It was in connection with this latter job that Prinsep carried out his census. He adopted two methods. The first was to have interviewed the *chaudhuris* of all of the castes in Banaras, and when Prinsep couldn't determine such an office for a caste he undertook direct investigation. This census gave him a figure of **152,613**. His second method was based on as accurate a listing of all the houses in Banaras as he considered possible, which he made up from a register being put together for the levying of a tax for the cleaning and repair of streets and drains. Prinsep then classified the houses as to size and type, got average figures for each type on a sample basis, and estimated the population of Banaras at **181,482**. He added to this some people living in the suburbs and estimated the population at approximately 200,000.³⁰ Censuses done later in the nineteenth century indicate that Prinsep's figures were perhaps too high and that the lesser figure of **152,000** was more nearly correct.”

There is reason to believe that not only was the population of Banaras consistently overestimated in the first half of the nineteenth century, but that of other cities as well. Given the methods used it is easy to see why the population may have been overestimated. The reasons why the overestimations were believed is a more interesting question. I think the reasons lie in the perceptions of the cities by Europeans. In the early nineteenth century, as in the twentieth century, Indian towns and cities, particularly the *chaunks* and bazaars, the commercial areas, give a sense of huge crowds. This sense comes from the layout of the towns and cities, and from the architecture. Town plans in the nineteenth century were featured by many narrow lanes with even narrower paths leading off them. In cities such as Banaras there were

large brick and stone tenements which often seemed to the observer to be built without plan and to contain enormous numbers of people. Most European travellers described Banaras in terms of large numbers of people, crowded conditions, noise and tumult.

The streets are only a few feet broad, confined with high buildings on each side, so that the sun can hardly penetrate to the bottom of the lanes.³²

Of the population of Benares, I am unable even to conjecture: the streets are so narrow and the buildings crowded to such a degree that you can have no conception of the number of people they contain.³³

The city of Benares is certainly the richest, as well as probably the most populous in India . . . the vast population, the crowds of beggars and pilgrims.³⁴

There are no wide streets in Benares, or large thoroughfares leading down to the river, but numerous narrow and intricate lanes.³⁵

In addition to the estimates made in the 1820s for the total population of India, the British continued in the **1830s** and **1840s** to try to determine the population of India. Most of the efforts were based upon the revenue surveys and were a by-product of attempts to map villages and lands. The Court of Directors called for a more accurate count to be made in 1846 as they felt that the figure 32 million for Upper India (North West Provinces) was much too high and they couldn't believe that the population was close to **500** persons per square mile.³⁶

The district officers in the North Western Provinces were instructed to obtain population figures from revenue surveys, from statements in reports on education, from settlement reports and from other surveys carried out in recent years. The figures for villages and *tahsil* were to be tested against information supplied by *chaukidars* and *patwaris*. The population estimate for districts was to be based on a listing of the villages and the estimate of the number of houses in each village. The village officials were to provide the house counts by each caste. Average figures for the number of persons in a house by caste were to be computed. John

Thornton, who was secretary to the Lieutenant-Governor, was aware that there might be a difference in the number of persons in a house depending on the caste. He reasoned that the upper-caste houses would have more people than the lower-caste households. In addition to a gross figure for each village in a district and gross district figures, an effort was made to determine how many people were agriculturalists. An agriculturalist was to be defined as anyone who derived his subsistence in whole or in part from the land, whether in wages or in rent, even though he might have other sources of income. This may not be the start of the conceptual problems which the census of India was to have and continues to have with the questions of what is an agriculturalist, what is a labourer, what is a primary and what is a secondary occupation, and all the various knotty questions of occupational categories in the Indian census. But it can be seen that from the earliest attempts there were conceptual problems built into the economic categories of the census.³⁷

We can also see the beginnings of problems in developing categories adequate to cover aspects of Indian social structure. In the report of Shakespear, the instruction to the collectors regarding the question of house, household and family was:

A house or family must be defined according to its local significance; perhaps it may generally be defined as a family living together, inhabiting a distinct part of a tenement or the whole of one or more tenements, in the same enclosure.³⁸

As could be predicted with such a vague definition, collectors were left to define what a house or family was in their own terms. Two operational definitions of family seem to have been used. One was based on multiple criteria of common expenditure³⁹ and the other was based on eating from a common hearth.⁴⁰ Those involved in this early effort at a census soon found difficulties even with questions of age, not only the difficulties of getting absolute age but also of trying to get estimates of the number of adults and the number of children. At what age was a young male considered to be a child and at what age was he to be considered an adult? This question was left to individual collectors and A. A. Roberts in the

Delhi district decided as follows: 'It was ruled that males above 12 should be considered men, and under that age as boys; and females above 10 should be enumerated as women and under that age as girls.' Notwithstanding the selection of these early ages, the tendency of the people was to consider still younger persons as men and women.⁴¹ Roberts also found problems in getting estimates of the number of females, as the Hindus consistently underestimated the number. This was a problem which Prinsep also found in Banaras when he questioned chaudhuris of the castes as to their numbers, since women were not reported.

Within five years of the publication of the census of 1847 orders were given that another census be carried out because of the inaccuracies of the previous census. This census was to be carried out by an actual enumeration of the total population of the North West Provinces and was to be carried out on the same day, 1 January 1853.⁴² This census was to record occupation as well as the number of people, households, and the number of villages. The actual enumeration was to be carried out by patwaris assisted by the village police, and in towns and cities by the heads of wards. In rural areas the work of the patwaris was to be supervised by the tahsildars, and that of the tahsildars by the collectors. There was an effort to make specific the definition of family—'Those who live together or who cook their food at the same hearth.'⁴³ The problem of what an agriculturalist was was not much advanced—'Those families are to be shown as agricultural of whom the head derives the whole or any part of his subsistence from the possession or the cultivation of land.'⁴⁴

Christian, in his summary of the findings, pointed to the high density of the population, which was 420 to the square mile for the whole of the North Western Provinces, and reached over 600 persons per square mile in the Eastern part of the province. He tried to disarm the critics in London—who had used such high density figures as an indication of the inaccuracies of previous counts—by pointing out that this would in no way seem strange to those familiar with Indian conditions, and said that if anything there was probably an underestimation rather than an overestimation in the population figures for the North Western Provinces.⁴⁵

Christian was not satisfied with the way in which agriculturalists were counted. He felt too broad a construction was given to the term 'agriculturalist'. His solution to the difficulty was to recommend that in future censuses the caste and occupation of the head of each family be recorded. He felt that a combined criteria of caste and occupation was the only way in which the relative strength of the agricultural and non-agricultural classes could be accurately ascertained.

The confusion amongst the European observers of caste and occupation in the early nineteenth century was quite widespread and can easily be seen in the town and district censuses which the Bhattacharyas reprint in their *Report on the Population Estimates of India 1820–1830*. There was a tendency to report the numbers in a particular caste as if all members of the caste followed the culturally assumed occupation, even though it was frequently known that not all Brahmins worked as priests and not all Rajputs were warriors and landlords. Some observers, such as Walters, who did a census of Dacca in 1830, tried to give both caste membership and, when the members of the caste followed more than one occupation, to give a breakdown by household of the occupations they followed. Walters, though, clearly had difficulties in deciding what a caste was, since Sudras are listed as a caste as well as Banias.⁴⁶

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODERN CENSUS 1871–1901

A full census of India was to have been attempted in 1861 but because of the dislocations caused by the suppression of the rebellion of 1857–9 and of the sensitivity which the British had developed to what, at least in North India, might be construed as undue interference in the life of the people, the census was postponed until 1871–2. A census of most of the provinces and princely states was carried out in 1871 and 1872, but such imperfections, both in administration and in conception, developed that not much reliance was put in the census at the time. There seems to have been very little effort made to make the provincial censuses comparable to each other. The rules for recording the heads of households differed from province to province, certain categories of

information, for example on education and literacy, were not collected in all provinces and there was much evidence of little co-operation from the population because of the fears that the carrying out of the census was for tax purposes.⁴⁷

British census officials always included in their reports accounts of rumours which were purported to circulate among the Indian population. In Oude in 1869 it was rumoured that one male from each family or every fourth man was to be taken as a recruit for the army, or as a labourer on the roads, or as an emigrant. It was also rumoured that the women were wanted for the European soldiers. One report circulated that England had become so hot that the Queen desired that two virgins might be sent from each village to fan her day and night, and the census was merely a subterfuge for the carrying out of the Queen's orders.⁴⁸

In each of the provinces there were individual difficulties, often because of the way in which records were kept or in the staffing of the census operations. For example, for twenty years starting with the census of 1871–2, there were difficulties in Bengal in getting an accurate list of villages or, for that matter, even defining what a village was. As Bengal was permanently settled, village lists, maps and settlement records were not available and there was not the large staff at the district and tahsil or taluk level which characterized non-permanently settled areas.

In Bengal the first step was to try to draw up an accurate list of survey *mauzas* which would provide the basic geographic unit on which the census would be carried out. It was found that the list which the police kept of villages on which the police circles (*thanas*) were based was totally inaccurate for census purposes because the boundaries of the villages were vague and the list was not up-to-date in terms of even the presence or absence of some villages. H. Beverly, who was Census Commissioner for Bengal in 1871–2, felt that the only way an accurate list of villages could be obtained was by sending a responsible official to each revenue village to check the boundaries and particulars of that village. His instructions, which were duly forwarded to the revenue commissioners throughout Bengal, brought an immediate howl of

response that such a check could not be carried out without seriously interfering with their regular work. If a special staff were appointed, it was estimated that 350 officials would have to be appointed for a period of four months at a cost of 70,000 rupees to visit every village in Bengal, exclusive of Bihar.⁴⁹

In the 1881 census of Bengal, it was decided to use a list which was in the process of being prepared by the Boundary Commissioner, who was an officer of the Revenue Survey. The office had been created in 1853 to settle all boundaries of revenue and judicial units and to prepare an accurate list of mauzas (revenue) villages in each magistrate's jurisdiction. This work was finished in time for the 1881 census and provided the basis for drawing up village lists for the census. In 1891, what was termed the residential village was the basis for determining census units. In Bihar it turned out that the mauza designation was widely enough known that the residential village and revenue village coincided. In Bengal proper and in Orissa this turned out not to be the case and the distinction between hamlet and village and even the boundaries of dispersed villages were not clear to the residents and to the census enumerators. This led to a situation in which, in the Cuttack district in Orissa, the census recorded 12,841 villages in 1881, 5429 in 1891, and 6347 in 1901.⁵⁰

Also related to the problem of the location of a village was the problem that arose of trying to distinguish villages from towns. In the 1872 census a town was distinguished from a village arbitrarily by defining any place with more than 5000 people in it as a town. The purpose of making distinctions, according to J. A. Bourdillon, Deputy Superintendent of Census Operations for Bengal in 1881, was to contrast the occupational structure of rural and urban people and 'to show how their separate modes of life affect their ages and civil conditions, and to display the sources from which our urban population is drawn'.⁵¹ Bourdillon didn't feel that a simple size criterion was sufficient because places smaller than 5000 people could have the social characteristics of a town and places over 5000 people could be based entirely on agriculture and not have any characteristics of towns. The decision was to use an administrative definition of a town as those places

notified under the Municipalities Act of 1876 as well as any place with more than 5000 people.

The experience which the census directors had in Bengal with the location and definition of a village and town can be repeated for almost every province in India and for almost every question asked on the census.

Perhaps the most complex questions for the census takers arose over the question of caste. Questions about caste also hold the most interest today for anthropologists and many other social scientists. G. S. Ghurye, as well as succeeding students of Indian society, saw the census itself as having effects on the caste system.

The conclusion is unavoidable that the intellectual curiosity of some of the early officials is mostly responsible for the treatment of caste given in the census, which has been progressively elaborated in each successive census since 1872. The total result has been as we have seen, a livening up of the caste-spirit.⁵²

It might be said that the historical role which Indian rulers had played as the final arbiters of the ranking of castes within their jurisdiction, including the ability to promote as well as demote castes, was now transferred by the people to the new rulers; and the ranks accorded to castes in census reports became the equivalent of traditional copper-plate grants declaring the status, rank and privileges of a particular caste or castes.⁵³

Srinivas and Ghurye raise two very important questions. Why did the British officials record the caste of individuals? Was it curiosity or was it part of the design on the part of the British, as some nationalist Indians believed, 'to keep alive, if not to exacerbate, the numerous divisions already present in Indian society'.⁵⁴ The second order of questions relates to the effects of census operations on the consciousness of caste and the use of the census for validation of claims to new status within the caste system. To these two complicated and important questions a third may be added—what influence did the census operations have on theoretical views which both administrators and social scientists developed about the Indian social system? Most of the basic treatises on the Indian caste system written during the period 1880 to 1950 were

written by men who had important positions either as census commissioners for all of India or for a province. Among these were A. Baines, E. A. H. Blunt, R. E. Enthoven, B. S. Guha, T. C. Hodson, J. H. Hutton, D. Ibbetson, E. J. Kitts, L. S. S. O'Malley, H. H. Risley, H. A. Rose, R. V. Russell, and E. Thurston. Of important works written on caste during this period only William Crooke, C. Bougle, G. S. Ghurye, A. M. Hocart, J. C. Nesfield, and E. Senart did not have positions important in census operations. This latter group of authors as well as many others drew heavily for illustration and analysis on the materials generated by the census of India. It would not be an exaggeration to say that down until 1950 scholars' and scientists' views on the nature, structure and functioning of the Indian caste system were shaped mainly by the data and conceptions growing out of the census Operations. The census was the necessary prerequisite both for the Imperial Gazetteer and for the Tribes and Castes series. Much of the basic scholarly apparatus, which continues to be used today for both administrative and scholarly activity, is founded on the work done on caste and related subjects as part of the census operations.

The official rationale for the taking of the census was based on administrative necessity. Beverly argued in 1872 that without precise information

regarding the numbers of the people, there was felt to be a sense of inconvenience in the administration of Bengal. Without information on this head, the basis is wanting on which to found accurate opinions on such important matters as the growth and rate of increase of the population, sufficiency of food supplies, the incidence of local and imperial taxes, the organization of adequate judicial and police arrangements, the spread of education and public health measures.⁵⁵

It was felt by many British officials in the middle of the nineteenth century that caste and religion were the sociological keys to understanding the Indian people. If they were to be governed well, then it was natural that information should be systematically collected about caste and religion. At the same time as the census operations were beginning to collect information about caste, the army was beginning to be

reorganized on assumptions about the nature of 'martial races', questions were being raised about the balance between Hindus and Muslims in the public services, about whether certain castes or 'races' were monopolizing access to new educational opportunities, and a political theory was beginning to emerge about the conspiracy which certain castes were organizing to supplant British rule. The impetus to collect information on caste went way beyond the 'intellectual curiosity' of a few officials and was based in widespread and deeply held beliefs about Indians by the British. Ideas about caste—its origins and functions—played much the same role in shaping policy in the latter half of the nineteenth century that ideas about the village community and the nature of property played in the first half of the nineteenth century. Attempts were made in the first census of 1871–2 to collect information on caste. The principle of organization was to try to place castes (*jatis*) in the four *varnas* or in categories of Outcastes and Aborigines. The writers of the individual provincial census reports tried to classify the castes in blocks. This effort failed owing to what Waterfield called intrinsic difficulties and the absence of a uniform system of classification.⁵⁶ From the beginning of the census operations it was widely assumed that an all-India system of classification of castes could be developed.

In the development of a classification system for castes, there were two interlocked but operationally separable problems: the actual question which an enumerator asked an individual; then how this answer was interpreted by a clerk and eventually by a supervisor of the census of a district or of a larger unit. The actual taking of the census was a two-step affair. Enumerators were appointed by circle supervisors, who were usually government officials. Supervisors were patwaris, zamindars, school teachers or anyone who was literate. They were given a form with columns on which was to be entered information about every member of a household. The information to be collected was name, religion (e.g. Hindu, Muslim), sect, caste, subdivision of caste, sex, age, marital status, language, birthplace, means of subsistence, education, language in which literate and infirmities. There was a one-month period before the actual date of the

census in which the enumerator was to fill in the forms, and then on the day of the census he was to check the information with the head of the household.

As an aid to achieving standardization in the recording of information on caste and subcaste, lists were prepared as early as the 1881 census which gave standard names with variations for the castes. The supervisors were supposed to instruct the enumerators in how to classify responses.⁵⁷ The lists of castes were alphabetically arranged giving information on where they were to be found and containing very brief notes. For example,

Shudra, found in Eastern Bengal, descended from maid servants by their masters of good caste; also called Golam or Golam Kayastha. The term Shudra is also used to indicate the various castes supposed to represent the fourth caste of Manu. In this sense the term is to be avoided in the census schedules

or another example, ‘Sutihar, Bihar, a low caste who spin cotton thread. In some cases the term indicates the occupation only. Its use in this sense should be avoided.’ A list of terms which should not be used was also provided. These were terms like Baniya, a generic term for trading castes; Bhojpura, when used to refer to all ‘up-country men’; Naik, which was a title; or Chakar, which was the name of a subcaste. The list was headed—

List of vague and indefinite entries found in the census returns of 1891 that should be carefully excluded from colom [sic] 8 (caste) of the census schedules, except in the special cases where the term is said to indicate a *true caste*. Any difficulties that may arise should be reported from orders to the District Magistrate.⁵⁸

The lists and instructions did not solve the problem of difficulties in the standardization of terminology for the enumerators, and, although in Bengal the number of people who were not classifiable in terms of their ‘true’ caste dropped from over 2,300,000 in 1891, there continued to be considerable correspondence about the names by which people were recorded.

The second order of problems came in the aggregation and presentation of the data on caste. In the 1881 census, the

Commissioner for India; W. C. Plowden, decided that the caste tables as found in the reports should contain information on castes and tribes which contained more than 100,000 persons. The castes should be arranged in five categories: Brahmins, Rajputs, Castes of Good Social Position, Inferior Castes and Non-Hindus or Aboriginal Castes. Plowden foresaw difficulty in separating ‘castes of good social position’ and ‘inferior castes’ and the criterion to be used was that castes engaged in personal service such as Mehters, Kahars, and Dhobis would be in an ‘inferior caste’ class. He believed it would be possible to determine other castes, ‘which the popular voice designates as inferior’.⁵⁹ It was left to the Provincial Census Commissioner to assign the class to which the caste belonged.

J. A. Bourdillon, Census Commissioner for Bengal, felt that the classification proposed by Plowden would do great violence to the facts of the caste system as found in Bengal. The Hinduized tribes, he felt should have separate classification. He also felt that some groups, such as the Kayasthas, Khandaitas, and the Babbans, were immeasurably higher in social status than the Koiris and Kumhars with whom they were classified and were very close in status to Brahmins and Rajputs. Therefore, he proposed a category of intermediary castes to come right below the Rajputs and Brahmins. The Lieutenant-Governor consulted Rajendra Lal Mitra, the outstanding Indian Sanskrit scholar of the time. Mitra set out an order or precedence, which included placing the Babbans (Bhumihars) in the same category as the Brahmins and ranking Kayasthas right below Rajputs. The Lieutenant-Governor ordered that any doubt about a caste’s social position should be resolved by reference to Rajendra Lal Mitra’s list.⁶⁰

Rajendra Lal Mitra based his scheme on what he termed ‘Hindu ideas’ of classification. He felt it was not the responsibility of the census to deal with claims for higher social positions such as were put forward by the Vaidyas of Burdwan, the Subarnabaniks and the Kayasthas. ‘Its [the census’] duty is clearly to follow the textbooks of the Hindus and not to decide on particular claims.⁶¹

The next stage in the effort to determine caste precedence

in the census grew out of the efforts under H. H. Risley's direction to conduct an ethnographic survey of Bengal. Risley drew up lists of castes ordered on the basis of 'social precedence' and then sent them out to a large number of Indians for the 'expression of your opinion on the correctness of the arrangement, considered with reference to your own district, or to any part of the country of which you have special experience'.⁶² Among the recipients of the list were Sheonarian Lal Ray, Deputy Magistrate and Collector of Patna; Roy Kumar Sen, Lecturer at Dacca College; Tara Prasad Chatterjee, Deputy Magistrate of Burdwan; Asvini Kumar Basu, Additional Munsiff, Serampore; Dina Nath Dhae, Government Pleader at Dacca, as well as a number of Indians not in government employ. The correspondents were instructed to 'correct' the printed list by assigning different numbers to the castes named.

Most of Risley's correspondents were not content just to place numbers, but some consulted widely other Indians and wrote furious and often very learned notes to justify their assignments of rank. Some also heaped abuse on Risley's unnamed informants. 'It is against all notions of caste known in Hindu society to say that a Kshatriya or Vaishya is inferior in social rank to a Kayastha'.⁶³ In support of his position, Sen submitted a list drawn up by a professor of Sanskrit at Dacca in which Kayasthas were ranked below Mahisyas, a farming and fishing caste of Bengal. Another correspondent, a Brahman, didn't understand why Kayasthas wanted to be ranked as Kshatriyas and why they wanted to 'obtain honours which heralds and Ghataks (genealogists) can bestow'. He points out that the Kayasthas had done well enough with occupational opportunities with which the British government had provided them and could outstrip Brahmins in this competitive field.

Most of Risley's correspondents cited sacred texts and legends to support their positions, the code of Manu and the *Brahma Vaivarta Purana* being most frequently cited. Kayastha respondents tended to cite the Ballal Sen story, a legendary account of the history of Bengal which places Kayasthas right below Brahmins. Others cited legal documents and English language legal textbooks such as *The Digest of Hindu*

Law by Babu Syama Charan Sarkar, or a document filed in 'the criminal court of Tipperah district in 1823–4—a list of intermarriages amongst castes which led to the founding of the present castes of Bengal, signed by 100 pandits. However, the most frequent validation for altering Risley's list was reference to learned pandits and Sanskrit scholars. In the publication which grew out of Risley's inquiries, *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, 4 vols, Calcutta, 1891, he sidestepped the social precedence question by listing the castes and tribes alphabetically.

Risley himself had a theoretical axe to grind in this and in his later publications, which was that 'race sentiment' was the basis of the caste system. On the first page of *Castes and Tribes of Bengal*, Risley described a stone panel from Sanchi, which depicts three 'aboriginal women' and a troop of monkeys praying at a small shrine. 'In the background, four stately figures—two men and two women—of tall stature and regular features . . . look with folded hands and apparent approval at this remarkable act of worship'.⁶⁴ Risley's interpretation of this scene is that it shows a higher race keenly conscious of differences but on friendly terms with a lower race. The book attempts to show, says Risley, that race sentiment, far from being—

a figment of the intolerant pride of the Brahman, rests upon a foundation of fact which scientific methods confirm, that it has shaped the intricate grouping of the caste system, and has preserved the Aryan type in comparative purity throughout North-east India.⁶⁵

In the 1901 census, which was done under Risley's direction, the question of caste precedence and of race came together and Risley felt that through anthropometric measurement he had confirmed his hypothesis that social precedence was based on a scale of racial purity.

THE RABBIT OUT OF THE HAT

This essay began with a discussion of a general cultural process-objectification—and has wound its way through some fragments of data and speculation regarding the census

of India and particularly the questions connected with the accumulation and presentation of data on caste. The implied argument is that the census was one of the situations in which Indians were confronted with the question of who they were and what their social and cultural systems were. I don't think that the act of a census enumerator asking a question of a peasant contributed too much to the process. I suspect in many instances that the questions weren't even asked and that many of the enumerators filled in the forms on the basis of their own knowledge of their neighbours—particularly on questions of caste, language and religion. If there was a direct effect of the census on the mass of the Indian population, it was on the enumerators. To carry out the census in the late nineteenth century at least half a million Indians had to be involved in the process, and it was probably many more than that. The keys to the situation were the instructions given by the supervisors to their circle supervisors and by the circle supervisors to the enumerators. The Indians who mainly on a voluntary basis made the census possible were a highly significant group as they were literate and educated, even if only at a primary school level.

In the towns and cities there was interest in the information which the census generated. The formation of caste *sabhas* and their petitions to have their caste status changed indicates this. Recently Thomas Kessinger, found a file in a District Record Office in Jullundur district in Punjab, which is a petition from a group called Mahtons who wanted to be recorded in the census of 1911 as Rajputs. They based their claim on history and to the fact that they followed Rajput customs. Their claim was rejected at the district level as being too vague. The decision was written by the District Census Officer, Din Mohammad, who based his decision on the work of Ibbetson in the census of the Punjab in 1881 and on the work of the Settlement Officer. Din Mohammad argued though that the Mahtons had separated themselves from a tribe of hunters and scavengers called Mahtams and had become agriculturalists. This separation would be symbolized by calling the agricultural section of the tribe Mahton Rajput. Din Mohammad appears to have accepted the claim of the Mahtons that they were recognized as Rajputs by the

Rajput Pratnik Sabha of the Punjab and Kashmir, but since they didn't intermarry with the Rajputs they would have to be content with being recorded as Mahton Rajput.

The decision had immediate consequences. Apparently some of the Mahtons wanted to be able to join a Sikh regiment of the army and hence the recruiting officer for the regiment made an inquiry. Also, the Inspector of Schools of Jullundur district wanted to know how to rule on a request that the Mahtons be eligible for a zamindari scholarship established by the Punjab government for Sikh and Hindu Rajputs.⁶⁶ What is significant in this case is the awareness which a rural and obscure group had of the desirability of being recorded as Rajputs, not only from considerations of assumed social standing but from the direct benefits such a denomination would bring them.

In 1895, Fazl-i-Rabb, who was the dewan to the nawab of Murshidabad in Bengal, wrote a book on the origin of the Muslims of Bengal. It appeared both in English and in Bengali.⁶⁷ In this study Rabb takes W. W. Hunter, the compiler of the *Statistical Account of Bengal*, and H. Beverly, Census Commissioner of Bengal for the 1871-2 census, to task for assuming all the Muslims of Bengal were of low caste origin and converted from the Hindu population. In particular, Beverly became his target.

We cannot say whether Mr. Beverly has any ulterior object in exposing the Musalmans to contempt and ridicule by publishing such unjust opinions and lamentable conjecture and imaginative suspicion as he has done.⁶⁸

Rabb felt that because the Musalmans were being unjustly held up to ridicule before the whole world, the British government should—

repair the wrongs done to us Musalman subjects through the public writings of Mr. Beverly and [we] solicit that the question at issue; viz., that of our origin and ancestry, be thoroughly enquired into with the help afforded by history and [that] the results of such investigation may be placed on record.⁶⁹

In 1931 the consciousness of the significance of the census operation had reached a point where Indians were not merely

content to petition and to write books: some groups set out to influence the answers which people would give in the census. In Lahore, just before the preliminary enumeration, a haqdbill was widely distributed by the census committee of the Arya Samaj in Lahore.

Remember!	
Question	You should answer!
Religion	Vedi Dharm
Sect	Arya Samajist
Caste	Nil
Race	Aryan
Language	Arya Bhasha ⁷⁰

Concern with counting the characteristics of the Indian population, which may have started as the intellectual concerns of a few British officials or the administrative necessity of knowing the 'natives', had become an object to be used in the political, cultural and religious battles at the heart of Punjabi politics which have been crucial down to the present. The movement of objectification had moved by the 1930s from a small group of intellectuals in Calcutta searching for cultural tools with which to counter Western influences to the towns and villages of much of India. In this process of classifying and making objective to the Indians themselves their culture and society, the census played a key role.

NOTES

1. Clifford Geertz, 'Religion as a Cultural System', in Michael Banton, ed., *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion* (London, 1966), p. 3.
2. Amiya Charan Banerji, 'Brahmananda Keshub Chandra Sen', in Atulchandra Gupta, ed., *Studies in the Bengal Renaissance* (Calcutta, 1958), pp. 79–80.
3. Kishori Chand Mitter as quoted in Lokanath Ghose, *The Modern History of Chiefs, Rajas, Zamindars of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1881), part I, p. 112.
4. Jawaharlal Nehru, *Toward Freedom* (New York, 1941), p. 353.
5. As quoted in L. S. S. O'Malley, 'General Survey', in L. S. S. O'Malley, ed., *Modern India and the West* (New York, 1941), p. 788.
6. My view of the Bengal Renaissance has been shaped by the work of David Kopf, particularly his *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969), and his unpublished paper, 'The Idea of Renaissance in Indian Historical Thought: A Study on the Historiography of Bengal'; and on the work of Warren Gunderson, 'The World of the Babu: Rajendralal Mitra and Cultural Change in Modern India', Ph.D. dissertation (University of Chicago, 1970), and 'The Self Image and World View of the Bengali Intelligentsia as Found in the Writings of the Mid-Nineteenth Century, 1830–1870' in Edward Dimock, ed., *Bengal Literature and History* (Michigan State University, Asian Studies Center Occasional Papers, 1967), pp. 127–77.
7. Stanley Wolpert, *Tilak and Gokhale: Revolution and Reform in the Making of Modern India* (Berkeley, 1962), pp. 67–8; Victor Barnouw, 'The Changing Character of a Hindu Festival', *American Anthropologist* (1954), vol. 56, pp. 74–86.
8. T. W. Clark, 'The Role of Bankim Chandra in the Development of Nationalism', in C. H. Philips, ed., *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon* (London, 1961), pp. 429–47; Rachel R. Van Meter, 'Bankim-chandra's View of the Role of Bengal in Indian Civilization', unpublished paper presented at the Second Annual Bengali Conference: University of Missouri, May 14, 1966.
9. V. Savarkar, *First War of Indian Independence*.
10. See reference to Marriott's article in *Old Societies and New States* and Wallerstein's article in *Colonial Situation*. Also Joseph Levinson's books and Martin Silverman's thesis.
11. See Minoo Adenwalla, 'Hindu Concepts and the *Gita* in Early Nationalist Thought' in Robert Sakai, ed., *Studies on Asia* (1961).
12. Notable exceptions to this generalization are Laurence Wylie's 'Life and Death of a Myth' in Melford Spiro, ed., *Context and Meaning in Cultural Anthropology* (New York, 1965), pp. 164–85; John William Ward's *Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age* (New York, 1962); Henry Nash Smith's *Virgin Land, The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, Mass., 1950); and William R. Taylor, *Yankee and Cavalier* (New York, 1961). These works draw on popular literature, theatre, songs, cartoons and other media to construct their account of the development of specific symbols important at various times in American history.
13. See David Kopf; Ellen Gumperz, 'English Education and Social Reform in Late Nineteenth Century Bombay', *Journal of Asian Studies* (May, 1966), vol. xxv, pp. 453–70; the research of Irene Gilbert on the Indian Educational Service and of David Lelyveld on Aligarh College.
14. See Gunderson.
15. Ellen Gumperz, 'The Modernizing of Communication: Vernacular Publishing in Nineteenth Century Maharashtra', *Asian Survey* (July 1968), vol. viii, pp. 589–606; and 'The Growth of Regional Con-

- sciousness in Maharashtra', *Indian Economic and Social History Review* (1968), vol. v.
16. Jyotirindra Das Gupta and John Gumperz, 'Language Communication and Control in North India', in Joshua Fisman *et al.*, eds., *Language Problems of Developing Nations* (New York, 1968), pp. 151–66.
 17. Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition* (Chicago, 1967), pp. 251–93; J. D. M. Derrett, 'Sanskrit Legal Treatises Compiled at the Instance of the British', *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Rechtswissenschaft* (1961), vol. LXII, pp. 203–36; Marc Galanter, 'The Aborted Restoration of "Indigenous" Law in India', unpublished paper, 1969.
 18. G. S. Ghurye was the first to note the effect that asking questions about caste may have had in heightening caste feelings. See G. S. Ghurye, *Caste and Race in India* (New York, 1932), pp. 156–8; also see M. N. Srinivas, *Social Change in Modern India* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1966), pp. 94–100; and Imitiaz Ahmed, 'The Backward Castes Movement', Unpublished paper, 1968.
 19. Verelst's plans for revenue administration and his instructions are summarized in Nandalal Chatterji, *Verelst's Rule In India* (Allahabad, The Indian Press, 1939), pp. 238–60; W. K. Firminger, *Historical Introduction to the Bengal Portion of the Fifth Report* (Indian Studies Past and Present, Calcutta, 1962; orig. publ. 1917), pp. 186–96. The instructions are printed in full in Henry Verelst, *A View of the Rise, Progress and Present State of the English Government in Bengal* (London, 1772), Appendix, pp. 224–39.
 20. Clements R. Markham, *A Memoir on the Indian Surveys* (London, W. H. Allen and Co., 2nd ed. 1878), p. 377; S. B. Chaudhuri, *History of the Gazetteers of India* (New Delhi, Ministry of Education, Government of India, 1964), pp. 25–6.
 21. *Survey of India, Historical Records of the Survey of India*, collected and compiled by Col. R. H. Phillimore, 4 vols., New Delhi, 1945; Markham; Charles E. D. Black, *A Memoir on the Indian Surveys 1875–1890* (London, 1891).
 22. These reports are found in the India Office Library, *Home Miscellaneous Series*, vols. 775 and 776.
 23. For examples see M. Elphinstone, *Report on the Territories Conquered from the Paishwa* (Calcutta, 1821, 2nd ed.); Sir John Malcom, *A Memoir of Central India*, 2 vols (London, 1823); Lt. Col. A. Walker, 'Reports on the Resources of the (Ceded) Districts in the Province of Gujarat 1804–1806: Selections From the Records of the Bombay Government', N.S., no. 39, pt. 1, 1856.
 24. See appendix 14, vol. II Malcom's *Memoir*.
 25. Durgaprasad Bhattacharya and Bibhavati Bhattacharya have collected and published all printed estimates for the population of India in the period 1820–30, as well as some district and town censuses. They have also tried to summarize the methods used in obtaining these estimates. For their discussion of Hamilton, see Census of India, 1961, *Report or*

- the Population Estimates of India 1820–1830*, vol. 29, p. 5. The Bhattacharyas have projected eight volumes on the population estimates of India between the eighteenth century and 1872.
26. 'A Return of the Population of the British Territories in India . . .', appendix 42, first appendix to the *Third Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons*, 17 Feb. to 6 Oct. 1831, pp. 328–35.
 27. Mountstuart Elphinstone, *The History of India* (London, 1857, 4th ed.; orig. publ. 1841).
 28. George, Viscount Valentia, *Voyages and Travels to India, Ceylon, and the Red Sea, Abyssinia, and Egypt in the Years 2802–1803, 1805, and 1806* (London, 1809), vol. I, appendix 1, pp. 461–5.
 29. See H. E. Fame, *Five Years in India* (London, 1842), vol. I, p. 46; Robert B. Minturn, *From New York to Delhi* (New York, 1858), p. 136.
 30. James Prinsep, 'Census of the Population of the City of Banaras', *Asiatic Researches* (1832), vol. xvii, pp. 470–98, reprinted in Bhattacharya and Bhattacharya. The original manuscript of the census can be found in the Allahabad Central Record office, Banaras Commission Office, Proceedings of the Committee for Local Improvement, basta 96, vol. 180; also see Prinsep's *Memoir* and James Prinsep, *Banaras Illustrated in a Series of Drawings* (Calcutta, 1830).
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 32. William Tennant, *Indian Recreations; Consisting Chiefly of Strictures on the Domestic and the Rural Economy of the Mahomedans and Hindus* (London, 1804, 2nd ed.), vol. II, p. 178.
 33. Ibid., p. 180.
 34. Reginald Heber, *Narrative of a Journey Through the Upper Provinces of India* (Philadelphia, 1828), vol. I, pp. 276–7.
 35. William Buyers, *Recollections of Northern India* (London, 1848), p. 257.
 36. A. Shakespear, *Memoir on the Statistics of the Northwestern Provinces of the Bengal Presidency* (Calcutta, 1848), p. 2.
 37. See Daniel and Alice Thorner, 'De-Industrialisation in India 1881–1931', 'Agrarian Revolution by Census Redefinition' and 'Economic Concepts in the Census of India 1951' in *Land and Labor in India* (London, 1962) for a discussion of the categories dealing with labour and occupation in the census of India.
 38. Shakespear, p. 8.
 39. See, for example, the discussion of F. R. Davidson, Collector of Saharanpur, in Shakespear, p. 43.
 40. See the discussion of C. Wingfield, Deputy Collector of Muzaffarnagar in Shakespear, p. 47.
 41. Shakespear, p. 31.
 42. C. J. Christian, *Report on the Census Of the North-West Provinces of the Bengal Presidency Taken on the First of January, 1853* (Calcutta, 1854), pp. 1–4.
 43. Ibid., p. 10.

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44. Ibid., p. 13.
45. Ibid., pp. 414–18.
46. Bhattacharya and Bhattacharya, pp. 285–94.
47. The census of India for 1871–2 was subjected to a very careful and detailed criticism by Henry Waterfield of the Statistics and Commerce Department of the Secretary of State for India Office, *Memorandum on the Census of British India 1871–72* (London, 1875), cmd. 1349.
48. Quoted from Waterfield's memo, p. 41.
49. H. Beverly, *Report on the Census of Bengal 1872*, pt. I, pp. 4–5.
50. E. A. Gait, *Report on the Census of Bengal 1901: Administrative Volume* (Calcutta, 1902), pp. 1–2.
51. Bourdillon to Sec. Govt., Bengal Financial Dept., *Proceedings of the Lt. Gov. of Bengal*: Financial Dept. Branch Statistics Head Census, March 1881, no. 1764C, 22 March 1881, India Office Library.
52. G. S. Ghurye, *Caste and Race in India* (New York, 1932), p. 158.
53. M. N. Srinivas, *Social Change in Modern India* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1966), p. 95.
54. Srinivas, p. 100.
55. Beverly, p. 1.
56. Waterfield, p. 20.
57. For an example of instructions, see B. Robertson, *The Central Provinces and Feudatories, Census of India 1891*, vol. xi, pt. 1, Report, appendix A.
58. Gait, *Administrative Volume, Census of Bengal, 1901*, appendix viii, pp. xxxviii–1.
59. *Proceedings of the Lt. Governor of Bengal*, Financial Dept., Branch Statistics, Head Census, July 1881. Circular no. 5, May 1881, India Office Library.
60. Ibid., Bourdillon to Sec. Govt. Bengal Financial Dept. # 255i C, 17 June, 1881; and Kirsch to Bourdillon, # 496, 18 July 1881.
61. Rajendra Lal Mitra, letter of 12 July 1881 in India Office Library, European Manuscript E 101, 'Ethnographical Papers: Social Status of Castes'.
62. H. H. Risley, India Office Library, European Manuscripts Euro. 101, Circular no. 1, 24 July 1886.
63. Ibid., Sen to Risley, 30 August 1886.
64. Risley, p. i.
65. Ibid., p. ii.
66. Deputy Commissioner Office Jullundur Census 'Classification of Mahtons in the Census of 1911', English File 5/viii.
67. Khondkar Fuzl-i-Rubbee (Fazl-i-Rabb), *The Origin of the Musalmans of Bengal, Being a Translation of Haggate Musalman i Bengalah* (Calcutta, 1895).
68. Ibid., p. 64.
69. Ibid., p. 65.
70. India Census Commissioner, *Census of India*, vol. xvii, 1931.