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Pratyush Kumar

Homo Connubialis Brahmanicus

Marriage Relations Among Brahmins
as Described in the Work

Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar [History of Brahmins]



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Preface

This is a work which emerged out of my current engagement with societal constitutionalism of Gunther Teubner and systems theory of Niklas Luhmann and a search for possibilities for the study of caste as an example for it. The main ongoing work is a work of law including sociology of law, legal theory and constitutional law in a societal constitutionalism and systems theory framework, among others, whereas this current essay is a work of sociology and social and cultural anthropology which offers as one of the undercurrents for my research. It forms the environment of law in India irritating and helping in the self-transformation of its political system, social system, economic system and legal-constitutional system. Whether caste, *jati* or *Varna* or an approximation of all three and something else helps explain Indian social reality, eludes as well as animates scholars and thinkers since Gautam Buddha till Mahatma Gandhi and beyond. In today's context, when elections are fought, party-tickets are given, governments are formed, economic self-help organizations are set up, constitutional entrenchment is done through fixed caste-based reservations not just in educational institutions, but also in all public jobs, promotions and emoluments, "caste", if that's the most identifiable Indian social system, does not seem to disappear anytime soon. And if history provided any lessons, then what is "caste" has transformed and mutated over millennia but has not died. It is not specific to Hinduism and has survived Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity, different social reform movements across time and across the length and breadth of the sub-continent (Balagangadhara 2012:3-4). Caste is not class and caste is not race. And yet, and because of India's long and complex history and society, caste eludes definition. And what is "undefinable" is "unenumerable", shows the futility and malafide-intention of colonial caste censuses. With the Indian diaspora being the biggest in the world, the fact of its social identity finds presence in the rest of world, more particularly in the Anglosphere because of the huge number of Indians present there. There are attempts to define the system of Indian society in these host countries bringing multiculturalism and the conflict of laws issue to the fore. In India itself, with a demand for caste-census by some politicians and political parties, the "colonial" exercise is again returning to haunt us even after seventy-five years of independence. No wonder, caste census was done in the most economically backward state of Bihar in the country in 2022, which is ruled by the higher *Sudras*, otherwise called backward castes, uninterruptedly since 1990 but dominating the politics of the state since late 1970s, i.e., nearly fifty years. Who is then to be blamed for the destitution of the province which in the 1950s was among the best-administered and having one of the most vibrant and upcoming economies under the able leadership

of Dr. Shri Krishna Sinha? The backward caste leadership and their narrow agendas themselves of which the recent din for caste-census is one of them.

All the translations from the original “Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar” and other works in Hindi have been done by me unless otherwise indicated. As far as some of the organization of the manuscript is concerned, I have avoided using diacritical marks except while quoting someone else. “Brahmin” instead of Brahman/Brāhmaṇ/Brāhmaṇa has been used unless quoted.

Pratyush Kumar
Feb. 12, 2025
Frankfurt am Main

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I am infinitely indebted to the towering intellectual Prof. Dr. jur. Dr. h.c. mult. Gunther Teubner for guiding me since my final days of submitting my PhD thesis in University of Eastern Piedmont, Alessandria, Italy. He is my constant intellectual guiding light and all my works have his imprint on it, directly or indirectly. For this monograph also he is an inspiration even though he could not provide comments on this particular draft. Therefore, all its shortcomings are mine alone as much as its strengths are inspired by him. I do hope to be his worthy student.

I am ever grateful to “Baba”, Mahamahopadhyaya, Sahityacharya, President Medal Awardee (2006), D.Litt. Prof. Dr. Munishwar Jha (1928- Nov. 6, 2020), Professor and Head of Department, Sanskrit College, Calcutta (now Kolkata) who has had a profound influence on me and in kindling an interest in the society of North Bihar and Mithila in particular. He considered me his *Dharmaputra* (intellectual son, according to Dharma). I hope I live up to his expectations.

Prof. Jörg Luther’s training and Prof. Domenico Francavilla’s continued support and encouragement provide me strength and perseverance to continue. I would like to thank my dear friend Piotr Piekut for his constant willingness to give valuable suggestions and detailed comments despite pressing professional and academic commitments. I would also like to thank Shri Kailash Chandra Jha, long-time collaborator with Prof. Walter Hauser the pre-eminent Swami Sahajanand Saraswati scholar, for his kind and helpful suggestions. I would also like to thank Prof. Ramchandra Pradhan, the translator of Sahajanand’s autobiography in a lucid volume and the author of forthcoming translations of several of Sahajanand’s works in four-volumes. He has been very kind and generous with his time and I have benefitted from my long discussions with him over the years. I would also like to thank Raghav Sharan Sharma the editor of selected writings of Sahajanand in six volumes and Harishchandra Sharma, its friendly publisher, and my long-standing interactions with them. The friendships of Shri Arun Kumar Singh, former Deputy Comptroller and Auditor General of India and Shri Surendra Kumar, former Secretary, Gandhi Peace Foundation has been invaluable. I would like to thank Prof. Roland Hardenberg along with Prof. Holger Jebens for facilitating a reviewer who gave a very detailed, comprehensive and critical review which helped me improve my text without changing my line of argument and keeping my original framework intact and develop it into a monograph what was initially planned as a research article.

My cognitive interest in Sahajanand’s life and work is fuelled by the fact that my dear father, Prof. Dr. Sachchidanand Sharma as a five-year old motherless child was sent packing to Sahajanand’s Sanskrit boarding pathshala/school at

Sri Sitaram Ashram in Bihta. Besides, I have located archival references to my grandfather; revolutionary, democratic socialist and trade unionist, Shri Basawon Singh's active involvement in the peasant movement led by Sahajanand in 1938-39, further fueling an interest in his life and work. I would also like to thank my grandmother, Mrs. Kamala Sinha *née* Mukherjee who sustained a culture of learning and formal education for the women in the household which has a percolated influence among all her descendants. Prof. Deepak Banerjee and Bina Banerjee (Bina Ma) from Jodhpur as part of my "extended family" have had a lasting impact on me. Last but not least, I would like to thank my loving family of Adi, Anku and Ma who make my life worth living and pursue my intellectual interests without any let or hindrance.

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Abstract and Keywords

Abstract: Replicating European (mis)-understanding of communal identity leading to communal identity formations as a result of forced lop-sided colonial modernity imposed on 'natives' had disastrous consequences. Likewise, the colonial (mis)-understandings of Hindu society and *varnas*, *jātis* or *castes* (overlaps but not synonymous) which constituted it, through colonial caste censuses were reduced to rigid 'caste' identities. Through discursive study of a 'native' text *Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar* [History of Brahmins] for the first time, written by a 'native' scholar Swami Sahajanand Saraswati, this book shows how different Brahmin castes and sub-castes did not and still do not have rigid boundaries *inter-se* Brahmins as colonial writers and post-colonial westernized natives would conclude. This monograph hopes to start the debate yet again to upend received wisdom in sociological-cultural-anthropological research resonating in post-colonial societies through study of Indian society's identity formation around which purportedly its politics, voting patterns, horizontal social affiliations and fixed caste-based reservations under its constitutional framework are structured.

Keywords: marriage relations, Pachchima Brahmins, Maithil Brahmins, Dogamia Brahmins, panji-prabandha, caste census.

1. Introduction

Much like the “history of India”, and many Indian conceptual categories like “karma”, “dharma” and so on; Indian societal or conceptual categories like *varna* or *jati* or caste, where the three have overlaps but are not entirely synonymous, and with the “translation” and “location” of Indian conceptual categories still being made in the English and other European languages, much of our understanding like the rest of knowledge is a work in progress. The tranquillity of “arrival” can only be at the cost of pedantry. And when it is the “history of *varna/jati/caste*”, the plot invariably thickens. This is also the case when it concerns the history of a traditionally considered highest social category of Brahmins. In this quest, there was a “native” intellectual named Naurang Rai later Swami Sahajanand Saraswati, a *dashnami sanyasi* of the highest Shankaracharya order of ascetics, relatively uninfluenced by the European intellectual tradition at least as far as his formal educational training is concerned, with just four years of school training but many years of classical learning of all the important branches of Indian philosophy in original Sanskrit, wrote a history of Brahmins.

Swami Sahajanand Saraswati’s¹ work “Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar” published in 1926, is an extended and comprehensive history of Brahmins in India, recording social life and marital relations among Brahmins more particularly (but not exclusively) in the Middle-Gangetic plains of Northern India. This work extensively deals with the history, origin, functions, divisions, myths, legends, genealogical records, marriage relations and so on among Brahmins concerning Sahajanand’s geographical milieu though he did make references and drew parallels from across the Indian sub-continent. It was also suitable for him to do so because he was born in Eastern Uttar Pradesh and spent a large part of his life working in Bihar (which included Jharkhand) in the social and political fields. Sahajanand belonged to the Jijhoutia Brahmin sub-branch of Kanyakbja Brahmins from the Bundelkhand region who settled in Deva, Ghazipur in Eastern Uttar Pradesh where they developed numerous marital relations with the preponderant Bhumihar Brahmins to the extent of getting

¹ Sahajanand was a leading figure of India’s struggle for independence since 1920 and the most important leader of the first organized peasant movement in the country since the establishment of West Patna Kisan Sabha/West Patna Peasant Union in 1927, then Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha in 1929 and then the All India Kisan Sabha in 1936 leading to the abolition of *zamindari*/landlordism without compensation in the country soon after independence. There are many works dealing more specifically with this period of his career. The current work deals scientifically for the very first time with his specific book on the history of Brahmins written in 1926 which is the revised and enlarged version of the one he wrote in 1916. He is a complex figure with multiple roles leaving a huge corpus of writings in a relatively short lifespan of sixty years offering huge scope of research. This article is just one addition on one of his earlier works which has escaped the notice of social scientists.

counted as one among them (Hauser and Jha 2015:7-10). Those Kanyakubja Brahmins who settled in the Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh and the adjoining regions of Madhya Pradesh are called Jijhoutia Brahmins.² The ancient and Sanskrit references to Bundelkhand is Jajakshuku, the region of India from which the term Jijhoutia emerges. Sahajanand had the highest possible education in the traditional Sanskrit Gurukul method³ and also became an ascetic of the highest order of Dashnami Dandi Sanyasis⁴ reserved for Brahmins (Ghurye 1964:71-72). It is to his credit that he only had four years of education with 'colonial-contact' due to studying in the German Mission High School, making him an 'organic intellectual' coming from rural India and getting trained in traditional scholarship reaching greatest heights in it.⁵

² There are many Jijhoutia Brahmin branch of Kanyakubja Brahmin feudatories in this region including the famous Chaube Jagirs. Sahajanand records in his autobiography, "Like the Sarbariya or Saryupari, the Jujhautiyas are a section or branch of the Kanyakubja Brahmins. The specific place of their origin is Jujhauti or Jajakshukti, hence these Brahmins came to be called Jujhautiya. It is well known, and history bears testimony to the fact, that people of that place were warlike and given to bravery. That is why Bundelkhand was also known as Jujhauti. The Jujhautiya Brahmins are mostly found in that region as well as in Hamirpur, Lalitpur and Jhansi, and near Chitrakut there was a petty raja or zamindar who was Jujhautiya. The Jujhautiyas also have a caste sabha or association and a printed genealogy (Hauser and Jha 2015:9)."

After Maharaja Chait Singh's revolt against the British, he was sent in exile in the Bundelkhand region, where his descendants still live (Bayly 1983, Yang 1989). Mahamana Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, whose ancestors were also Jijhoutia Brahmins from Malwa, from which they drew their last name Malviya, was close to the Kashi Naresh, a Brahmin king, who gave all the land to build the Banaras Hindu University by him. Most of the finances were provided by Darbhanga Maharaj, another Brahmin king of North Bihar. The great revolutionary Chandrashekhar Azad is also supposed to belong to the Jijhoutia Brahmin branch of Kanyakubja Brahmins.

³ It is an example of societal constitutionalism of education, where well-off members of Hindu society would support free education given by Brahmin scholars, locally called Pandits, and by Hindu sannyasis ("monks"). The students were mostly drawn from the three higher varnas of Brahmin, Kshatriya or Vaishya families.

⁴ Sahajanand writes in his autobiography, "I learned from these sannyasis that though there are ten divisions (Dashnami) or titles of sannyasis, only three – Tirtha, Ashram and Saraswati – are Dandi Sannyasis. The remaining seven, Bharati, Puri, Ban, Aranya, Giri, Parbat and Sagar have no dand, or one might say, they cannot and do not keep the dand, or ritual staff. I was unaware of this, nor did I know that a Brahman, on taking sannyas (celibate monkhood) must take a dand. The non-Brahman varnas who take sannyas cannot do so. Accordingly, persons of all varnas are found among sannyasis with the titles of Bharati, Puri, etc." (Hauser and Jha 2015:42).

⁵ Walter Hauser has rightfully called him an organic intellectual because he came from the stock of 'kore kisans (simple peasants)' and achieved great intellectual, social and political prominence in the country and gave extremely original and rooted viewpoints on varied subjects. But, it must be highlighted both to the credit of Sahajanand as well as to the traditional Indian institutions of scholarship that Sahajanand is also an extremely erudite classical scholar and indeed held the highest esteem as a *dashnami dandi sanyasi*, much like Adi Shankaracharya in the seventh century (Hauser and Jha 2015:104). Among many others recording a similar trait, his life-long associate and follower Pandit Jadunandan Sharma attests to Swamiji's scholarship

As the work is very detailed, voluminous and comprehensive, I am focusing primarily on the aspect of marriage relations among Brahmins as studied by Sahajanand and contextualise it with some relevant aspects of history and culture. It is very striking how he explores into all the classical works and then consults works of history, culture, caste system, including works written in English, apart from recording his observations of the society he was studying because he had no modern European university training. In this, he was the forerunner of field study as pioneered by M.N. Srinivas in the 1940s to 1950s (Srinivas 2002b:641–663). Instead of writing a Sanskrit verse-text on the history of Bhumihaar Brahmins, in line with other caste-community texts, Sahajanand was very scientific and logical in his approach to combine textual references with actual social practices, including marriage relations, the data for which he collected over many years by himself visiting many regions including Darbhanga, Bhagalpur and Monghyr and recording marriage relations among Bhumihaar Brahmins and Maithil Brahmins “numbering in thousands” with exact family details (Hauser and Jha 2015:159-171). In his research and gathering of data through fieldwork he was also helped by Swami Purnanandji who recorded hundreds of marriage relations documenting with names and full addresses between Bhumihaar Brahmins and Kanyakubja and Saryupareen Brahmins in the region of Allahabad, Fatehpur and Gorakhpur in the United Provinces/ Uttar Pradesh (Hauser and Jha 2015:168). It is also interesting to note that this work of sociology and ‘ethnic’ and ‘social and cultural anthropology’ was a revised and a much more comprehensive work compared to the previously published “Bhumihaar Brahmin Parichay” which he had published a decade earlier in 1916 (Pradhan 2018:108). The presence of this earlier 1916 edition also points to the fact of field-work being done by Sahajanand since the early years of the twentieth-century apart from being a “participant-observer” for being born in Juhoutia branch of Kanyakubja Brahmins marrying into Bhumihaar Brahmin branch of Kanyakubja Brahmins witnessing Brahmin society and its marriage relations first-hand since the last years of the nineteenth-century itself. By his own admission, Sahajanand was a very proud Brahmin and wanted to record the history of his brethren Bhumihaar Brahmins not just based on Shastras and Puranas (original Sanskrit manuscripts) but actual social practice and ‘the experience of people themselves’ (Hauser and Jha 2015:162-163).⁶ The

and intelligence (Kuwajima 2017). ‘Ji’ is an honorific added after names for respect, in this case and throughout this text, it is used for Swami Sahajanand Saraswati.

⁶ Sahajanand also wrote a massive work running into more than a thousand pages on the performance of rituals called “Karma Kalap” making the complex ritualic world available in one encyclopaedic compendium which should be studied by scholars working on Hindu rituals. Most of Brahmin priests I have personally encountered who perform rituals in Bihar refer to Sahajanand’s work for performing it. The work contains the structure, the concept and the exact method of its execution. The ritualistic world of Hindus exemplified by its sacerdotal class of Brahmins led to the emergence of a complex and sophisticated school of jurisprudence

great Hindi litterateur for whom there is a periodization in Hindi literature called the “Dwivedi Yug”, Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi had written a review of “Bhumihar Brahmin Parichay” in his literary journal “Saraswati”, in which he wrote, ‘[n]othing has been left out in the book. It is full of authentic and detailed facts and interpretations (Pradhan 2018:108)’.⁷

On the rationale of the title of his work “Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar” in 1926, Swamiji records in his autobiography:

The first edition of *Bhumihar Brahman Parichay* comprising 1,500 copies was sold out. Thus, a second edition was needed. Then an idea occurred to me that there are Tyagis and Mohiyals who reside in the western United Provinces and Punjab respectively. They are just like Bhumihars. Hence, their relationship with Gaud Brahmins and Saraswat Brahmins should be found out and included in the new edition of *Bhumihar Brahman Parichaya*. Doing this research resulted in the discovery of thousands of such relationships. Then I thought that the old title (*Bhumihar Brahman Parichaya*) did not fit in with the new findings. Hence, the title of the new edition, which included the new material, was changed to *Brahmarshi Vansh Vistar*. There was another reason for changing its title. In fact, it contained a historical analysis of all Brahmins (Pradhan 2018:109–110, emphasis added).⁸

Sahajanand writes in the preface of the 1926 work, which is used for this article⁹, that he had added new points and references, like the relationship between Gaud Brahmins and Tyagi Brahmins, and how he regretted not to include the relationship between Saraswat Brahmins and Mohyal Brahmins which he planned to include in the next and third edition of the book which unfortunately never came out (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:156). The revised title of the work “Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar” is also noteworthy as Sahajanand wanted to write the extended or comprehensive (“vistar”/“vistrit”) history, culture and society of Brahmins. “Vansha” literally means genealogy and true to the title, Sahajanand provides an excellent genealogical account including marriage relations of different sub-groups or sub-castes/castes of Brahmins. “Brahmarshi” is an ideal indeed for Brahmins; i.e., to realise the Brāhmānā or the absolute/ab-

called Mimamsa, which is remarkable for its insights into interpretation since the later Vedic age (Sarkar 1909; Ayyar 1952; Staal 2010; Michaels 2016)

⁷ “Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi (1864-1938) was among the most prominent Hindi literary figures of the time. As the editor of the monthly journal *Saraswati* from 1903-1920, Dwivedi exerted a powerful influence on the very nature of Hindi literature. That he should have reviewed *Bhumihar Brahman Parichay* suggests that Sahajanand, at the age of 27, was a visible public figure well before his political activism of the 1920s and 1930s (Hauser with Jha 2015:187, n.24).”

⁸ Saraswat and Gaud are among the two major geographical distinctions among North Indian Brahmins as mentioned in the *Sahyādri Khaṇḍa* (Pandey 2014). Mohyal Brahmins are Punjabi Brahmins and as such a sub-division of Saraswat Brahmins. Tyagis are more akin to Gaud with whom they have marital relations as well. Bhumihar Brahmins as we would see through the course of this article are either of Kanyakubja Brahmin or Maithil Brahmin descent.

⁹ I don’t have access to the 1916 volume, but to the 1926 volume which the author informs was a more comprehensive work than the previous edition (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:156). It is a pity that this earlier work is not readily available.

solute knowledge, and therefore the first choice of the term “Brahmarshi” in the title of his work. It was both the intention as spelled out by Sahajanand in the preface of the book, and how it is written with the history of Brahmins and not of any “particular group” of Brahmins (though the greatest part of the work concerned Brahmins of the middle-gangetic plain), as well as in the reviews and assessments of the work during his time, most notably by Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi. Therefore, it is quite paradoxical if Babhan/Pachchima/Bhumihar Brahmins name their different community-specific organizations with the title Brahmarshi. Additionally, Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar points to the fact that Swamiji had adopted the same research methodology as well as findings from his ‘field work’, which means he was practising it in the early years of twentieth century, nearly half a century ahead of M.N. Srinivas and couple of decades ahead of G.S. Ghurye, who had never practised it himself, but had encouraged his students to do field-work in Social Anthropology or Sociology as a discipline in India.¹⁰

Swami Sahajanand Saraswati has also provided tables of marriage relations among different sub-castes of Brahmins. This work has been curiously ignored by sociologists, cultural anthropologists, historians and political scientists from India and those working on India. It is quite noticeable because it is written by someone who had no real training in western style institutions in British India and had no formal training in modern ‘European’ methods of research.¹¹ But he had the highest training in the traditional sense and learnt grammar, Sāṃkhya, Nyāya, Advaita Vedānta and other major schools of Indian philosophy both institutionally from the *mathās* (monasteries) where he was trained for being a monk (not just any monk, but a *dashnami sanyasi*, see n.5) and also individually where he used to personally visit scholars and learn from them.¹² Perhaps

¹⁰ “One of the abiding lessons which Ghurye had learnt at Cambridge was the indissoluble link between social anthropology and the fieldwork tradition. While he himself never undertook any serious fieldwork he, more than any other teacher, contributed to basing sociology and social anthropology in India on sound fieldwork. From his Chair in Bombay a directed a one-man ethnographic survey of India, an operation which was conducted with little or no financial resources. The way he went about it was interesting. Bombay being the most cosmopolitan of Indian cities, Ghurye’s MA and Ph.D. students came from diverse regions and economic backgrounds. He encouraged them, wherever possible, to take up the study of problems in their regions for their master’s and doctoral dissertations. This meant that they combed the existing literature in English and in the local language for data, and supplemented it with fieldwork. In this way he managed to get dissertations written on such themes as ‘Hindu Culture in Sind’, ‘Muslims of UP’, ‘Harijans in Bombay’, and ‘Prabhus and Kolis in Maharashtra’ (Srinivas 2002b:648–649).”

¹¹ He only had four years of ‘modern’ ‘Western’ school training at the German Mission High School where he proved to be an exceptionally bright student (Hauser and Jha 2015:36-39).

¹² Swami Sahajanand Saraswati records it in his autobiography, *Mera Jivan Sangharsh*, “By its side or a little above it, was Kailash (near Rishikesh in the Himalayas, author’s addition)—the *math* of Dhanrajpuri—which was quite big in size. During those days, we used to study *Vedanta Siddhanta Mukta wali*, a well-reputed book on *Vedanta* philosophy, with an able and serene *Vedanti sannyasi*. It is a very terse and difficult Vedantic book. We started our study

his training in Nyāya, the Indian school of logic, made him such a forceful and logical writer and later articulator of India's independence and the rights of

there with that book, though we had not studied books preceding it till then. A number of people were involved in our learning process. Whenever a question relating to *nyaya* and *mimansa* rose, we would seek clarification from the scholarly sannyasi mentioned earlier. We could easily understand the entire thing by his single explanation, as we were sharp minds. When we used to ask him to explain a subtle point of the *Vedanta*, he would advise us to go to Kashi and study grammar, *nyaya*, and *mimansa*. He would also remind us that without such studies, it is not easy to grasp the subtle points of *Vedanta*. [...] There was a Sanskrit pathashala in *Aparnath Math* (in Kashi/Varanasi), which was a study centre of *nyaya*, grammar, and *Vedanta*. It occurred to me that without a deep knowledge of Sanskrit grammar, I could hardly enjoy Vedantic studies. Hence, I decided to initiate my study with grammar. Let me add that I had already done some study of the *Laghu Siddhant Kaumudi*, a primer of Sanskrit grammar, so I had a good command over the language. I restarted my study of Sanskrit grammar with the *Siddhant Kaumudi*. During those days, Shri Harinarayan Tripathi alias Tiwariji was the most reputed teacher of the *Siddhant Kaumudi* in the entire Kashi region. Fortunately, he was teaching the same book at the *Aparnath Math* pathashala. That was the icing on the cake. I started my study of the *Siddhant Kaumudi* with full concentration. First, I started memorizing and grasping its basic formulations and difficult passages. The text had several *pathas* (versions). I would listen to whatever Tiwariji was teaching with rapt attention and would prepare detailed notes on these at my place of stay. That way, I ended up making extensive and detailed notes. My notes turned out to be very useful to the other students as well. Later, one of my class fellows took them for study and forgot to give them back to me. Thus, that notebook was lost forever. Otherwise, it could have provided a good commentary on the *Siddhant Kaumudi*. It might have even been published in a book form. [] By the middle of 1911, I finished the study of the *Siddhant Kaumudi*. It used to be said that a complete study of the *Siddhant Kaumudi* should take a period of twelve years. In any case, people used to devote a minimum period of six years for its study. A bird's eye view of its study was not that difficult. But the way it was taught in Kashi during those days, particularly the methodology adopted by Tiwariji, involved a longer period of study. It is a bulky book. But, with serious effort and full concentration, I succeeded in completing its study in a relatively shorter period of two and half years. Tiwariji would explain even its intricate passages in an extremely lucid and comprehensible way. Hence, hundreds of students used to attend his classes and listen attentively to his explanations and interpretations. [] But that did not mean that I was involved and satisfied with the study of the *Siddhant Kaumudi* alone. After sometime, I initiated the study of *nyaya*. I carried on both these studies simultaneously. At a still later stage, after the completion of the study of the *Siddhant Kaumudi*, I took up books like *Shabdendu Shekher* and *Paribhashendu Shekher* for detailed study. In due course, the time came for the study of *Bhushan*, *Manjusha*, and *Mahabhashya*. On my own, I simultaneously started studying the works on *Sankhya*, *Mimansa*, *Vedanta*, *yoga*, and so on. Besides, in my spare time during the day, I used to teach the *Siddhant Kaumudi* to my fellow students and others. Even my seniors would come to me for the study of the *Siddhant Kaumudi*. I decided that within five to seven years I should complete a thorough study of all the major philosophical works. Hence, I used to be engaged in my studies day in and day out. [...] I came across three great scholars of *Navya Nyaya*—two of them at Kashi and the third in Mithila. All three were great scholars of their own kind. One of them, Shankar Bhattacharya, was of Bengali origin, and the second one, Jivanath Mishra, was from Mithila. I came across the third one, Balkrishna Mishra, at Darbhanga. For some time, I studied books like *Badh* and *Satpratipaksha* with Balkrishna Mishra. While I have had encounters with other scholars, I was highly impressed by these three. Bhattacharya taught me the largest number of books on *Navya Nyaya*. His skills in teaching and his manner of providing explanations, particularly with respect to intricate issues, were rare. He would give his best to drive the fundamentals of the books under study straight into the heart and minds of the students. I found the same skills in the case of Balkrishna Mishra as well (Pradhan 2018:60–61, 73–74, 78).⁹

the toiling peasants and agricultural labourers (Pradhan 2014; Kumar 2021). He adopted a very logical and curiously ‘modern’ scientific methodology in writing “Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar”, including recording the marriage relations among Brahmins by making field visits to villages in North India and recording, even tabulating, the names and details of all families from both sides which entered into such a marital relationship. His references and sources indicate he was also a very widely read man which included modern works in the English language. Therefore, it is also an object lesson into the traditional Indian methods including that of *gurukulas* (traditional Indian schools) and the different monastic orders for imparting knowledge (Michaels 2001; Mookerji 2011). Unfortunately, none of these non-western methods of education have actually been revived for imparting, carrying and producing knowledge. In my view, it is one of the main reasons for how an English-educated Indian elite is uprooted from India’s “own” knowledge traditions and has little recourse in accessing it.¹³

¹³ Sudipta Kaviraj’s interesting public lecture “The second Mahabharata” (2016) explores on the idea of ‘what is our tradition’ through the hermeneutic lens of Hans Georg Gadamer, and then goes on to use creatively the work “Kavyaprakash” of the Kashmiri Shaivite aesthetic philosopher Mammatacharya in making interpretations and readings of the great epic Mahabharata. Swami Sahajanand Saraswati as a profound and original intellectual with both classical training as well as field knowledge during his ascetic wanderings, and even for the pursuit of his classical studies as well as his involvement in the freedom movement and organized peasant movement is already able to assess the aftereffects of colonial education policy of discouraging Indian scholarship in the early years of the twentieth century. The decline in Sanskrit scholarship in its greatest centre of Varanasi was noted by him, “Kashi had good scope and provisions for the study of Sanskrit grammar and *Navya Nyaya*. But it was difficult to find able and competent teachers for *yoga*, the ancient system of *Nyaya*, *Mimamsa*, and *Sankhya*. The few who were competent were not willing to teach. All this that I am saying is based on my personal experiences. I am saying this in all earnestness in respect of Kashi, which is regarded as a prime centre of Sanskrit learning. While one could somehow manage with Vedantic studies, the study of *Mimamsa* and ancient *Nyaya* was really in a bad shape. The study of *Mimamsa* does not comprise works like *Apo Devi*, *Nyaya Prakasha*, and *Adhikaran Ratnamala*. The real *Mimamsa* works are *Shabarvashya*, *Shlokavartik*, *Tantravartik*, and others. No one in Kashi was actually teaching these difficult works. The few works mentioned earlier marked the beginning and the end of the teachings of scholars. [] The commentary of Parthasarathi Mishra on Kumaril Bhatt’s work, which is known as *Tantra Ratna*, has not been published till now. I copied it in my own hand from a manuscript at Darbhanga. People are hardly aware of the works of Prabhakar. The published version of *Shabarvashya* is full of errors and inaccuracies. There is no competent scholar to correct it. The same is true of the commentaries on ancient *Nyaya* and their *vartik*, and the commentary of Vachspati Mishra on *Tatparya Tika* and other works on those subjects. They are full of errors. It is also impossible to study *Kusumanjali* and *Atmatatvavivek*. The latter is a difficult work and its published version is full of errors. Only the part of the work that is prescribed for the Sanskrit examinations has been published correctly with a commentary on it. Why should anyone be bothered about the rest of it? (Pradhan 2018:79)”. Hetukar Jha records not just decline in Sanskrit learning, but learning in general, because a lot of the local pathshalas/schools taught in the local languages, in Bihar and Bengal for example, rather than Sanskrit prior to British colonial period. And the British systematically led to their permanent closure. If we couple this with the hostile British colonial attitude to Sanskrit scholarship, with their preference for a limited English education with measly budget

Swamiji's pioneering role in India's struggle for independence is perhaps not adequately acknowledged for his involvement in Brahmin, particularly Bhumihar Brahmin social reform in his early life. And then among social scientists his work on the history, social structure and practices, and marriage relations among Brahmins is curiously ignored for him being in India's struggle for independence and peasants' movement and abolishment of landlordism (*zamindari*) to improve the lot of peasants and workers in the country from late 1910s (overlapping with his Brahmin social reform phase) till his sudden death in 1950 (Kumar 2021). It is rather surprising how when studying caste associations (*sabhas* and *mahasabhas*), there is an epistemic violence in relying on the dubious colonial caste censuses (Samarendra, 2008, 2011) in order to (mis)-characterize the motives for organizing such caste *sabhas*, whereas native works like "Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar" is merely mentioned, if at all, without discussing what is actually contained in the work with a scientific treatment and then it is glossed over in ideological fervour or outright hate (Bose 1991; Mishra & Pandey 1996). One instance of the specimen of creating a new caste-identity due to colonial differentiation, categorization and then enumeration of the Brahmin caste-community into Bhumihar Brahmins and Brahmins by the 1911 census will be seen through the course of this work. This current work is the first such attempt at rectification of this callousness. Another reason for the lack of attention on his works by sociologists and anthropologists could be the non-use of intellectual works in Hindi and in other dialects of the region among the English-educated literate class coming from Bihar and eastern-Uttar Pradesh. Sociologists (to focus on those coming from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh or working on it) like L.P. Vidyarthi or Sachchidanand ignored his writings.¹⁴ So did Hetukar Jha,¹⁵ besides historians writing on the history of modern

allocation to man the lower rungs of British Indian administration, police and the like as clerks and coolies, Sahajanand's assessment comes out to be true (Jha 2011).

- ¹⁴ L.P. Vidyarthi was born in Bihar and had a distinguished academic career. He was both inspired by India's ancient knowledge system and wrote works on different tribes of India. He never intellectually engaged with the works of Sahajanand. Sachchidanand wrote on the tribal communities of Bihar but made no references to the actual and extensive 'field-work' of Sahajanand from the 1920s to the 1940s in what constitutes Jharkhand today (Hauser 2005).
- ¹⁵ Hetukar Jha was a prominent sociologist belonging from North Bihar and working in Patna University. Belatedly he did some field work in the late 1980s and published it, though unfortunately it is not of the scale as was done by M.N. Srinivas and carried forward by Andre Béteille and others like T.N. Madan (Madan 1965). He never referenced from works of Swami Sahajanand Saraswati including in his book on Historical Sociology in India, except for a cursory mention while discussing the peasant movement (Jha 2016:77). In any case, he ignored Sahajanand's Brahmarshi Vanshi Vistar and did not reference from any of his original writings which constitute a huge corpus. See also Jha, Sinha and Tiwary (1985) and H. Jha (1991).

Perhaps the best and most comprehensive work on a single village of Bihar after independence by an Indian in any language has been the work of littérateur and historian Prof. Ramnath Sharma on Amhara village lying west of Patna and close to Bihta. He also wrote other works on the history and contribution of people from Bihta who played a prominent

Bihar like K.K. Datta and others of the period of 1950s and 1960s ignored him completely (Datta 1957a).¹⁶ Hetukar Jha was not completely damning of the big Brahmin *zamindari* landed estates, including Hathwa or Bettiah apart from of course Darbhanga with which he was related. His maternal aunt (*mausi*) Maharani Kalyani Singh was the third and last Maharani of Darbhanga and he used to effectively and efficiently run the Maharajadhiraj Kameshwar Singh Kalyani Foundation for as long as he lived. Maybe his personal affinity with the ruling Brahmin families of estates made him dislike the fiery Swami Sahajanand Saraswati to actually ignore him and berate the role of Swami Sahajanand Saraswati and his Kisan Sabha played in the only successful organised peasant movement in twentieth-century India leading to the abolition of *zamindari* not just in Bihar but across the country (Jha 1977:558-559; Kumar 2021). It is also paradoxical because Hetukar Jha emphasized on the “field-view of history” and not “the book-view of history” to ignore Sahajanand’s comprehensive field-view of history and society complementing his very comprehensive book-view of history and society, when he recommends, “Regional issues must be studied not only in terms of their present manifestations also but in terms of how those issues have emerged historically. Such historical investigations, however, must depend more on the field-view of history, than on the book-view of history, as the latter does not generally present an account of life actually lived in history (Jha 2005).” B.B. Kumar and Sachchidanand Sinha ignored Sahajanand’s works, including Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar, for ideological reasons.¹⁷ It was sin-

role in India’s independence movement and it doesn’t come as a surprise how Swami Sahajanand Saraswati’s locus of social and political work, Sri Sitaram Ashram was set up in Bihta (Sharma, Ramnath, 2000).

¹⁶ The most authoritative and comprehensive work on the history of freedom movement in Bihar is still the one written in 1957 by Datta. There is no comprehensive single volume or multi-volume work worth the name on the history of the freedom movement in Bihar written since Datta’s work.

¹⁷ B.B. Kumar, the former Chairman of Indian Council of Social Science Research, despite hailing from Bihar and writing a voluminous work on caste with an encyclopaedic list of castes with their mool mentioned in its appendix, failed to make any references to Swami Sahajanand Saraswati’s works (Kumar 2016). Despite his earlier hobnobbing with the Praja Socialist Party, B.B. Kumar in his later years appeared to align with the current trend of what is labelled „Hindu Nationalism“ where Sahajanand would be a misfit. Thus, Sahajanand is ignored by Hindu Nationalists for being left-leaning and by the left-leaning intellectuals for being „too much“ of a Brahmin, maybe even a Bhumihar Brahmin, or too much rooted to the Indian tradition, to be referred by the suave „westernized natives“.

Sachchidanand Sinha (b. 1928), is a solitary socialist free-thinker from Bihar, and formerly associated with the Samyukta Socialist Party (SSP) of Ram Manohar Lohia. Sinha is deeper than Lohia in his thought and writings but he owes his political allegiance with Lohia and his narrow brand of casteist politics passed-off for socialism, the likes of which permeated through politics in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and destroyed the socialist party/ies by turning them into caste-linked family fiefdoms. Therefore, because of his political allegiance with lumpen Lohia-ism, if at all such an „idea“ can be characterised, while discussing caste he makes unfounded and incorrect assertions for affiliations and support from the lower castes (Sinha 1982). In the numerous and varied works he has written, he has avoided referring

glehandedly the work of American historian Walter Hauser whose pioneering work on the “Bihar provincial Kisan Sabha” (a peasant organization formed by Sahajanand in 1929) in 1961 and a life-long interest in the Swami’s works made it difficult for at least historians to ignore him.¹⁸ Hauser’s “Bihar provincial Kisan Sabha” is the forerunner of subaltern history writing led by the eminent historian Ranajit Guha [Hauser 2019 (1961)]. Hauser’s critical translation with detailed and massive notes and commentary of Swamiji’s autobiography “Mera Jivan Sangharsh” (Hauser 2015) has also not received the attention of historians and social scientists which it otherwise eminently deserves.

All *tri-karma*/*Ayachak* Brahmins were Brahmins performing the three essential functions of performing *yajna* (performance of rituals at the sacred fire, Michaels 2016), studying the Vedas (the first hymn of the oldest Veda, the Ṛg Veda, is devoted to sacred fire) and offering alms or liberality as against the six popular functions, which in addition to the three essential functions, included performing *yajna* and rituals for others, teaching the Vedas, and receiving alms (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:189-298).¹⁹ Brahmins who took to primarily non-priestly functions were mostly referred to as Babhans, or since Sahajanand, Bhumihar Brahmins in Bihar. Maithil Brahmin scholar Acharya Tareneesh Jha in his afterword to the work “Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar” extracts a classical source pointing to the five branches of Kanyakubja Brahmins, namely Saryupareen, Sanadhya, Bhumihar, Jijhoutia and Kanyakubja proper, ‘*Saryupāreen Sanādhyashcha Bhumihāro Jijhoutayah, Prākritashcha iti Panchbhedāstasya Prakartitāh*’ (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:518-519).

The ordering of the Indian social system, including that of Brahmins, was first laid out in the Vedas and then in the law books called the Dharmasastras, and then over centuries and millennia it has kept reinforcing itself through different texts and commentaries in a binary code with parallel social practice. Whether social practice always corresponded with the text/principle is debatable but the principle for the ordering of Indian society has remained fixed. It is a classic dilemma of text and practice. If Indian society was “stuck in time” in the four-fold varna system then there would not be thousands of self-sustaining, self-replicating and self-defining endogamous social groups who

to Sahajanand completely, including the work Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar. In the process, despite belonging to an illustrious Pachchima Brahmin family he is ignored by Brahmins for manipulating and misrepresenting the community in his personal quest for being considered a „great egalitarian thinker “ and he is ignored by the backward castes, who dominate politics and run namesake socialist parties as personal fiefdoms/lest one say monarchies, for being a Brahmin.

¹⁸ Copies of Hauser (1961) are available at Teen Murti Library in Delhi and A.N. Sinha research Institute in Patna. Because of the immense importance of his work, Hauser finally agreed to get it published in 2019, the year he departed.

¹⁹ “[...] there had always been two categories of Brahmins— pravrita or yachak (engaged or alms taking) or nivrita or ayachak (non-engaged or non-alms-taking). Thus, on that basis, Bhumihar Brahmins belong to the ayachak category (Pradhan 2018:100).”

are now referred to as “castes”. Louis Dumont is correct on understanding this one aspect of differentiation and hierarchization as a matter of “principle” in the ordering of Indian society (Dumont 1998, Madan: 2006a, 2006b). But soon he falls into the familiar colonial loop when he contrasts this “rigid, hierarchized principle”, which is after all in “his head” (Madan: 2006a, 2006b), or by implication or inspiration in the “Indian head”, to a so-called “egalitarian west”, which “western” intellectuals would agree to be also a matter of principle, “in the head” since the French Revolution. India has its own egalitarian inspirations and practice and west has its own hierarchies and differentiations, though the Varna order is indeed an idealized and perfect theoretical differentiated hierarchical principle.²⁰

It was Swami Sahajanand Saraswati who popularized the name of Bhumihaar Brahmin and solidified them into one concrete and cohesive social group which became the most dominant political group since the days of the Non-cooperation Movement (nationalist movement against British colonial rule led by Mahatma Gandhi from 1920-22) until the days of Mandal politics (populist measure of adding 27 % fixed caste-based reservations for the so-called Other Backward Classes, which is effectively castes, in public educational institutions and public jobs in 1990 by the Government of India (something which was already done in Bihar in the late 1970s; Blair 1980; Frankel 1989: 46-132), over and above the already provided 22.5% fixed caste-based reservation for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under the Constitution of India since 1950 making half the seats reserved and closed for open and fair competition).²¹

²⁰ The great philosopher Wilhelm Halbfass, who could straddle with ease both Indian philosophy as well as Western philosophy, highlights this aspect of differentiation and hierarchization in Indian conceptual category, whether one agrees with it or not, or whether it was ever a part of Indian lived reality or not, “The ‘homo hierarchicus’ is just a segment of the pervasive hierarchy of living beings, which extends ‘from Brahṃā to the tufts of grass’ (*brahmādistambaparyanta*). The Indian authors use a variety of terms to characterize this hierarchy of human, subhuman and superhuman forms of life, for instance *tāratamya* (‘gradation’), *uccanīcabhāva* (‘high and low status’), and *utkarsāpakarsa* (‘superiority and inferiority’). This hierarchy involves different levels of merit and demerit (*dharma, adharmā*), pleasure and pain (*sukha, dukha*), and of the ‘manifestations of knowledge, sovereignty and so forth’ (*jñānaishvaryaabhivyakti*), and it provides different stations of *samsāra*, i.e., of karmic reward and punishment. Some authors suggest that mankind alone, and no other species of living beings, is subdivided into further classes characterized by mutual ‘superiority and inferiority’ (*utkarsāpakarsa*). In addition to such vertical hierarchies, we also find ‘horizontal’ schemes of hierarchy, that is, concentric circles of increasing distance from a dharmic centre (Halbfass 1991:349).”

²¹ According to the eminent world-renowned historian Ram Sharan Sharma, the term Bhumihaar Brahmin term gained currency only after 1920 due to Swami Sahajanand Saraswati (A. Kumar 2005). Earlier they were referred to as Pachchima Brahmins (literally meaning Brahmins coming from the west) or Babhans or by their respective root (*mool/dih*) like Jijhoutia Brahmin for Swami Sahajanand Saraswati or the revolutionary Chandrashekhar Azad or Dronvar Brahmins or Gautam Brahmins for Kashi Naresh, the Maharaja of Benares (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a; A. Kumar 2005; Qureshi & Pathak 2024).

Swami Sahajanand Saraswati records in his autobiography, '[i]t was also true that seventy-five per cent of the youth from Bihar, who went to jail during the Non-Cooperation Movement were from the Bhumihaar community. It was in that proportion that Bhumihaar boys had left their schools and colleges. I was proud of the fact that the community I claimed to serve was overwhelmingly with me. It had also helped the country hold its head high. People like Sir Ganesh Dutt and his ilk were unhappy with such a state of affairs. But he felt helpless and could hardly do anything about it' (Pradhan 2018:178–179). Therefore, it doesn't come as a surprise when one of the greatest leaders of modern India, Dr. Anugraha Narayan Sinha, and who belonged to the Kshatriya Rajput caste and a close friend and collaborator of Dr. Shri Krishna Sinha since the days of the freedom struggle, records in his essay endearingly titled "Mere Shri Babu (My Shri Babu)", that "since 1921, the history of Bihar has been the history of the life of Shri Babu (Kumar 2013:164)". Dr. Shri Krishna Sinha belonged to a Trikarma/Ayachak/Babhan/Bhumihaar Brahmin of Kanyakubja Brahmin descent who had migrated from Sherpur in the region of Delhi in the medieval period (most likely around 12th-13th century CE) and settled in Maur in Shekhpura, Monghyr and established their *mool/dih* (root) of Sheriar mool Brahmins in the Sherpur Mauja (settlement) of Monghyr (Singh 2001). Whether the hyperbole with which Dr. Anugraha Narayan Sinha assessed the role and significance of Dr. Shri Krishna Sinha in the history of modern Bihar is concerned, it would be the subject matter of another study, but what it certainly provides is a peek into the significance and role of Ayachak/Trikarma Brahmins in modern India. For the purposes of this work, it additionally shows how Brahmins migrated from the Kanyakubja geographical centre (see the discussion in section 2 below) in North India and spread culture, knowledge, and established settlements introducing new methods of agriculture, opened new means of commerce and trade routes apart from weaving and conceptualising the cultural, spiritual and Dharmic unity of India across centuries and millennia (Upadhyay 1979; Datta 1989; Ram S. Sharma 2006) and playing a crucial role in its spread upto Japan in the East (the Brahmin Buddhist philosopher Bodhisena was requested to be the the Philosopher in residence by the emperor of Japan some thirteen centuries ago taking Buddhism and Hindu gods to Japan; Behl 2019) and Central Asia, Caucasus, Arabia, central Europe upto Greece and Rome in the West (Chandra 1990, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1997a, 1997b, 1998; Dalrymple 2024).²²

²² It is also interesting to note how almost all of Buddha's main disciples were Brahmins and all the Buddhist logistians and philosophers from ancient times were born a Brahmin. It is also a European understanding of looking at Hinduism, or which was earlier referred by Europeans as Brahmanism, and Buddhism as separate as Catholicism and Protestantism and in conflict with each other. In the Indian philosophical tradition, Buddhism is one of the major Indian schools of atheistic philosophical tradition founded by Gautam Buddha as recorded by many Indian philosophers themselves, like Madhavacharya and so on, and

The Oinwara dynasty of Mithila in North Bihar were also Babhans (Diwakar 1959:528) or Pachchima Brahmins,²³ who are today referred to as Bhumihar Brahmins. Babhans or Bhumihar Brahmins of Oinwara root are also spread in some villages of this region in Bihar.²⁴ Therefore, it is quite likely the Babhans or Brahmins of Mithila when they developed a language in the late middle ages and started keeping their genealogical records (*panjis*) evolved into the

Indian dharmic religions does not restrict multiple religious/philosophical affiliations, multiple forms of worship and respect for multiple philosophical ideas, discrediting any conflict between Hindus and Buddhists in history (Radhakrishnan 2008a, 2008b; Arvind Sharma 2012; Cowell & Gough 2015). Besides, all Ashokan inscriptions and rock edicts (the inscriptions of Mauryan Emperor Ashoka who is reputed to have taken to Buddhist philosophy), recommend respect for Brahmins and Sramanas (Buddhist monks, ascetics and philosophers are referred to as one), in that order, dispelling doubts of any kind of conflict. As with human societies, even with best “orders” established, there could be conflict; and in the philosophical world, for philosophy and knowledge to expand, there were and should certainly have been philosophical disputations between Brahmin and Buddhist philosophers (Nikam & McKeon 1959:31; Tiekens 2022).

²³ On the emergence of social stratification in later Vedic society (1000 BCE – 600 BCE), there are copious references of Brahmins settling and bringing new technology of cultivation, including being excellent cultivators themselves. The name Pachchima Brahmins could have later Vedic roots, besides the new name or adjective of Bhumihar Brahmin, being a name developed from having land grants (*agrahar bhumi*) in perpetuity. This trend continued well into the early medieval times with a well-developed feudal system including subinfeudation (Ram S. Sharma 1980, 2005; Choudhary 1999:141–142, 145; Radhakrishnan 2015). Thankfully, another interesting fact of oral history is provided by Kailash Chandra Jha, co-author, friend and long-time collaborator with Walter Hauser, and who hails from Ranti village in Madhubani. He mentions how in his childhood Brahmins from Begusarai, Monghyr and Bhagalpur were referred to as Dakshinaha Babhans instead of Pachchima, probably because Madhubani borders Nepal and is the northernmost district of Bihar. I would like to thank him for bringing this fact to light in the email communication on Oct. 22, 2024.

²⁴ Oinwar, Onwar or Okinwar are root (*mool/dih*) of Bhumihar Brahmins listed out by B.B. Kumar in his nearly ‘encyclopaedic’ annexures in his work (Kumar 2016:290). It is also interesting to note how the later Khandavala Brahmin dynasty deliberately and consciously eliminated records of the previous Oinwara Brahmin dynasty. Therefore, it is quite likely that the earlier Oinwara Brahmin rulers were Pachchima Brahmins whereas the later Khandavala rulers were Srotriya Brahmins who fixed their identity with the *panjis*/genealogical records and the then emerging linguistic identity around *Avahatta*, which then became Maithili. Despite this separation they continued their marital relations.

Though Kailash Chandra Jha mentions from his field-work experience how he had heard that *panjis* were initially kept for all castes but the available records show it only for Brahmins and Kayasthas. I would like to thank him for bringing this fact to light in the email communication on Oct. 22, 2024. Though my personal view is because Brahmins and Karna Kayasthas of Mithila were the literate castes of North Bihar so they could maintain a written record of their genealogies in the form of *panji-prabandh* unlike other communities who would keep their record in the oral tradition. Though Mr. Jha has brought out for the first time in public domain how there are *panjis* available also for the Mahapatra/Kantaha Brahmins of North Bihar, who perform the last rituals, and for all practical purposes treated as “untouchables” by everyone, including the so-called lower castes (Singh 2024). Another interesting discussion with Mr. Jha was how Pachchima Brahmins and Rajputs had the resources and wherewithal, and they could appoint *panjikars*, but chose not to, are themes which require separate research enquiry.

linguistic-cultural group of Maithil Brahmanas (Pandey 2014). The Bettiah Raj traces its origin from the Oinwara dynasty (1325-1527), which controlled all of North Bihar, including both Champaran and Darbhanga and had established the Simraon Raj in Mithila (Ansari 2019: 227). With the decline and ensuing chaos from 1527, when Nusrat Shah, the ruler of Bengal, attacked Mithila and killed Kansanarayana, the last Oinwara chief, North Bihar disintegrated into many small feudal principalities, but gradually the two prominent and biggest ones which emerged were Bettiah Raj, as descendants of the Oinwara dynasty and Darbhanga Raj under the Khandavala dynasty (Ansari 2019:227-228). Both these Brahmin dynasties were often at loggerheads with each other but both supported Brahmin scholars, musicians and a courtly culture emerged in Bettiah and Darbhanga which both boasted of Dhrupad singers, the oldest form of Indian classical music. The property of Bettiah Raj was very extensive and spread to different regions including Rajpore Sihoria, Betian, Motihari, Peeprah and Turkaulia alongwith possessing landed property in the districts of Muzaffarpur, Patna, Saran, Mirzapur, Allahabad, Basti, Gorakhpur, Faizabad and Varanasi (Ansari 2019:233).²⁵

No Brahmin sub-caste is older than the late middle ages or at any rate their regional identities started only after Harsha²⁶ and the Rashtrakutas (another Hindu dynasty), 'The first evidence of a historical understanding about the origins of Brahmin communities appears in a text from the 12th century called the Sahyādri Khaṇḍa. The Sahyādri Khaṇḍa states that there are ten Brahmin communities dispersed across India. These ten communities are divided into two groups according to the geography of India. The northern group consists of the Sārasvata, Kānyakubja, Utkala, Maithila, and Gauḍa communities, while the southern groups consists of the Drāviḍa, Tailaṅga, Karnāṭa, Madhyadeśa, and Gurjara communities (Pandey 2014:4).' Therefore, from the 12th century onwards geographical divisions with differentiated polity coalesced with the development of different regional languages created ten big geographical divisions among Brahmins of the Indian sub-continent who further developed

²⁵ Today the "decimated" Bettiah Raj's property is valued at 8000 crore rupees (around 1 billion euros) with 15358 acres of land in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and which was first controlled by the British by setting up the Court of Wards since 1897 and now the current Government of Bihar is trying to "usurp" the property by excluding the claims of "rightful" Bhumihar Brahmin descendants of Bettiah Raj through the Bettiah Raj Properties Bill 2024. The court of wards was another legal device developed by the British to disinherit Indian ruling families of their inheritances in order to augment their revenue and exacerbate further exploitation of tenants and peasants in the name of the estate, which for all practical purposes was the British Indian Government. Thus, the British could generate more revenue for themselves without taking the blame for further depredation of the masses. (Yang 1979; Tewary 2024; Dev Raj 2024)

²⁶ Kanauj dynasty, with epigraphical records showing massive land grants to Brahmins, precursor to the emergence of Kanyakubja Brahmins and its five sub-divisions of Sayupareen, Shanadhya Bhumihar, Jijhoutia, and Kanyakubja proper (Ram S. Sharma 2006; Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:515-519).

many divisions and sub-divisions among themselves based on professions, scholarship, rituals and so on. And Maithili as a language developed much later from fifteenth century onwards – the first major Maithili poet and writer was Vidyapati Thakur who wrote in the earlier form of Maithili: Avahatta or Desil Baina (R.P. Sharma 2016, M.K. Jha 2017, P. Jha 2018) which along with the genealogical records called *panji-prabandh* gave a distinct ethnic identity to Maithil Brahmins based on language, genealogy, culture and relative political stability since fourteenth century (Pandey 2014).

It is also interesting to note how in Bihar, as a significant portion of the middle Gangetic plain, maximum landed estates were owned and run by the *tri-karma/Ayachak* Brahmins popularly called Babhans/Pachchima/Bhumihar Brahmins which included Bettiah, Hathwa, Madhuban, Sheohar, Sursand, Tekari, Deo, Maksudpur, Majhwe, Parsa, Chainpur, Dharhara, Budhaulti, Bodh Gaya among a host of others in addition to the largest *zamindari* in Bihar, Darbhanga Raj, owned by Maithil Brahmins apart from Banaili and Srinagar estates owned by Maithils (Shukla 1996:509) who were both martially related with Babhans/Pachchima/Bhumihar Brahmins (Appendix I). Rajputs, as the quintessential Kshatriya community, were the next biggest landowners in Bihar (Shukla 1996:509). What is interesting is how there is a professional division of labour among Brahmins inter-se, with those owning land and even becoming kings, *zamindars* and landed magnates to support their priestly brethren as a matter of duty to *Dharma*, and later *Hindu Dharma*. Many of the *Mahanths*/Hindu monasteries with rent-free ownership of vast tracts of land and immense spiritual and social prestige like Bodh Gaya and Bhudhaulti have been hereditarily run by Bhumihar Brahmin ascetics (Shukla 1996:509). And there was a free-flowing transformation of *tri-karma/Ayachak* into *shat-karma/Yachak* and from *shat-karma/Yachak* into *tri-karma/Ayachak* Brahmins with connubial and commensal ties with each other, keeping their societal constitutionalism and the inner systemic rationality of their social unity intact over the ages. One can draw parallels to the distinction between *tri-karma/Ayachak* Chitpavan Brahmins, who were initially land-owning Brahmins in the Ratnagairi hills and also migratory Brahmins in the late medieval and early-modern period to the rest of Maharashtra and also the rest of the sub-continent with the taking up of Peshwa leadership; and the *shat-karma/Yachak* Deshastha Brahmins, among Maharashtrian Brahmins (Patterson 1970). The Chitpavan Brahmins are *tri-karma/Ayachak* Brahmins and as land-owning Brahmins were political, military, administrative and financial leaders in addition to being profound Sanskrit scholars and with their rule as Peshvas who were drawn from them, the distinction between the two main Maharashtrian Brahmins disappeared; where in the field of scholarship, indeed Sanskrit scholarship, the *tri-karma/Ayachak* Chitpavan Brahmins might have outperformed the *shat-karma/Yachak* and more priestly Deshastha Brahmins (Patterson 1970; Deshpande 2015).

Since colonial times, much stress has been paid on how an ideal Brahmin's engagement was only with the text and *shastras*, but Brahmins have followed successfully a diverse range of occupations across centuries and millennia. It was a clever colonial device to make the "intellectual class" of Brahmins accept and internalise colonial subjecthood and become docile, passive observers of British colonial pilferage and destruction of India (Metcalf 1995). But historical evidence, genealogies, personal histories, epigraphical records, manuscripts, legends, tales and oral narratives attests otherwise.

Brahmins have been excellent agriculturalists and military leaders across time and space (Pinch 2006). Dr. S. Radhakrishnan writes, "The Brahmin has in him the possibilities of a warrior. The *ṛsis* of old were agriculturists and sometimes warriors too (Radhakrishnan 2015:81)". While writing on the nature of later-Vedic social stratification, B.K. Choudhary writes, "The desire of the *brāhmaṇa* to gain land as a sacrificial fee would suggest that the *brāhmaṇas* owned and cultivated land. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* reveals that the *brāhmaṇas* were skilful cultivators. [...] The legend regarding the migration of *Videghas*, recorded in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, shows that the *brāhmaṇas* played a leading role in settling new lands. The text states that the land east to the Sadanirā (modern Gandak in North Bihar) was marshy and uncultivable before the *brāhmaṇas* settled and made it fully cultivable (Choudhary 1999:141–142, 145)."

Much of the leadership and revolt against colonial subjugation of India was initially and overwhelmingly challenged by Brahmin ascetics and leaders, the most notable being nearly a hundred years *sanyasi rebellion* against British colonial rule on which there is still a dearth of literature or a comprehensive account; the role played by Brahmin and also Rajput soldiers and leaders in the War of Indian Independence in 1857; besides the overwhelming and pioneering role of Brahmins in Anushilan Samiti, Jugantar Party, Hindustan Republican Army or Hindustan Socialist Republican Army as cadres and leaders striving for an armed overthrow of British rule in India show a continued militaristic tradition running simultaneously with shastric and classical learning among Brahmins. Even a perceptive reader of Indian history and a profound scholar of Sanskrit, Prof. Michael Witzel also commits this error when he expresses surprise on the military leadership of Brahmins mentioned by none other than Kalhaṇa in his *Rajatarangini*, when he writes, "Brahmins even joined the army quite frequently, which might surprise in other areas of India. For example, Rakka, a Brahmin living in the house of a local feudatory, was a mere foot soldier but was made chief minister (*mukhyamantri*) because of his valor (5.424-5). Bhujāṅga, son of the Brahmin Samanta, was a commander in Saṅgrāmarāja's army (7.91). Caṅpaka, Kalhaṇa's father, was commander of forts under King Harṣa (7.1177). Ajaka, a Brahmin minister of Salhaṇa, died in battle; the Brahmin soldiers Lavarāja and Yaśorāja found their end in the same way (Witzel 1991:54)." On this note, the reference to Babhans/Pachchima/Bhumihar

Brahmins as “military Brahmins” by Francis Buchanan is worth mentioning (Buchanan 1939), and Walter Hauser adds, “It is useful to note that Bhumihar Brahmins are also called Sainik, or military Brahmins, much as Sahajanand indicates was the case for Jujhautiya Brahmins (Hauser and Jha 2015:26).” It should be added here on how among Kanyakubja Brahmins; court, military service [attributing spirituality with no loss of social status as Brahmins (Bayly 2005:74)] and also trade are mentioned as prestigious jobs by genealogists and old informants (Khare 1970:4n.2). Therefore, Kanyakubja Brahmins are as much “military Brahmins” as their fellow Babhan/Bhumihar Brahmins making it an additional reason for extensive marriage relations they share with each other (See Appendix III below).

Through the social practice of marriage relations among different Brahmin groups, an additional purpose of this article is to further discredit the colonial caste censuses which could not structure the ordering of Indian society since 1860s until 1931 when it held the last census (Samarendra, 2008, 2011). The categories and names and ordering of caste-communities (for the lack of a better form of expression in the English language) remained unorganized both horizontally as well as vertically (Samarendra, 2008, 2011). Caste-communities were upgraded or downgraded according to politics, convenience and pandering, casting a doubt on the whole exercise as an unscientific project in the first place (Samarendra, 2008, 2011). Colonial caste censuses could never define satisfactorily the terms used to explain Indian social reality like “caste” or “jati” or the classical term “varna” and which term/s satisfactorily and adequately represented Indian lived reality, of text and practice, remained indecisive (Beteille 1966, 1996; Srinivas 2002a; Samarendra, 2008, 2011).²⁷ Coming to the exact social group of “Brahmins”, which is the subject matter of this study, even though it is the highest in the classical social order, its comprehensive history throughout the sub-continent still eludes us, making its ordering of social relations in different regions as one of the methods of recording its social register, to which end this article is a contribution (Witzel 1993). The different Brahmin sub-castes which emerged in the early-medieval period base their individual histories on the works of community-scholars whose works are

²⁷ Varna is the four-fold distinction and differentiation of Indian society since Vedic literature, viz., Brahman/Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. Sometimes a fifth is added which is outside the pale of four-varnas. Jati is a much more realistic and lived social fact, where there are thousands of social communities with their own sub-systemic rationality of self-ordering, including regulating the rules of commensality and connubiality. But “jati” itself can take on plural meanings based on the context. Then came the Portuguese in sixteenth century who could predictably not understand Indian society and they named it *casta* which over time became “caste”. Much like European religion/s and sects with fixed defined social borders, affiliation, dogmas and theology; the British colonial administration tried to define and order Indian society including what they termed as “caste”, law, religion/s, land laws, and so on, based on their own cultural formulations, which has a protracted legacy, and continued misunderstandings, if not complete mischaracterization.

mostly mythical and less historical-sociological or they are again an exercise of textual scholarship and less so the lived reality of people (Hauser and Jha 2015:162-163, 167-171). In the early-medieval period when geographical distinctions and linguistic distinctions were still being formed individual origin-stories of different “castes” and “sub-castes” emulated the ancient format when gods/goddesses readily and regularly intervened in the affairs of humans and provide us with a wealth of stories and legends which are a complex mix of facts, fiction, legend, myth and so on.²⁸ In Brahmin sub-caste origin stories, myth, textual/scriptural/legal Dharmasastra references and social fact, keep merging and diverging at various points. In this respect, “Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar” is a “modern” notable exception as it does not just deal with classical texts and textual exegesis but pans out actual social fact based on field-work over a large geographical region collected over several years of hard work in the early twentieth century. In writing “Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar”, Sahajanand does not just provide theoretical concepts and constructs of “what is a Brahmin” and “who constitutes a Brahmin” but also backs it up with social and historical realities. Therefore, this work is also the work of an “Indian social theorist” developing his social theoretical formulations on “Indian” ideas based on “Indian lived social and historical realities” and not based on some western theorist defining perhaps the “oldest and continuous intellectual community of Brahmins in the world (supposedly ordering a conceptual-theoretical hierarchy *non-pareil*; Dumont 1998)” for themselves.

²⁸ Among the „modern“ western thinkers, Carl Gustav Jung has emphasized how myth helps to keep our sanity and human feelings, and it was the “loss of myth” as one of the possible reasons for the World War and wanton and indiscriminate killings of civilians for no end to be achieved (Jung 1989).

2. Marriage relations among Brahmins as recorded in “Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar”

This sub-chapter deals with marriage relations among horizontally equal Brahmin caste-communities of Maithil Brahmins and Pachchima Brahmins (Bhumihar Brahmins) and Bhumihar Brahmins and Saryupareen Brahmins; discusses about Dogamia Brahmins for the first time in academic literature; critically assesses Louis Dumont’s writing on North Indian Brahmins because of the overbearing impact and influence he has had on Indian sociology ever since the publication of his work *Homo Hierarchicus*; critically assesses Maithil Brahmin genealogical records called Panji-Prabandha and discusses the dispute between Bhumihar Brahmins and Maithil Brahmins in the journal *Bharat Mitra* in 1916; based on the work “Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar” by Swami Sahajanand Saraswati. This part also helps discredit the colonial caste census for one more reason of enumerating Brahmins and Bhumihar Brahmins separately because both in text as well as practice/social fact they are one and the same. In the process, it also helps discredit, for example, the sociology/social history/culture of understanding Bhumihar Brahmins solely on the basis of a faulty colonial caste census for at least the last century.

Swami Sahajanand Saraswati writes how Yachak/Shatkarma Brahmins like Kanyakubja, Maithil, Gaud, Saraswat, Saryupareen Brahmins as well as Ayachak/Trikarma Brahmins like Tyagi, Mohyal, Pachchima, and Bhumihar Brahmins emerged from the same social group of Brahmins and with the passage of time developed these divisions and sub-divisions based on differences of profession, region, language, scholarship, etc. (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:308). Ayachak Brahmins have marriage relations with distinguished families of Maithil, Kanyakubja²⁹, Saryupareen and Gaud Brahmins (but with root, group and clan exogamy) [Raghav S. Sharma (2003:a308)]. ‘Root’ (“*mul/mool*”, *dih*) is based on the first male member of a family who settled in the village. This is more particular of Saraswat Brahmins, Bhumihar Brahmins and Maithil Brahmins. No matter how many generations expire, still those of the same *mool* cannot inter-marry. Therefore, there is caste endogamy but *mool* or *dih* exogamy. In addition to this, Bhumihar Brahmins and Maithil Brahmins do not marry within the same clan (*gotra*) like the rest of the Brahmins of India. But interestingly, and making the system of marriage alliances more complex, the Bhumihar Brahmins and Maithil Brahmins have double exclusions of both *gotra* as well as *mool* or *dih* exogamy. This is another similarity between these two sub-castes of

²⁹ The Kanyakubja Brahmins also have something similar where *ānk/purushā* is the root ancestor, *āspads* (titles/last names based on scholarship) which could change every generation and *susthān*, the original place of habitation with proper observation of rituals (Khare 1970:19-20).

Brahmins which is why they intermarry. Besides, the Bhumihaar Brahmins and Maithil Brahmins share many common *mool* or *dih*, both suggesting a common origin as well as scrupulous practice of *mool* exogamy. The common *mool/dih* (root) of Bhumihaar Brahmins and Maithil Brahmins are Jalewar/Jalaiwar, Anrai/Anwar/Arewar/Anraiwar, Barhampur/Brahmapur/Brahmpur, Beloncha, Bhusaware/Bhunasware, Darihare, Dharwar, Dighwe/Dighwa, Domkatariye/Domkatar (Tiwari of Dumtikar, See Appendix III below:70-71), Dumrait, Gaur/Gaul, Jaji, Katewar, Kunjalwar, Mangrauni, Nikatwar, Nonaitwar, Okinwar/Oinwar/Oini, Sakarwar/Sakariwar/Sakardhiwar, Sorawar, Suargane, and so on (Kumar 2016:279-282, 289-290). The Tiwari of Dumtikar are Saryupareen Brahmins settled in Magadha and Mithila; in Magadha they became one of the mools/roots of Bhumihaar Brahmins (including the Maharaja of Tikari/Tekari) and in Mithila they became one of the mools of Maithil Brahmins (Appendix III below:70-71). Unfortunately, on *mool* or *dih* nothing much has been written (Kumar 2016: 61) unlike on the issue of *gotra* on which there is available academic literature (Brough 1946/47, Gajendragadkar 1942, Kosambi 1953, Madan 1962, Rahrurkar 1972, Seyfort Ruegg 1976). On *gotra*, Irawati Karve who was both a Sanskritist as well had extensive field-work experience wrote, “[...] among the ancient Aryans the rule of marriage was that one could marry a person who was not a near relation on the father's and mother's side. [...] The Brahmins starting from the same marriage regulations established in the end truly exogamous patri-clans independent of the locality in which they lived. These are called *Gotras*. [...] Among the Brahmins [of north India], who possess *Gotras* in the old Brahmanic sense, a man marries outside his own *Gotra* and also that of his mother's. Just as the taboo on the father's kin embraces the patri-clan so the taboo on the mother's kin embraces the whole of the matri-clan (Karve 1953:65,117).” T.N. Madan while identifying the differences between the approach and definition in understanding *gotra* among five important scholars (John Brough, Indologist; A.L. Basham and D.D. Kosambi, historians; S.V. Karandikar and G.S. Ghurye, sociologists)³⁰, gives us on how all five are agreed

³⁰ Madan (Madan 1962: 61) provides relevant excerpts of the view of these five important scholars who have written on *gotra*,

“The exogamy of the Hindus has two sides—sept exogamy that prohibits marriage between members of the same sept or *gotra* who are all believed to have descended from one common ancestor. . . (Karandikar 1929:2).

The Brahmanical *gotra*, which persists with little modification to the present day, may be defined as an exogamous patrilineal sibship, whose members trace their descent back to a common ancestor (Brough 1953:2).

The original meaning of *gotra* is “a cowshed” or “a herd of cows”; in the *Atharva Veda*, the word first appears with the meaning of “a clan”, which it has retained with a special connotation (Basham 1954: 153).

Since the time of the *Sutras* sept exogamy based on *gotra*, as designed in the scheme of Baudhayana linking up the actual families into ten large divisions on the basis of their spiritual affiliation, has been the rule among high castes (Ghurye 1955:91).

upon, “that the gotra is an exogamous group of persons who are descended from a common ancestor (Madan 1962).”

Families of the same *mool/dih* (root) will always have the same *gotra*; but those with the same *gotra* need not necessarily have the same *mool/dih* (root). It is quite likely that since the concept of *gotra* (which was often compared/translated as kinship) has Dharmasastra, Indian classical law books references and sanctions so there is available literature and there were modern intellectuals interested in its study. Whereas, *mool/dih* (root) does not have classical references or Dharmasastra sanctions so it has escaped the attention which it otherwise deserves because it is part of the living reality of a section of Indian society. Both *mool* and *gotra* exogamy is observed by Bhumihar/Maithil Brahmins in Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh as part of their societal constitutionalism of the system of marriage. Many of the mools of Maithil/Bhumihar Brahmins are the same showing the same ancestry which could be with place in instances of migration and/or *mool purush*, or primal ancestor like in the case of Dronwar Mool Brahmins, whether Bhumihar Brahmins or Maithil Brahmins, who have all descended from the same primal ancestor, Raja Abhiman's son Rai Gangaram (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:321). The entire Dronwar ancestry is traced to the nine sons of Rai Gangaram; first six sons were born to Bhag Rani, a Maithil Brahmin princess and daughter of Raja Singh Chakwar of Chakwar mool and the last three sons were born to Mukta Rani, daughter of Pandit Gopi Thakur, a Maithil Brahmin resident of Tiswara village (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:321; See Appendix I). *Gotra* can be shared by different community-groups/castes for having either descended from the same ancestor/primal *Rishi* (sage) as in the case of Brahmins or those who were his pupils as in the case of other castes. Mools of two castes cannot be the same when ancestry is traced to a mool purush/primal ancestor but in some isolated instances it can be the same when it concerns *mool/dih* as the original place of settlement of ancestors of different castes who for whatever reason chose to migrate together to newer settlements. Such cases of internal migration of entire society from one place to the other could be for better prospects or as a result of some war or duress like famine, etc., from their “original” place of inhabitation. And as nearly all marriages in India, including in Bihar, follows caste endogamy, and *gotra*/clan exogamy; *mool/mul/dih* also deserves to be studied as part of the regional orientation of sociology and social anthropology to understand the social system of marriage among Brahmins in the middle-Gangetic plain. And most importantly, *gotra* and *mul/mool* exogamy is observed by inter-related marriages of co-equal

There are innumerable *gotras* in seven main divisions of the brahmins, each of which must marry outside its own *gotra*, which thus corresponds to the Latin *gens*. . . . In theory, each of the seven larger groups or any sub-group thereof betokens common descent from a *ṛṣi* sage, whose name the *gotra* still bears (Kosambi 1956:96-97).”

Pachchima/Bhumihar//Dogamia/Maithil Brahmins without any law or legal sanction or enforcement by the modern Indian state and its Constitution.

In this context it is remarkable to note how the Maithil Brahmin Mahasabha in its reference to marriage relations between Bhumihar Brahmins and Maithil Brahmins at its Bhagalpur Convention in 1911 also recommended its discontinuance (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:312). Swamiji suggested the impracticability of such a recommendation because Ayachak Brahmins (non-priestly Brahmins) also have Yachak or priestly Brahmins among them and Yachak Brahmins also have Ayachak Brahmins among them because it is just a distinction based on professional competence besides it would deny the existing social reality of inter-marriage among them (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:309). Swamiji makes special mention of an extremely old, learned and experienced Pachchima Brahmin gentleman Shri Parasmani Singh from Naya Nagar in Darbhanga who was instrumental in listing out the marriage relations among Pachchima (Bhumihar) Brahmins and Maithil Brahmins with their complete details (with family trees, addresses and relationships) and hailed him as a Pachchima Brahmin Ratna, a jewel among Pachchima Brahmins (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:313). And then he thanks Maithil Brahmin scholar, Paramhans Mahopdehsak because of whose work “Brahman Sambandh (Marriage relations among Brahmins)”, Swamiji’s own quest for writing a comprehensive work on the history of Brahmins in general and marriage relations among Brahmins in particular, started (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:313). Mithila Mihir, a Maithili language journal run by the Maharaja of Darbhanga, in its June 3, 1922 issue records how from 4 kos (12 km) east of Darbhanga to the south, even across the Ganges, there is no difference between Maithil Brahmins and Bhumihar Brahmins, they share commensal (and connubial, otherwise inter-dining was not possible) ties (Raghav S. Sharma 2003b:69).

Sahajanand expressed his disagreement with the then Maharaja of Kashi (King belonging to the Narayan dynasty of the Princely State of Benares), ‘King of Brahmins’ (Dvijraj) Kashiraj presiding over the Bhumihar Brahmin Mahasabha in its Kashi (Varanasi) session, who while acknowledging the marriage relations of Ayachak Brahmins (Babhans or Bhumihar Brahmins) with Maithils, Kanyakubjas, Saryupareens and Gaud Brahmins, expressed opinion for its discontinuance because in Kashiraj’s view Ayachak Brahmins should marry only Ayachak Brahmins (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:308–309) Sahajanand understood all too well the importance of marriage-relations for horizontal solidarity among Brahmins and thus opposed the Maharaja’s view. Such marriage relations also nullifies the separate enumeration of Bhumihar Brahmin and Brahmin in the colonial caste census of 1911. It should be pointed out here how the Maharaja of Kashi is hailed by different Brahmin community

organizations as Dvijraj (literally meaning ‘King of Brahmins’),³¹ which is also part of their royal insignia with Dvijraj inscribed in it and kept in the Ramnagar Fort Museum and I attest to its presence during a visit to this museum. It is interesting to note how unlike other Brahmin principalities different Brahmin community organizations called *sabhas* or *mahasabhas* held the Maharaja of Kashi, or Kashi Naresh as he is often referred to, as the King of Brahmins (Raghav S. Sharma 2003b:67–69) and not just king of Bhumihar Brahmins. The prestige of Kashi Naresh was not just because of heading the ruling Brahmin Narayan dynasty of Benares and being the chief officiating priest of the famous Shiva temple of Kashi Vishwanath and who was given widespread regard not just among Brahmins of the region and beyond but also as a popular and learned monarch highly respected for their personal integrity and scholarship (Upadhyaya 1983). It was the spiritual and temporal prestige enjoyed by Kashi Naresh which led the British to acknowledge it as a Princely State whereas few other estates which were bigger or provided more revenue to the British were never recognized as Princely States. The last ruling king Dr. Vibhuti Narayan Singh (1927-2000); as King and head of the Narayan Dynasty of Benares from 1939-1947) was personally renowned for Sanskrit scholarship and for the promotion of learning and scholarship through his All India Kashiraj Trust which played a significant role in bringing out excellent volumes and perhaps the only ones which have given a “modern” intellectual treatment to the Puranas through a journal published by the Trust called Puranam, apart from supporting original translations and works by Sanskrit scholars like Dr. Ganga Sagar Rai and many others (Upadhyaya 1983). Land for both the campuses of Benares Hindu University were gifted by Kashiraj; the land for the old campus was gifted

³¹ On the millenium old current ruling Bhumihar Brahmin family of Kashi, H.A. Qureshi and Shreya Pathak write, “Mansaram was a Trikarma brahmin or Gautum Bhumihar and the zamindar of Tetharia (Ootataria of Curwen) or Gangapur village that he inherited from his father Manoranjan Singh (referred to here as Miranji, which seems to be a corruption of Manoranjan Singh when written in the *shikasht* mode of writing Persian; Curwen reads it as Mutrunjun Singh), who, contrary to the desire of his brothers, gained his livelihood in his own way by agriculture. Nearly half of the aforementioned village was a part of Manoranjan’s *zamindari*. The origin of this family is traced back to the eleventh century when there was the rule of Raja Banar in Banaras.his purohit Kithoo (Shri Krishan) Misr is a known ancestor of this family. He was a pious Brahmin leading an austere life in the village Utataria (Ootataria), 6 mile away from Banaras. Raja Banaras made many offers of money and land to him, but he invariably denied and didnt accept any of these. Eventually, one day, the Raja, without his knowledge, tied a grant of rent-free land to his turban. When he discovered this concealed grant in his turban, he prophesied that the Raja’s rule would pass on to his sons in future. It happened to be so that the rule of the said Raja soon came to an end after the Ghaznavid attack in 1029. The descendants of Kithoo (Shri Krishan) Misr joined the services of the new rulers. They gotranks androsedaily into great favour. [...] Though Mansaram successfully acquired the zamindary, he could not enjoy it for long and passed away in 1740. The zamindary continued under his son Balwant Singh with all his possessions, comprising eighteen mahals and generating an annual revenue of Rs. 24,50,881 (Qureshi & Pathak 2024:5, 7).”

by Maharaja Prabhu Narayan Singh at the request of Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya; whereas the land for the second campus was gifted by Maharaja Aditya Narayan Singh (Pathak 2014). The Kashiraj has been the official patron of the month-long remarkable Ramlila at Ramnagar for around two and a half-centuries when Maharaja Udit Narayan Singh turned it into a grand operatic cultural-religious pageantry from the early 1800s (Kapur 2006; Pathak 2014). The Kashiraj has a huge and rich personal library including the handwritten manuscripts of Goswami Tulsidas, the celebrated author of *Ramcharitmanas*; besides during Dussehra after praying to his ancestral mother deity, until very recently an annual Durbar (council) used to be organized at the Ramnagar Fort, the seat of residence of the erstwhile King when he would meet ordinary citizens of Benares which held cultural appeal, despite India being a republic and *zamindari* and privy purses being constitutionally abolished (Pathak 2014). It is also noticeable, that the last Maharaja Dr. Vibhuti Narayan Singh's own maternal uncle was Pandit Ramnandan Mishra, son of a leading *zamindar* of Darbhanga and close to the Maharaja of Darbhanga, and who was involved in the Kisan Sabha politics during the fiery 1930s in Pandal and Amwari (places in Darbhanga, Bihar) with Swami Sahajanand Saraswati against *zamindars* (landlordism), including his father and against the *zamindari* exploitation of tenants and farmers (Jha 2014; Mishra & Kumar 2017). It is also noticeable how Raj Narain, the "maverick" socialist leader who defeated Indira Gandhi from her constituency of Rae Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh and brought an end to India's internal emergency leading to a reinstatement of fundamental rights, rule of law and other constitutional safeguards and principles, including democracy, also belonged to the Kashi Raj family (Sethi 1979; Singh 1979; Hazarika 1987).³² The Darbhanga Raj and its family members were close to Kashi Raj, including Sir Ganganath Jha and his family; Sir Ganganath Jha records staying in the Ramnagar Fort as a young boy in his autobiographical notes and being treated as a family member of the royal House of Kashi (Jha 1976).

Sahajanand cites how Kanyakubja originally was a geographical determinant, which is the ancient name of what we know of as Kanauj. It is also important

³² Raj Narain was often caricatured demeaningly by media (Singh 1979; Khushwant Singh calling Narain "a court jester and a buffoon", as one example among many wanting to keep the then Congress government in good humour, it is relevant to note how Khushwant Singh defended internal emergency and was rewarded with membership of the upper house of Indian Parliament, the Rajya Sabha in 1980 when Congress led by Indira Gandhi came back to power) and other academic establishments for his "pedestrian" manners which he consciously and curiously adopted perhaps because of his ideologically socialist commitments. He had given away most of his considerable inheritance to landless farmers and had acquired no personal property or wealth. It should be brought to notice how he did not just belong to an illustrious family but had a brilliant educational career, including an MA and LLB from Benares Hindu University. It is rather surprising how the man who defeated Indira Gandhi and can be held to be prominently responsible for ending the internal emergency is not given enough credit for it let alone having any comprehensive biography written on him.

to note how Sahajanand attests to Kanyakubja as a place and not a specific community in the ancient times, a fact attested to by historical literature henceforth (Lahiri 1967). It is the city of Kānyakubja or Kanyākubja, inhabited since second-first century BCE and gradually rose into prominence with the decline of Magadha (Lahiri 1967). The many different names of Kanauj/Kanyakubja are Kānyakubja, Mahōdaya, Kauśa or Kuśasthala and Gādhipura; and it finds mention in the epic Mahābhārata as Kānyakubja; in the epic Rāmāyaṇa as Kanyākubja; in Patañjali's Māhābhāshya as Kānyakubji; by Ptolemy as Kanagora; by Hiuen Tsang as Ka-no-Kue-she; in the Nava-Khaṇḍa of Skandapurāṇa as Kānyakubja; in the Padmapurāṇa as Mahōdaya; and by Al-Bīrūnī as 'Kanōj', which is how we know of it today (Lahiri 1967). This further attests to the fact that the ten-fold distinction of Brahmins is a regional attestation rather than any sectarian formulation and which at any rate developed in the medieval age around the 12th century CE (Pandey 2014:4). It could be the case how Brahmins who carried the name of the regions to their self-identification more specifically, over time in the late-medieval and early modern period, styled themselves as more distinct communities like the Kanyakubja Brahmins or Maithil Brahmins, though marriage relations and social fact speaks otherwise and attests to the earlier and original meaning of division of the Indian sub-continent into ten-regional divisions with ten regional variations of Brahmins without any specific sectarian ethnicity formation, which even when formed, is only an approximate categorization. *Gotra*/clan and *mool/mul/dih* (root) and with the onset of late-middle ages and difficulty in movement and mobility with a more inward looking village-based society with regional linguistic and cultural identity formations led to the metamorphosis of earlier geographically-determining Brahmins into different regional and ethnic groups of Brahmins. This fact is attested to by Sahajanand when he cites the verse "Kānyakubjādvijāh Sarve", of how Kanyakubja was the "geographical" land of Brahmins, also called Brahmavarta or Brahmarshi Desh (another inspiration for the title of his work) from where they kept migrating to different parts of the sub-continent over centuries and therefore all are co-equal Brahmins because what really matters is how Brahmins of the same *gotra*, no matter of which region or what caste/sub-caste/group/sub-group like Kanyakubja, Gaud, Maharashtra, Maithil, Bhumihar or Tyagi, they have the same *Pravar*, *Shakha*, *Sutra*, *Veda*, *Devata*, *Pada* and *Shikha* (Raghav S. Sharma 2003b:65–66; explained below). Therefore, Sahajanand suggests that despite hundreds of varieties and variations of Brahmins, there are underlying thread of unity and same ancestry which is maintained and located by all these "kinship terminologies (for the lack of a better word)" meticulously maintained by Brahmins and unite them as a social group across the Indian sub-continent (Raghav S. Sharma 2003b:65–66).

On the spread of Brahmins from Kanyakubja region and the proliferation of Kanyakubja Brahmin castes/sub-castes as linked to region, "country", "and

territorial sub-divisions” and due to “migration” and “immigration”, Suvira Jaiswal writes, “Hence, brāhmaṇas were known by the name of their country, and broad territorial subdivisions emerged on this basis. Later, in early medieval times when indigenous chieftains, in the so-called absence of local ‘pure’ brāhmaṇas, began to send for brāhmaṇas from elsewhere to earn religious merit (in reality to create a class of loyal intermediaries and ideologues), the process of subcaste formation within the brāhmaṇa varṇa received a fillip. Immigrant brāhmaṇas generally retained a distinct identity and in some rare cases continued to have links with the parent group, but in most cases loss of contact with the original home and interaction with the local culture transformed them into new brāhmaṇa subcastes, such as the Kanyakubja or Gauḍa sections of Bengali brāhmaṇas. Sectarian, ritualistic and occupational differences contributed further to create a very complex picture of the caste organization. The result was that later myths about the origin of brāhmaṇa and non-brāhmaṇa castes rarely refer to the *puruṣasūkta* myth and are not concerned with the origin of the varṇa as a whole but only with a subdivision, caste or subcaste of a particular varṇa category (Jaiswal 1998:59).” The entire Kulin Brahmin structure of Brahmins in Bengal is based on the idea of migration of Upadhyaya (literally meaning knowledgeable) Brahmins from Kanyakubja/Banaras or from Kanyakubja to Banaras to Bengal or Bengali-speaking parts of Eastern India through Bihar, where they adopted the titles of Mukhopadhyaya/Mukherjee/Mookerjee/Mukherji, Chattopadhyaya/Chatterjee/Chatteraj, Bandopadhyaya/Bannerjee/Bonnerjee/Bannerji and Gangopadhyaya/Ganguly at the invitation of the Sena king, Adisura in the eleventh-century CE (Inden 1976; Ray, 1994:164; Brown 1988:758-759). Because of settling in the region of Rārha in Bengal, they are also called Rārhi/Radhi Brahmins (Inden 1976:54; Ray, 1994:164). It is also interesting to observe that unlike in Mithila in North Bihar, where the Srotriya Maithil Brahmins are considered the “purest of the pure, and the highest of the high” which includes the Maharaja of Darbhanga and some of the most notable Brahmin scholars like Mahamahopadhyaya Sri Krishna Singh Thakur, Sir Ganganath Jha, Mahamahopadhyaya Acharya Tari-neesh Jha and so on being *Srotriyas*; in the Kulin Brahmin structure of Bengal, the *Srotriyas* are lower in the rank/hierarchy among Brahmins in Bengal and as compared to the Kanyakubja Upadhyayas who as the most exalted and the most landed, not just among all caste-communities but also among all the Brahmins of Bengal, never performed rituals for others because of essentially being Ayachak/Trikarma Brahmins (Inden 1976: 69-70; Brown 1988:759).

Therefore, in addition to *gotra* and *mool/mul/dih* (root); *Pravar*, *Shakha*, *Sutra*, *Veda*, *Devata*, *Pada* and *Shikha* are all kinship/knowledge based group terminologies which all have their own complex meanings and implications for identifying Brahmins with the same root ancestor across the Indian sub-continent (Raghav S. Sharma 2003b:65–66). “Pravar” identifies and commemorates

some eminent scholar who would have been born in a *gotra* in a specific region or field of scholarship. It helps one identify the lineage and location of a Brahmin immediately because such genealogical knowledge is carried over from one generation to the next both as a matter of pride but also as a matter of inspiration for emulation. Brough writes, “The traditional view as given by Baudhayana is that the gotras are to be classified according to the eponymous risis – the seven risis, that is 'Jamadagani, Gautama, Bharadvaja, Atri, Visvamitra, Kasyapa and Vasistha', with the additional gotra of Agastya. On the other hand, the pravaras are classified under the names of Bhrgu, Angiras, Atri, Visvamitra, Kasyapa, Vasistha, and Agastya, the Jamadaganis coming under the Bhrgus, and both the Gautamas and Bharadvajas under the Angirases. In general, however, the various ganas [groups] of Jamadaganis all have three out of the five names of their pravaras in common: ... while the Gautamas, ... and the Bharadvajas, ... also form exogamous units. Thus, in spite of the pravaras being grouped under Bhrgu and Angiras, the exogamous groups resulting from the pravara-rule are those of Jamadagani, Gautama and Bharadvaja (Brough 1953:29).” Although the knowledge of *pravara* might be more present among the more learned and erudite Brahmins.

All the four Vedas have many different branches and there would be Brahmin scholars specialising in one specific branch of one of the four Vedas and achieve acclaim for it. The descendants of such a specialist, *shakha*, literally branch, would self-identify and also get identified by it as an additional list of identity markers to help situate the family and origin of an individual. *Sutras* are also a set of rules and one who has given such a set of rules, his descendants identify as belonging to that sutra-giver’s family. It was one of the non-violable duties of Brahmins to learn the Vedas; some learnt all four and became known as *Chaturvedis/Chaubey/Chaube*, literally meaning scholar of four Vedas; some learnt three and became known as *Trivedi/Tripathi/Tiwari*, literally meaning scholar of three Vedas; some specialised in two Vedas and became known as *Dwivedi/Dube/Dubey*, literally meaning scholar of two Vedas; and then some are known as *Mishra*, who as having mixed knowledge of different Vedas much like a comparative scholar. Those who specialised on Shukla Yajurveda, adopted *Shukla* as their title. The first word of the Rig Veda is “Agni” (1a. *agnim ilē purōhitam yajñāsya devām ṛtvijam | Hótāraṃ ratnadhatamam*|| Nootan & Holland 1994:1) so those who specialised in the Agnihotra ritual adopted it as their title, and so on. With all these aforementioned determinants, coupled with the ten main geographical distinctions of Brahmins since the middle ages, we find a proliferation of multifarious distinctions and identity markers, including professional differentiations and focussing on some specialized branch of knowledge among Brahmins, leading to a proliferation of the number of titles adopted by them. “Devata” signifies *Ishta* or personal deity; every family has their own personal deity, and there are fixed times of the year when the

personal deity is worshipped. Also, the personal deity is linked to the settlement of the primal ancestor (*mool/mul/root*) in a specific location. So often, personal deity, “devata” could overlap with “gram devata” or village deity, to identify the root village or location of ones ancestors. “Pada” is literally seat, it is the seat of learning or the seat/s of worship where certain set of villages and settlements are intrinsically linked. It could also be the case how ayachak/trikarma and all the other Brahmins support these seats of learning/worship financially and providing a regular portion of the agricultural produce during the harvest. In the pre-modern times, agriculture as the predominant source of revenue was the mainstay of support and identification with a particular seat of learning/worship. All the temples and temple-towns had their own sources revenue in this way to sustain ritual worship and promotion of arts and learning. It was a system of local economy and culture, for example the House of Hathwa (Hathwa Raj), is a Brahmin ruling family in the name of Thawe Mata, who is one of the many forms/incarnations of Goddess Durga, the mother goddess who is worshipped across the Indian subcontinent (Sharma 2012). “Shikha” is the tuft of hair, and there are specific ways of keeping it much like the performing of Gayatree Mantram or Sandhya Vandanam after Yajnopaveetam (sacred thread ceremony) for a Brahmin. Knotting the *shikha*, or keeping it open, or let it fall backwards or one specific case of Namboodiri Brahmins from South-West coast of India to let the shikha fall frontwards, “the tuft of hair is worn on the top or crown of the head (Raja 1910:632)” all have very specific symbolic-ritual meaning.

Sahajanand maintains that despite regional, occupational, linguistic and other differences emerging, the different groups/communities/caste-sub-castes of Brahmins such as Gaud, Tyagi, Saraswat, Mahiyal, Kanyakubja, Saryupareen, Maithil, Bhumihar, Utkal, Bengali, and the like and also Tailang, Dravida, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Gurjar and so on, maintain connubial and commensal ties with each other wherever two or more groups of Brahmins are more numerous and reside in adjoining regions making them all linked to each other in an organized order and web of relationships (Raghav S. Sharma 2003b:66–67). Although not all the groups of Brahmins are interrelated because not all are present in all the regions, but wherever one Brahmin group’s place of residence borders that of another group, these two groups of Brahmins are martially related to each other (Raghav S. Sharma 2003b:67). Sahajanand’s insights from his earlier travels in the early years of twentieth century when he had taken to *sanyas* (ascetic monkhood) and when he had travelled mostly on foot to all of northern, western, eastern and central India finds its way into Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar when he was writing about the history and culture of Brahmins (Hauser and Jha 2015:49-113). It is further bolstered by his field-work in 1915-1916 for the specific purpose of recording marriage relations among Brahmins. His travels to deep southern part of India does not appear

in his autobiography during his early years of sanyas or while conducting his field-study for writing “Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar”. His visit to the southern parts of India appear clearly when he joined politics and indeed while organizing peasants and addressing them during his Kisan Sabha phase. He was a very keen observer and had impeccable memory and we see signs of it from his earliest reflections when he wrote seven voluminous works including his autobiography “Mera Jivan Sangharsh” (My Life’s Struggle/The Struggle of my Life) all based on his memory while in prison from 1940-1942. Sahajanand records in the 20-page addendum which he added to his autobiography in mid-1946, more than four-years following his release from Hazaribagh Central jail in March 1942, and after six years of writing his memoir, “Apart from my memoir, *Mera Jivan Sangharsh* [My Life Struggle], I wrote six other books while in jail, namely, *Kisan Kaise Larte Hain?* [How do the Peasants Struggle?], *Kranti aur Samyukta Morcha* [Revolution and the United Front], *Kisan Sabha ke Sansmaran* [Reminiscences of the Kisan Sabha], *Khet Mazdoor* [Agricultural Labourers], *Jharkhand ke Kisan* [The Peasants of Jharkhand], and *Gita Hriday* [The Heart of the Gita]. Of these six, the first two have already been published and the remaining ones are ready for publication. Of these, *Gita Hriday* was completed just on the eve of my being released from jail (Hauser and Jha 2015:655-656).³³ It is relevant to point this out because in his autobiography/memoir “Mera Jivan Sangharsh” (My Life Struggle/The Struggle of my Life), Sahajanand provides his reflections of his earliest childhood memories, of the places he visited during his ascetic wanderings across most of India almost entirely on foot besides providing the history and context of writing “Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar” (The History of Brahmins) in graphic detail in this early phase of his life and before getting involved with Congress (1920), the Non-Cooperation Movement, and details of the Kisan Sabha phase from 1927 onwards, with the formation of the West Patna Kisan Sabha (Kumar 2021).

Based on his earlier experience of travelling on foot and his insight while conducting field-work in 1915-1916, he provides how, “In the districts of Farukhabad, Mainpuri and Itawa where Kanyakubjas and Sanadhyas live in adjoining and bordering villages, they have inter-marriages. Similarly, in the region of Sultanpur and Prayag, Kanyakubjas and Saryupareen inter-marry and

³³ The octogenarian Prof. Ram Chandra Pradhan, a political scientist, intellectual historian and prolific writer who taught at Ramjas College in Delhi University and hails from Dhakaich in Buxar district, Bihar, where he had heard as a small boy Swami Sahajanand Saraswati give one of his famous and last speeches. After having made a lucid translation of Sahajanand’s autobiography/memoir *Mera Jivan Sangharsh* (he has given it the title, “The Struggle of my Life” rather than “My Life Struggle” as given by Walter Hauser) and published by Oxford University Press, he has translated five more works in four volumes by Sahajanand published this year by Primus, including, *Reminiscences and Struggles of the Kisan Sabha* (Pradhan 2024a); *What Should Peasants Do?* (Pradhan 2024b); *Speeches* (Pradhan 2024c); and *Major Essays and Other Writings* (Pradhan 2024d).

inter-dine and the two together maintain connubial and commensal ties with Bhumihars; whereas in Mithila (north Bihar) Bhumihar and Maithils maintain connubial and commensal ties with each other. In Murshidabad, Jessore, etc. districts in Bengal, Jijhoutia, Kanyakubja and Bhumihar, etc. are settled who maintain marriage relations with each other. And these inter-marriages among different groups of Brahmins is a rule rather than an exception and there are brides and bridegrooms belonging to both corresponding groups of Brahmins (Sahajanand attests to the absence of any hypergamy/hypogamy among these different groups of Brahmins). Similarly, in Delhi, Saharanpur, Rohtak and adjoining districts, Tyagis and Grahi Gaudas maintain marriage relations with each other and in some districts of Punjab Saraswats and Mohiyals inter-marry (Raghav S. Sharma 2003b:67).”

The Kanyakubja Mahati Sabha, a leading Kanyakubja Brahmin community organization, and their numerous journals and articles by learned scholars, mentioned profusely in their proceedings of the nineteenth congress in Prayag (1926) and the twentieth congress in Lucknow (1927) by beginning their proceedings mentioning the name of Kashi Naresh as the king of all Brahmins (Raghav S. Sharma 2003b:67–69). Sahajanand records how the 19th Congress of the Kanyakubja Mahati Sabha (Kanyakubja Brahmin Organization) was held in Parayag (Allahabad) in the summer of 1926 which was presided by the King of Jaunpur, Shri Krishnaduttji Dubey, MLC (Member of Legislative Council), the Secretary elect was Raisaheb Pandit Rajnarayanji Mishra and the proceedings of the meeting was passed unanimously stating, “The society’s (Kanyakubja Brahmin society’s) disintegration and decline precipitates the importance in emphasizing the ideals of mutual affinity, unity and support which the Kanyakubja Mahati Sabha wants to promote and as a community organization it considers it important to stress upon these ideals of unity and makes further appeals to the community towards that purpose. [] A significant proportion among the groups/communities of - Saryupareen, Sanadhya, Jijhoutia, Bhumihar, Parvatiya, Bengali, Gujarati – Brahmins consider themselves to be Kanyakubjas. But due to the lack of explicit (apparent) relationship among these communities of Kanyakubja Brahmins, it is difficult to organize them into a unified community. Therefore, for the purposes of communal unity among different groups of Kanyakubja Brahmins through mutual affinity, unity and support; it is the solemn purpose and utmost responsibility of this community organization of Kanyakubja representatives to bring about societal unity among its different groups (across the country) (Raghav S. Sharma 2003b:68)”.

Sahajanand records, “The same organization’s (Kanyakubja Mahati Sabha) 20th convention held in the April of 1927 in Lucknow under the Presidentship of Pandit Umashankar Vajpayee, MA, LLB, Government Advocate, Allahabad passed a resolution on similar lines which was as follows:

- (a) This Kanyakubja Mahati Sabha, much like last year's congress/convention, expresses its deep happiness and a sense of satisfaction at finding Saryupareen and the like branches of the Kanyakubja Brahmins present at this convention. For the purposes and ideals of community organization and solidarity, and witnessing the current challenges, this organization prays and appeals for forming a unified, large and comprehensive organization of all Kanyakubjas including Sarupareen, Sanadhya, Jijhoutia, Bhumihar, Parvatiya, Bengali, and so on for mutual affinity, unity and support. We request the definite presence of all these different Kanyakubja Brahmin groups in our annual conventions and to take active part in its proceedings and to play an active role in sedulously implementing the proceedings of this Sabha.
- (b) This Kanyakubja Mahati Sabha also proposes to set-up a committee composed of the below mentioned five distinguished gentlemen, whose work would be to work towards consensus building based on suggestions on this issue (mutual affinity, unity and support among all the different Kanyakubjas including Sarupareen, Sanadhya, Jijhoutia, Bhumihar, Parvatiya, Bengali, and so on) and based on the suggestions and consensus gathered to develop such a Kanyakubja society which would work towards all the groundwork and all the varied means of achieving its above-mentioned objectives passed in its resolutions. The five members of the committee are as follows: (1) Honourable Pandit Gokaran Nathji Mishra – convener; (2) Pandit Ravishankarji Shukla Rai, Raipur; (3) Pandit Jaidyalji Awasthi, Lucknow; (4) Raisaheb Pandit Rajnarayanji Mishra, Allahabad; (5) Pandit Raghunandan Sharma (Kanpur) (Raghav S. Sharma 2003b:68).”

Sahajanand records how in this said convention (Kanyakubja Mahati Sabha's 20th convention held in the April of 1927 in Lucknow), the President Pandit Umashankar Vajpayee, MA, LLB, Government Advocate, Allahabad at page twelve of his address mentioned, “The same Kanyakubja Vrihat Vansha's (extensive groups of Kanyakubja Brahmins) many branches became Sanadhya, Pahadi, Jijhoutia, Saryupareen, Chattisgarhi, Bhumihar and many different Bengali Brahmins. With the passage of time, and the lack of proper means of transportation, differences in dressing and attire due to regional and provincial differences, differences in eating habits, etc. reasons led to the origin of differences among them and they (all these groups of Kanyakubja Brahmins) forgot about their origin as Kanyakubjas and the old unity became like a dream (Raghav S. Sharma 2003b:68-69).”

In his inaugural address (at the Kanyakubja Mahati Sabha annual convention of 1927 in Lucknow), Justice Gokarannath Mishra at page four of his address mentioned, “I cannot express in words the amount of happiness I had when in the last year's convention (in 1926) of the Kanyakubja Mahati Sabha in Prayag passing a resolution to unite and incorporate those Brahmin communities

who were Kanyakubjas in the past and expressed their interest to unite with their ancient root of Kanyakubjas. At this point in time, my express intention concerns Saryupareen, Jujhoutia and Bhumihaar Brahmins and mostly reside in the eastern and southern parts of this province (United Provinces now Uttar Pradesh) (Raghav S. Sharma 2003b:69).”

Sahajanand further records, “Under the editorship of Ayurvedacharya Pandit Satyanarayanji Mishra, the ‘Kanyakubja Hitkari’ (Kanyakubja Brahmin community journal), a monthly journal while discussing on the same issue of unity among all Kanyakubja branch of Brahmins in two of its issues of 1926 discussed - ‘Many times, from the platform of very big conventions, scholars have given lectures on the history of Brahmins which has proved without an iota of doubt how Saryupareen, Sanadhya, Jijhoutia, Bhumihaar, Parvatiya, Bangali, etc. Brahmins are all Kanyakubja Brahmins. Now the question which emerges is how there can be community solidarity among them. Our readers would not have forgotten how in the opportune occasion of the just concluded annual convention of the said Sabha (Kanyakubja Mahati Sabha) in Prayag where the resolution proposed by Shri Pandit Venkateshnarayanji Tiwari, MA and released and supported by Pandit Shivratanji Shukla, Pandit Jagannathji Shukla and Pandit Gurudayalji Tiwari was to this effect (of bringing solidarity among different branches of Kanyakubja Brahmins (November, p. 238.” “In accordance with the accepted resolution of ‘The Shri Kanyakubja Pratinidhi Sabha (delegates’ organization of the annual convention of Kanyakubja Mahati Sabha)’, it must invite all the different branches of Kanyakubja Brahmins, i.e., Saryupareen, Sanadhya, Bengali, Bhumihaar, etc. all Brahmins must be invited in the annual convention (of the Kanyakubja Mahati Sabha) (December, p. 269) (Raghav S. Sharma 2003b:69).”³⁴

³⁴ R.S. Khare records how Justice Gokarnnath Mishra played a prominent role in the Kanyakubja Community Organization which he records as Akhil Bhārtiya Sri Kanya-Kubja Pratinidhi Sabha, where “Pratinidhi” means representative, which Sahajanand records as “Mahati” or main, or Main Kanyakubja Community Organization, this is one obvious difference between a modern trained scholar like Khare who has stuck to the literal name as recorded, whereas Sahajanand refers to its substance and purpose which was that of being the “main” community organization for Kanyakubja Brahmins; both point to the annual convention of the “main” Sabha being held in Lucknow in 1927 (Khare 1970:33,n.2). One must also keep into account how Khare is doing his fieldwork and recording his accounts nearly half-a-century after Sahajanand. Sahajanand’s record of the other prominent Kanyakubja Brahmin distinguished scholars and members of the community and indeed its organization like Justice Gokarnnath Mishra, Pt. Gurudayal Tiwari Raja Shri Krishna Dutt Dubey, Rai Bahadur Raj Narain Mishra, Pt. Ravishankar Shukla (who later became the first Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh) is confirmed by Khare half-a-century later. What Khare has not done is to engage discursively with the proceedings of the Kanyakubja Brahmin Sabha and its journals on who is a Kanyakubja, what all Brahmin groups constitute as part of Kanyakubja, what is its history and so on, or to refer to Sahajanand’s “Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar” where he had discursively engaged with the proceedings of the Kanyakubja Sabha some fifty years ahead of Khare (Khare 1970).

In the details of as many as 360 genealogical records (*Kanyakubja Vanshawali*) of Kanyakubja Brahmins itself belonging to the Kashyap *gotra* with titles of Dube (Dubey/Dwivedi), Tiwari (Tiwary/Trivedi), Awasthi, Dixit (Dikshit), Agnihotri and Mishra are held to be descendants of Bhumihar Brahmins (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:354). Bhumihar Brahmins are given a very high status by Kanyakubja Brahmins because the primal ancestor (*mool purush*) of Kashyap *gotra* Kanyakubja Brahmins have descended from Bhumihar Brahmins; the name of the primal ancestor is Anantram and his son's name was Garbhu from whose descendants they have emerged (Raghav S. Sharma 2003b:97). They were from a place called Madarpur in Kanpur and its record is found in Kanyakubja genealogical records and has been discussed at length in Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar (Raghav S. Sharma 2003b:97-98). The Kashyap *Gotra* Kanyakubja Brahmins belong to Khatkul or the higher Uttama (among the highest group of Kanyakubja Brahmins) among the Kulin (literally cultured/cultivated) cluster of six *gotras* (Khare 1970:96-97) and it is these Kulin Kanyakubja Brahmins who emigrated to the rest of the country, including Bengal. It is then reasonable to conclude how "the highest of the high" Kashyap *gotra* Kanyakubja Brahmins, not just in Uttar Pradesh or Bihar but also in Bengal, Odisha, Assam and the rest of the country have Babhan/Bhumihar Brahmin ancestry. Therefore, Kanyakubja Brahmins and Bhumihar Brahmins share the same 'bodily substance'.³⁵ When, their 'occupational substance' changed, a Bhumihar Brahmin became a Kanyakubja Brahmin and a Kanyakubja Brahmin became a Bhumihar Brahmin accordingly (Inden 1976:11-22). On the issue of change of titles based on profession and specialization, but without studying the genealogical records in this article³⁶, R.S. Khare writes:

There is strong evidence that *aspads* (titles or positions based on scholarship and/or specific ritualistic practice) changed as soon as any ancestor in the lineage got name and fame by performing a particular type of sacrifice or obtaining special adeptness in Sanskritic texts. Bajpai shows through his genealogy that his ancestors held the titles of Pāthak, Avasthi, Dixit, and Bajpai successively on account of different sacrifices that they performed. At the present time, the *aspad* as such no longer signifies anything except that it is a common surname suffixed as an easy naming device. It is very common in the genealogies. One *gotra* may have more than one *aspad*, and, conversely, one *aspad* may be found in different *gotras*. For matrimonial alliances, the one principle that is strictly adhered to is the avoidance of

³⁵ Ronald Inden writes quite interestingly and convincingly on the concept of 'shared bodily substance', including among other defining features, the 'worship substance', the 'territorial substance' and the 'occupational substance' (1976:11-22). On the concept of rank dynamics, among Brahmins, more particularly Maithil Brahmins, but the structure of the principle of rank is translatable to Pachchima Brahmins (Bhumihar Brahmins) and also to Kanyakubja Brahmins in general (Brown 1983:49-51).

³⁶ Khare has not referred to the proceedings and unanimous resolutions of the Kanyakubja Mahati Sabha, a leading Kanyakubja Brahmin community organization since colonial times, besides he has failed to mention the Bhumihar Brahmin origin of Kashyap-*gotra* Kanyakubja Brahmins as per their own genealogical records.

gotra-endogamy so that two families belonging to the same *aspada* may intermarry if their *gotras* are different, but even those belonging to different *aspada* may not, if their *gotra* is the same (Khare 1960:357–358)

The Saryupareen Brahmin organizations, journals and articles also celebrated and hailed Kashi Naresh as the most exalted and the first among Saryupareen Brahmins. The president of the Saryupareen Brahmin (who are considered Yachak Brahmins) Sabha of Kashi (Varanasi), a resident of Bhadaini, Pandit Vijayanand Tripathi, while writing on the history of the Saryupareen Brahmins titled “Panktipawan Parichay” named Maharajidhiraj Dwijraj Shrimat Prabhunaryan Singh Kashi Naresh, who is an Ayachak Gautam Gotra Bhumihar Brahmin, as the first famous Saryupareen Brahmin resident of Kashi (Raghu S. Sharma 2003a:353), thus vindicating Sahajanand’s view of Yachak/Ayachak as merely a perfunctory differentiation and discrediting Kashiraj’s view advocating discontinuance of marriage between Yachak and Ayachak Brahmins.

This sub-chapter enlists how different Brahmin community organizations viewed themselves and aspired to order their society during colonialism and points to the organic unity among different Brahmin caste-communities as against the colonial ordering of differentiation, subjugation and domination.

2.1. Critique of Dumont’s views on marriage relations among North Indian Brahmins in light of “Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar”

While discussing marriage relations among Brahmins it is important to bring Louis Dumont into the debate, who was perhaps the most influential Western thinker who wrote on Indian society in the second half of the twentieth century, casting his shadow on all debates in sociology, anthropology and culture studies ever since (Khare 2006). Much as India is a complex and plural society, so should its intellectual enquiry be pluralistic (Madan 2011).³⁷ He had studied in greater detail the Brahmins of Southern India and he was right in assessing the nature and structure of the ordering of Brahmin social life across the Indian sub-continent including in the nature of marriage alliances (Dumont 1966).³⁸ Brahmins are thus a ‘national caste’, despite having many castes and sub-castes within them, and despite several millennia of migration, differentiation and settlements, share some similarities amongst themselves. While discussing similarities, Dumont took the example of Saryupareen Brahmins from Gorakhpur district in particular. Though it is rather surprising how he failed to even mention the marriage relations of Kashi Naresh’s family as the most prominent

³⁷ This aspect will be addressed more comprehensively in an ongoing project to be published subsequently.

³⁸ I would like to sincerely thank Roland Hardenberg to provide me a copy of this article by Louis Dumont which was not readily available.

example of a Brahmin king and social and cultural leader while discussing marriage relations among Saryupareen Brahmins.³⁹ In his zeal for a structuralist understanding of Brahmins as a social group at the apex of its society as part of *homo hierarchichus*, a trait he invariably inherited from his other European forebears, but specially so among his contemporary French sociologists (Steinmetz 2023) studying Indian society, despite being a Sanskritist, he fell into the same loop of superiority of European social sciences in substance and methodology, and thus committed some of the same epistemic violence (Madan: 2006a, 2006b; see pp. 9 and 11 above and the debates below).

There are some finer problematic points in Dumont's article on marriage relations in North Indian Brahmins. He makes a decisive statement at the very beginning of his piece how the generally held view of "village exogamy" being more extant among North Indian Brahmins is not as "general" as it is made out to be (Dumont 1966:90) – he is incorrect because village exogamy is the general norm among North Indian Brahmins with rare exceptions only when Brahmins of different *mool* and also different *gotra* live in the same village (terms explained above). And, therefore, they cannot be *sapinda* or from the same family line for seven generations from the agnatic side and five generations from the matrilineal side (*pinda* is the rice-ball offered to departed ancestors, *sapinda* means having the same ancestors to whom you are obliged/ could offer rice-balls).⁴⁰ *Mool* and *gotra* exogamy is a practice among Pachchima Brahmins (Bhumihar Brahmins) and Maithil Brahmins of Bihar. But, Kashi Naresh is a Bhumihar Brahmin, and claimed as the king of all sub-groups of Brahmins including Saryupareens, and Dumont did not study the concept of *mool* thus casting a doubt on his results.

Secondly, Dumont writes that '[d]etailed descriptions of kinship in North India are scarce'.⁴¹ – He just had to look into the *panji-prabandh* of Maithil Brahmins which is the most extant genealogical record in all of India and not just North India to realise the problem with his sweeping assertion. *Panji-prabandh* of Maithil Brahmins is perhaps the most complex and rigorous genealogical record maintained by any community anywhere in the world for close to seven centuries (Brown 1988). It is rather surprising how it escaped the attention of Dumont. Besides, every other Brahmin group, if they are from the higher and more prestigious family background maintain genealogical records in great detail. Additionally, Bhumihar Brahmins who had the maximum land ownership

³⁹ He did field research in Gorakhpur district which is not far from Varanasi.

⁴⁰ To resolve the riddle of *sapinda*, both *gotra* and, even more importantly, *mool* has to be taken into account. More than the Kanyakubja Brahmins or Saryupareen Brahmins, Bhumihar Brahmins have exactly the same structure like the Maithil Brahmins, which is why Maithil Brahmin scholars like Mahamahopadhyaya Acharya Tareneesh Jha, among so many other Maithil Brahmin scholars consider Bhumihar Brahmin themselves to be another branch of Maithil Brahmins. See Brown (1983), Khare (1960), Raghav S. Sharma (2003).

⁴¹ Dumont (1966:90). See Brown (1983).

in the state of Bihar and significant ownership in eastern Uttar Pradesh, with land grants in perpetuity and acknowledged as such in the Mughal Persian records, maintain their genealogical records in great detail, not just to maintain the accepted marriage system among illustrious Brahmins to avoid marriage among sa-gotra, sa-pinda, or sa-mool but also to settle their property disputes.⁴²

Thirdly, among Maithil Brahmins and Bhumihar Brahmins, hypergamy is not particularly favoured because it does not meet the requirement of *kul* or *khandan* (prestigious/illustrious family with family prestige), but marriage among co-equals is preferred to maintain the 'superior bodily substance' which includes 'worship substance, territorial substance and occupational substance' (Inden 1976:11–22, Brown 1983:49–51). Therefore, the likelihood of the marriage of a Srotriya and Yogya Maithil Brahmin among each other and with Pachchima Brahmins both as a rule and as a matter of practice was higher as Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar attests to (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:308-321) rather than with Jaibar Maithils who are more numerous but considered lower in the hierarchy because of not following the Brahmanical stricture of strict spiritual discipline with a pursuit of scholarship (Brown 1983).

Fourthly, Dumont's treatment of 'pāo pūjā'⁴³, as necessarily because of a hypergamous relation, for example, is questionable (Dumont 1966:104–108). He has turned a ritualistic practice into a systemic rule of superiority and inferiority which is arbitrary. For example, among Maithil Brahmins and Bhumihar Brahmins of North India, 'pāo pūjā' is a ritual practice and not a systemic structural rule conveying 'hypergamy' because parallel marriages could be arranged from both sides who would thus be obliged to conduct 'pāo pūjā'. Besides, Dumont does not provide any specific instances of 'pāo pūjā' being conducted among Saryupareen Brahmins inter-se because of hypergamy, who are the subject of his study. There is no sampling provided and there is no record of the exact families with their addresses and genealogies as provided by Sahajanand in Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar.

Fifthly, another related problem in Dumont's particular 1966 article is his reliance still on some of the European or British ethnographic sources of the nineteenth century based on which imprecise, unstructured and in our example faulty caste censuses were conducted. Much unlike 'native' scholars who would be very erudite in the *shastras* (classical scholarship of Sanskrit texts) as well as societal knowledge, these ethnographers often had no specialized training, Indian or western, and no scholarship worth the name in the *shastras* or knowledge of Indian languages and society, to be in a position to comment upon it, which is what explains the obvious errors in their caste census enterprise from

⁴² See Yang (1989, 1999), Bayly (2012), Ansari (2019), Khan (2022), Qureshi & Pathak (2024).

⁴³ It is the ritual washing of feet of the prospective groom before solemnizing the marriage. The bridegroom is called pāhun/mehmān/guest and is honoured as an embodiment of Gods along with mother, father and Guru.

1860s until 1931 (Samarendra, 2008, 2011). If, for a change some British official had some academic background, he was not supposed to and often did not have any redeeming view of Indian religions, societies and culture. At any rate these British officials whom Dumont quotes did not have to have any specialized training in the rich history and culture of India. For nearly a century they were fed on the discredited and polemical work of James Mill’s “History of India” (as a compulsory reading for Indian Civil Service examinations) and followed its discredited methodology and clearly obnoxious views in everything Indian they were supposed to evaluate and comment upon (these were precisely the officials who became ethnographers and conducted caste surveys and censuses reeking of racist-colonial tropes who are then cited as “authorities” and referred in sociological writings including those of Dumont).⁴⁴ Otherwise, these officials were dependent upon unnamed, unacknowledged ‘native informants’ whose qualifications, training or scholarship one is not certain of. In case if this is the methodology or historical architecture of research in European Sociological-anthropological works then it requires serious reassessment (Steinmetz 2023).

2.2. Critique of Panji-Prabandha the practice of genealogical record-keeping among Maithil Brahmins

Much unlike social and cultural anthropologists writing in the English language and some Maithil Brahmin scholars making very positive assessments of the Panji-Prabandha, Swami Sahajanand Saraswati is very critical of it. Genealogical records of Brahmins do exist, which is especially relevant for property rights like succession and partition done by metes and bounds under Hindu law (Mulla 2024, Menski 2009). Without genealogical records, written or oral, succession and partition cannot be determined. But Panji-Prabandha became an exclusive domain of Panjekar Maithil Brahmins who often manipulated the records to suit their own interests according to Swamiji. It is also interesting to note how such critical insight are coming from a “native scholar” and perhaps much before such readings done by European anthropologists (Evans-Pritchard or Fortes reached such conclusions about manipulation of genealogical records later than Sahajanand).

Swamiji records two kinds of marriage practices among Maithil Brahmins. The first one being ‘marriage relations congregation’ (*vivah sambandhini sabha*) at Saurath Sabha (near Madhubani in Bihar) where brides were sold to the

⁴⁴ See Ganguly (2018). This remarkable work is an extremely important addition to understand the intellectual history of colonialism in India, and the damning role of James Mill in it, among other important figures. Other recent works, among others, which upend colonial intellectual history of India include Balangadhara (2012), De Roover and Rao (2022) and Rao (2022).

highest bidders and marriages are given sanction by the Panjikars (genealogical record-keepers) who kept genealogical records of Maithil Brahmin families (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:309–310). This marriage practice was criticized by Mithila Mihir, a Maithili periodical run by the Maharaja of Darbhanga himself apart from being criticized in another periodical, “Mithila Mod” and condemned by the Maithil Brahmin Mahasabha at Bhagalpur (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:309–310). Swami Sahajanand Saraswati is very critical of this practice as the Panjikars were very corrupt and would record names of grooms from dubious backgrounds or even by non-Brahmanical castes in their records if they received huge sums of money and give sanction to such marriages (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:309–310). Swamiji refers to the section of ‘old-fashioned’ Maithils who take great pride in the Panji-Prabandha and marriage relations based on it as ‘as obstinate as a mule’ (*likh ka fakir*) and such horrible marriage practice was prevalent only among the in-distinguished and poorer folks among Maithil Brahmins.⁴⁵ The second kind of marriage practiced among the distinguished, rich and landed (*zamindar*) Maithil Brahmins is popularly called ‘*tilakowwa vivah*’: marriage solemnised by proper consultation, background check and with payment of gifts much like among the Brahmins of United Provinces (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:310). It is this sort of marriage which is solemnised by Maithil Brahmins with the Pachchima Brahmins or Bhumihar Brahmins (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:310). There cannot be any kind of deception and fraud in this second kind of marriage as both sides are distinguished and landed and personally approach for marriage relations rather than being manipulated by the Panjikars (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:310). Swamiji adds later once again how amongst ‘fake Maithils’ marriages are solemnised on the spot in the marriage *sabhas* like the Saurath Sabha (Brown 1983:57; infra n.29) with the ‘sanction’ of Panjikars without prior knowledge of family details, circumstances and background, whereas in ‘*tilakowwa vivah*’/‘*tilakowwa*’ marriages solemnised among Maithil and Bhumihar (Pacchima) Brahmins is arranged only after visiting the house of prospective brides and staying in their houses for a few days (when entire family trees, common connections, backgrounds are carefully examined) before making the final decision of actually arranging the marriage or not (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:313). Besides among Maithil and Bhumihar (Pacchima) Brahmins there are marriages solemnised among brides

⁴⁵ Raghav S. Sharma (2003:309–310). There are some Maithil Brahmin scholars who have written on Panji-Prabandha and who also associate with this cultural practice with pride. See U.N. Jha (1980), R. Jha (n.d.). On the history and cultural history of Mithila in North Bihar, including Panji-Prabandha, see Thakur (1956), R. Chaudhary (1976), I.K. Chaudhary (1988). On the history of origin of Maithil Brahmins in medieval times, an excellent recent PhD submitted by Anshuman Pandey (2014) in the University of Michigan is worth referring. Kailash Chandra Jha points to Panji Prabandh as a dying system today and Saurath Sabha as completely dead. I would like to thank him for bringing this fact to light in the email communication on Oct. 22, 2024.

and grooms coming from both the Brahmin sub-groups.⁴⁶ By ‘*tilakowwa vivah*’ or ‘*tilakowwa*’ marriages, Swami Sahajanand Saraswati is referring to *Brahma vivah* marriages, where individual families of prospective bride and groom find out all the details of the corresponding family and then solemnise the marriage with exchange of (movable) gifts from the bride’s family to the groom’s family as her personal property (*stridhan*).⁴⁷

Panji-prabandha/genealogical records are, therefore, just one source of understanding the social life of Brahmins of Mithila. In fairness to the system, “corruption” through manipulation could be one of the weaknesses of Panji-prabandha like in any other system as highlighted by Swami Sahajanand Saraswati in the early years of twentieth-century but the way the panji-prabandh was structured, practiced and implemented over seven centuries is a unique and remarkable achievement in keeping genealogical records anywhere (Brown 1988; see the discussion below). On the idea of genealogical history and genealogies used for political and cultural justification, Witzel correctly assesses it, “In addition, it can safely be said that virtually no such genealogy, in India or elsewhere, is free from tinkering, interpolation etc. Instead, they have frequently been used to bolster the claims of minor local chiefs and kings to a high rank, and if no such prestigious link was in sight, it has been manufactured. [...] Even if one subsumes that they were originally based on correct lineage lists, they have been used from early on, for “secondary justification” of origin and the social prestige going with it. [...] In the Purânas these pedigrees (*vamça*) have been systematized as to trace back every local dynasty of the subcontinent to the mythical Sun (*Sûryavamça*) or the Moon (*Candravamça*) lineages. Even newcomers, such as the Huns, or the local dynasties of Nepal or Kashmir, simply ‘must’ go back to the beginning of mankind, or, at least to a well known ancient dynasty (Witzel 1990:3-4).”

The social fact of marital relations between Maithil Brahmins and Bhumihar Brahmins to show how they are one and the same Brahmins needs to be assessed. This sub-chapter showed the problems with genealogical records, social fact of marriage relations and the incongruence between text/law/norms on the one hand and practice/procedure on the other.

⁴⁶ Raghav S. Sharma (2003:313). Maybe Swamiji is discrediting any practice of hypergamy with the common misperception of how grooms came necessarily from Maithil Brahmin backgrounds.

⁴⁷ On the different kinds of Hindu marriages, see Pandey (2013). On Hindu law, see Menski (2009), Francavilla (2006). The most encyclopaedic and unparalleled work in the modern world in English is Kane (2022).

2.3. Marriage relations among Bhumihar Brahmins and Maithil Brahmins

Swami Sahajanand Saraswati through his fieldwork records intermarriage among hundreds of families of Bhumihar Brahmins (Pachchima Brahmins) and Maithil Brahmins. He says

Similarly, 15–20 kos [45 to 60 kilometres] North and South and 20–22 kos [60 to 66 kilometres] East and West from Dalsinghsarai station, generally in Saraisa Pargana and in its adjoining regions, thousands of Maithil Brahmins and Pachchima Brahmins (Babhans/Bhumihar Brahmins) are related. Not all can be listed out here.⁴⁸

Sahajanand is meticulous with his details by listing out the names of the bride's family and the groom's family, with their *gotra*, *mool* (both together include the *sapinda*), village (*gram*), *kul*, *khandan*, and even district, *pargana* (villages grouped together as an administrative and sometimes revenue unit within a district) and sometimes even closest railway stations. These are all instances of *Brahma vivah* marriages or what he refers to as '*tilakowwa vivah*' or '*tilakowwa*' marriages. In these marriages, both Maithil Brahmins and Bhumihar Brahmins are giving and receiving daughters in marriage. Since these are instances of *Brahma vivah*, it is most likely that parties of both sides would be from distinguished backgrounds and also well-off. Swamiji records instances of marriage between Bhumihar Brahmins and the highest Maithil Brahmins of Srotriya and Yogya backgrounds including none other than the Maharaja of Darbhanga as well as highly respected Maithil Brahmin scholars like Mahamahopadhyaya Shrikrishna Singh Thakur (Raghav S. Sharma 2003:321). Many of the Bhumihar Brahmin zamindaris in Mithila, including that of the ancestors of Pandit Ramnandan Mishra, were acquired or settled during the period of Brahmin Khandavala dynasty ruling in Mithila; much like many Maithil, Saryupareen and Kanyakubja Brahmins acquired huge land-ownerships during the Bhumihar Brahmin ruling dynasty in Bettiah. It is also likely that marriage between Bhumihar Brahmins and the 'lowly' (both ritualistically and often economically) Jaibar Maithils would have been less frequent. Bhumihar Brahmins, being the richest *jati*-group (*jati* is usually transliterated as caste, but it is a more complex term than that, See: Beteille 1966, 1996; Srinivas 2002a; Samarendra, 2008, 2011) in the province of Bihar in the early twentieth century in which Sahajanand is recording his field work, would avoid relating with the lesser Jaibars (lowest sub-category of Maithil Brahmins). The lowly Maithil Brahmins would

⁴⁸ Raghav S. Sharma (2003:317). Vijay Kumar Chaudhary, a prominent political leader in Bihar today, hailing from Pachchima (Bhumihar) Brahmin family having regular marital relations with both Maithil Brahmins and Bhumihar Brahmins, is characterised as Dogamia Brahmin, making him win elections by getting votes of both Bhumihar Brahmins and Maithil Brahmins as a concrete example of horizontal solidarity among Brahmins (Jaleel 2015).

generally go to the marriage market in Saurath Sabha.⁴⁹ Though, both being Brahmins, instances of marriages might still be solemnised between illustrious Bhumihar Brahmins and less distinguished Jaibar Maithil Brahmins, much like marriages between Srotriya and Yogya Maithil Brahmins on the one hand and Jaibar Maithil Brahmins on the other.⁵⁰

The way the concept of rank is structured among Maithil Brahmins, it discourages a Srotriya or a Yogya or a Panjibaddh Maithil to marry a girl from a lower-ranked Maithil Brahmin like the Jaibars (Brown 1988). The moment a Srotriya marries a Jaibar, not just him but the whole family loses rank and it would take another seven generations of marrying into Srotriya or Yogya Maithils to improve the rank of the “fallen” Srotriya but it would lead to the simultaneous decline of rank of other Srotriya Maithil Brahmins who would marry into this “fallen” or “degraded” Srotriya. Therefore, the number of Srotriyas and Yogyas keep on declining and over the centuries it has required reordering being constituted by the Maharaja of Darbhanga who is the not just the King of Darbhanga but due to “his superior Srotriya blood; he was the purest of the pure, the highest of the high. He was revered as king, and doubly revered as Srotriya (Brown 1988:768)”. This intermixing of ranks led to seven classes (*shrenis*) of Srotriyas called Srotriya Laukits who were then ranked and grouped based on working on the genealogical records by the panjikars at the behest of Maharaja Rameshwar Singh in 1897 (Brown 1988:768). In addition to Laukits, another category of Bans (good lineage) emerged among Maithil Brahmins due to the marriage of Srotriya men with Yogya or Jaibar girls (Brown 1988:766-767). It is noteworthy that it is this family of the “purest of the pure, the highest of the high” which is maritally related to Pachchima/Bhumihar Brahmins (see Appendix I) along with other Srotriya, Yogya and Panjibaddh Maithil Brahmins. Therefore, Babhan/Pachchima/Bhumihar Brahmins are equal in rank to the Srotriya/Yogya/Panjibaddh Maithil Brahmins of North Bihar making marriage relations acceptable to both without either one losing rank or social esteem. Though marriage with Jaibar Maithil Brahmin is not ruled out either for Srotriya/Yogya/Panjibaddh Maithil Brahmins or for Babhan/Pachchima/Bhumihar Brahmins. The Uttirn Panji containing all the thirty-two male ancestors from mother’s side and all the thirty-two male ancestors from the father’s side, in total sixty-four male ancestors for each individual Srotriya Maithil for seven generations backward,

⁴⁹ “[...]there is a unique institution in Mithila, the Saurath Sabha, a kind of fair whose sole purpose is to bring together Brahmins from all over Mithila to negotiate marriages for their sons and daughters, a fine solution to the vexations search which every upwardly mobile father undertakes as his daughter comes of age (Brown 1983:57).”

⁵⁰ Brown (1983). On the history and culture of Maithil Brahmins, an excellent work has been done by Anshuman Pandey (Pandey 2014).

can provide us with a detailed account of marriages between Srotriya Maithil Brahmins and Bhumihar Brahmins (Brown 1988:763-764).

These two groups of Maithil/Bhumihar Brahmins are like two sides of the same coin, which is why a Maithil Brahmin litterateur and socialist scitivist like Sureshwar Jha records how Rashtrakavi Ramdhari Singh Dinkar had Maithil Brahmin roots even though he is counted as a Bhumihar Brahmin today (S. Jha 2014). Similarly, the Bhumihar Brahmins of Subhai-Jamalpur village were Maithil Brahmins earlier and now counted as Bhumihar Brahmins with the great leader of India's struggle for independence, Shri Basawon Singh hailing from the same village (G. Sharma 2022). Chandra Prakash Narayan Sinha, younger son of Gandhian and leading Congress leader Ram Charitra Singh from Bihat from Begusarai District records in his work how their ancestors were Maithil Brahmins, though now they are counted as Bhumihar Brahmins (Sinha 2010).⁵¹

2.4. Dogamia Brahmins

The Brahmins of North Bihar who solemnise marriages specifically between Pachchima (Bhumihar) Brahmins and Maithil Brahmins are also referred to as Dogamia Babhans or Dogamia Brahmins, literally meaning two Brahmins. Bhumihar Brahmins from other parts of Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh as well as Maithil Brahmins solemnise marriage with Dogamia Brahmins from this region of North Bihar and are therefore related with each other in a more rooted way than they are ready to admit. Sahajanand writes, "The word "dogamiya" has come into common use describing those involved in this kind of two sided marriage alliance between Bhumihars and Maithils' (Hauser and Jha 2015:161). Some Maithil Brahmins made superior posturing of Mithila culture and language whereas Bhumihar Brahmins emphasized on their landed wealth and grandeur. Facts based on field work by Swami Sahajanand attest to their being from the same group of Brahmins which has also been confirmed by the experience of Walter Hauser and Kailash Chandra Jha (Hauser and Jha 2015:179). Besides, sometimes Dogamias are shown to be Maithils and on other occasions are shown to be Bhumihars, and thus Dogamias are belonging to both, and finally and more conclusively both Bhumihars and Maithils are belonging to

⁵¹ Bihat is a very prominent Bhumihar Brahmin village in the district of Begusarai, with Ram Charitra Singh being one of the tallest leaders from the Congress Party in Bihar hailing from it. He was a Gandhian and active in India's struggle for independence and was prominent member of the provincial cabinet from 1937 to 1939 as well as between 1946 and 1957. His elder son Chandrashekhar Singh was a prominent leader of the Communist Party of India whereas his younger son Chandra Prakash Narayan Sinha was a social worker and wrote some highly original works (Sinha 2010). The illustrious writer and former Home Secretary of India and Governor of Sikkim Balmiki Prasad Singh also hails from this village.

each other.⁵² The Anthropological Survey of India records Dogamia Brahmans as those Bhumihaar Brahmans who practice extensive marital relations with Maithil Brahmans (Singh 1998:855). The *Kalyani Kosh*, a relatively recent Maithili dictionary edited by Pandit Govind Jha dubiously and incorrectly mentions “Dogamia” as a term meaning, “having marital relations in two caste groups; continuing for two generations” (Darbhanga: Maharajadhiraj Kameshwar Singh Kalyani Foundation, 1999, p. 319, cf. Hauser and Jha 2015:179). This is deliberately misleading as only Pachchima/Bhumihaar Brahmins and Maithil Brahmins inter-marry very commonly for two or more generations to constitute the Dogamia Brahmin community. No two different caste groups are known to inter-marry for two generations in Bihar or anywhere else in the country. Pandit Govind Jha did not know this or deliberately misrepresented it. This lexicographical error necessitates correction in its new edition. Though to his credit, and correctly so, Pandit Govind Jha translates *Babhan*, a term commonly used to refer to Bhumihaar/Pachchima Brahmins as “Brahman, belonging to the priestly class (Jha 1999:456)”. Inter-marriage between any two caste groups, whether *anuloma* (endogamous) which was occasional, or *pratiloma* (exogamous) which was rare, was prohibited by scriptural and religious sanction in early medieval texts, one of the reasons being that the discharge of debt to ancestors equal marriage was necessary (Yadava 1973:66-68; Sharma 2001:52). Mixed-caste marriages are often held to be the origin of Chandalas/Çaṇḍālas, the so-called untouchables (Yadava 1973; Sharma 2001; Jha 2018).

On this concealment and even misrepresentation by a section of Maithils, is recorded by Swami Sahajanand Saraswati while doing field-work for his book *Bhumihaar Brahmin Parichay* from the second half of 1915, “I do not know why, but efforts were made among the Maithils to conceal these cross caste relationships. Inevitably this made our task more difficult, but by our persistent efforts we were able to identify an elaborate network of marriage connections between Maithil and Bhumihaar Brahmans. We also uncovered a resolution of the Maithil Mahasabha recommending that these kinds of marriage connections should be ended. This confirms that such relationships existed, otherwise why should there be efforts to stop them? We found this web of marriage relationships to occur throughout Maithil society, from the Maharaja of Darbhanga at the top, to other Shrotriyas, as well as to Yogyas, and other categories of Maithils. And beyond this, we found in Raghunathpur Pataur (Darbhanga) more than a score of letters in which the Maharaja of Darbhanga and his *gotiyas* (close relatives belonging to the same gotra) had addressed Bhumihaar Brahmans with the salutation *namaskar*, a practice that was and still is used among Brahmans (Hauser with Jha 2015:168).”

⁵² On the history of Maithil Brahmans, see Pandey (2014). Other recent works on the history and culture of Mithila with which the origin and fate of Maithil Brahmans is intrinsically linked, include Mishra *et al.* (2015), Rorabacher (2016), M.K. Jha (2017), P. Jha (2018).

2.5. Marriage relations among Bhumihar Brahmins and Saryupareen Brahmins

Swamiji has also recorded thousands of marriages between Bhumihar Brahmins and Saryupareen Brahmins (and also between Bhumihar Brahmins and Kanyakubja Brahmins). He has made a detailed table with all the details of the two sides of marriage relations including *gotra*, *mool*, *gram*, *pargana*, etc. It is quite remarkable to see marriage relations shown in a tabular form much before it being in vogue by ‘modern’ researchers.⁵³ There are higher instances of recorded marriages by Sahajanand where Saryupareen Brahmins are daughter givers to Bhumihar Brahmins of eastern Uttar Pradesh (See Appendix II & III). Though, both Brahmin communities gave and received daughters in marriage, again not fitting into the analysis of *pāō pūjā* by Dumont (Dumont 1966:104–108).

2.6. Debate in the journal *Bharat Mitra*, Calcutta, 1916

Swamiji provides the authority of a Maithil Brahmin scholar named Paramhans Mahopadeshak who recorded marriage relations in particular between Maithil Brahmins and Bhumihar Brahmins in his short monograph “Brahmin Sam-bandh [Marriage relations among Brahmins]”, apart from mentioning (on page 4 of his monograph) how before the emergence of *panji*, Maithil, Kanyakubj, Sarvariya and Pachchima Brahmins intermarried (Raghav S. Sharma 2003:309). Paramhans Mahopadeshak’s monograph became the reason for an editorial article in the journal *Bharatmitra*,⁵⁴ published from Calcutta (now Kolkata) on 11 January 1916 pointing at connubial relations among Bhumihar Brahmins and Maithil Brahmins followed by a critical letter to the editor by a Maithil Brahmin Jiwach Mishra from Darbhanga, which was then followed by an editorial response and clarification on 25 January 1916 (Raghav S. Sharma 2003:310–311). In the editorial response of 25 January, the editor pointed out how the article in question is based on the work of Paramhans Mahopadeshak who had actually sent his book on marriage relations between Bhumihar Brahmins and Maithil Brahmins to be published by them which they could not then publish (Raghav S. Sharma 2003:311). Besides, they had received additional testimony of marriage relations among Maithils and Bhumihars by a Maithil Vaishnav to the journal (Raghav S. Sharma 2003:311). The editor suggested to Jiwach Mishra to research carefully and provide authorities and if he still felt

⁵³ A selection of marriage relations in tabular form and detailed list of marriage relations as recorded in *Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar* among different sub-castes/sections of Brahmins is provided in the Annexures below.

⁵⁴ *Bharatmitra* was a leading journal in the Hindi language started in Calcutta in 1877.

the gist of the article incorrect, they were ready to amend their article (Raghav S. Sharma 2003:311). Jiwach Mishra never came back with a response – whether to the clarification by the editor or the few affirmative letters to the editor published subsequently (Raghav S. Sharma 2003:311).

After the editorial clarification, there was another letter to the editor on 28 January 1916 by a Bhumihar Brahmin named Sriyut Aditya Narayan Singh from Mokama stating how Bhumihar Brahmins and Maithil Brahmins did not just marry each other but with increase or decrease in wealth Maithils became Bhumihars and Bhumihars became Maithils (Raghav S. Sharma 2003:311). To prove his point he was ready to take anyone for a field study or survey on the ground and he was ready to hear a response from Jiwach Mishra which apparently he never received (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:311).

Finally, the debate of the existence of marriage relations between illustrious Maithil Brahmins and Bhumihar Brahmins was put to rest by Pandit Shyam-narayan Sharma of Kashi in his article of 8 February 1916 in the edited issue of the journal Bhumihar Brahmin journal stating,

The insinuations of Mr. Jiwach Mishra that only dubious Maithils marry Bhumihar Brahmins is unfounded because otherwise their own Maithil Brahmin Mahasabha in its Bha-galpur Convention of 1911 would not have proposed for its discontinuance. A select committee for executing such discontinuance would not have been set up? Otherwise, their (Maithil Brahmin's) own journal 'Mithila Mihir' on its issue of April 29 in the same year of 1911 would not have written how 'Dubious Maithils practiced or still practice bride-selling to solemnise marriages at the famous Saurath Sabha. On the other hand, marriage relations with Bhumihar Brahmins is solemnised on the basis of Tilak/dowry much like the marriage practice in United Provinces and elsewhere which Maithils commonly refer to as "*Tilakowwa Vivah*" (Raghav S. Sharma 2003:311–312).

Therefore, the debate around marriage relations between Bhumihar Brahmins and Maithil Brahmins as co-equal Brahmins was settled positively and decidedly.

3. Conclusion

Marriage relations discussed above among different castes and sub-castes (*jātis*) of Brahmins as mapped out very structurally, thematically and also in a tabular form in “Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar” of Swami Sahajanand Saraswati provides fresh insights for academic social sciences including that of Sociology and Social and Cultural Anthropology. The fact that this text from 1926 was ignored completely by social scientists comes across as an enigma. It is written primarily in Sanskrit and Hindi with some English references as well. Apart from being more rigorous in its substance, even in its methodology “Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar” reverses the narrative of colonial caste censuses which was done only in English by colonial officials not having sufficient knowledge of Indian languages and knowledge traditions, being often inimical to anything Indian, and relying on unknown ‘native’ informants. Therefore, this work also opens up to a great extent, all the research since (on the history of Brahmins and marriage relations among them in particular), which relies quite heavily, if not solely, on colonial caste censuses and colonial authors or on those who can be characterised as ‘colonized natives’ even in its post-colonial mint.

We also find that the term “Bhumihar” itself is a new terminology popularised by Sahajanand since 1920s for Brahmins who took to mostly secular professions as against the more ritualistic and sacerdotal functions (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a; A. Kumar 2005). Brahmins with either Kanyakubja Brahmin or Maithil Brahmin origin who took to mostly secular professions, for the lack of a better word, but retained their marital alliances with Kanyakubja Brahmin and Maithil Brahmin, have now been collectively clubbed as a “new caste” enumerated in the colonial caste census as Bhumihar Brahmins since 1911. Therefore, to start the analysis with the colonial caste census is an epistemic violence and denies the social reality of marriage relations, for example, on which the caste-community structure is dependent. Pachchima Brahmins/Bhumihar Brahmins are illustrious Brahmins who took to mostly secular professions, due to land grants since at least the Gupta period or acquisition through military service (Sharma 1980), to support their less fortunate brethren pursue religious and ritualistic pursuits. Those who have based their main analysis on the colonial caste censuses also do not realise that Pachchima Brahmins/Bhumihar Brahmins often became Maithil Brahmins and then reverted back to being Pachchima Brahmins to even become Maithil Brahmins once again (please see Appendix I below). This fact is very well recorded in Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar. The sudden decline in numbers of Bhumihar Brahmins (in 1931 census) and the rise in the number of other Brahmins, especially in North Bihar, should be

seen in this light and not as a matter of some Brahmanizing claim (Bose 1991).⁵⁵ The steep decline in the number of Babhans/Pachchima Brahmins/Bhumihar Brahmins from 1921 census to 1931 census is recorded which is attributed to how around half the Babhans correctly reported themselves to be Brahmins (estimates suggesting as high as 40%; Jha 1972:74)⁵⁶ and were counted as such with societal acceptance by other Brahmins like Maithil Brahmins and others (See Appendixes I, II and III below). A self-proclamation amounts to nothing unless there is wider social acceptance in a differentiated and hierarchized social structure based on “structural distance” (Srinivas 1969:16-17) reinforced through connubial ties bound with commensality. It also means how half of those who are counted as non-Bhumihar Brahmin-Brahmins are actually Bhumihar Brahmins/Pachchima Brahmins/Dogamia Brahmins even now as hundred years ago when Swami Sahajanand Saraswati was conducting his field-study. A more realistic and reliable picture emerges by studying their marriage relations which is exactly what Sahajanand did. Therefore, such sociological, political and other social science works require a new and fresh approach to studying Indian society, and Brahmin society from the middle-Gangetic plains in particular, which is the primary concern of this work.

In another work, *Jhootha Bhay Mithya Abhiman* (False Fear, Fallacious Arrogance), Swami Sahajanand Saraswati has criticized the fallacious arrogance of the landed and lordly Pachchima/Bhumihar Brahmins (Raghav S. Sharma 2003c). If at all, the *jajmani* system/prestations was developed by Brahmins in secular professions, who had maximum land ownership promoting the Hindu society by supporting their priestly brethrens and temples for practical reasons, as they had little time to perform their own ritualistic oblations leave alone performing it for others and in temples. Swami Sahajanand also brings to light

⁵⁵ Pradip K. Bose makes a factual error by basing his argument on the colonial caste census alone without bothering to discursively engage with any of Sahajanand’s primary writings. He makes additional mistake by having a factually incorrect view on the mass following of Kisan Sabha which all the primary documents as well as the secondary writings prove (Kumar 2021) just because its leadership was primarily drawn from Babhan/Bhumihar Brahmins. Leadership of any society is first provided by its socially elite, progressive and enlightened members who are also willing to make huge personal sacrifices, a trait displayed amply by Babhans/Bhumihar Brahmins during this period and most certainly in Kisan Sabha leadership and politics. This factual mistake is accompanied by an additional factual error of claiming huge membership for some marginal sectarian organizations from this period without providing any authority, whether primary or secondary.

⁵⁶ Shashishekar Jha’s otherwise interesting work is unable to contemplate how the distinction of Brahmins into Maithils and Pachiaras (coming from the West) in North Bihar (Mithila) is actually Maithil and Pachchimas, where Pachchimas are actually Babhans/Bhumihar Brahmins. This is an error which he has repeated throughout his work. He would have understood the Brahmin society’s structure and marriage relations better if he had explored the primary writings of Swami Sahajanand Saraswati including his Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar, even when he is largely sympathetic to Sahajanand, Kisan Sabha and the first band of dedicated communist leadership drawn predominantly from Bhumihar Brahmin background.

how Bhumihar Brahmins perform traditional Brahmin ritualistic functions (six functions) in Prayag (Allahabad); in the famous Sun temple in Deo, Gaya “(the priest Kheda Pandey, etc. of the Sun temple in Deo, Gaya are descendants of Sonbhadariya mool Babhan/Bhumihar Brahmin Mayurbhatt (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:334)”; the Gayawal Pandas in Gaya also have Bhumihar Brahmin lineage; besides performing the traditional role of priests from times immemorial in the Hazaribagh region “(Babhans/Bhumihar Brahmins from Chatra and Itkhori stations in Hazaribagh have their traditional profession as Brahmin priests of Mahuri Vaishyas, Rajputs and Kayasthas and it is recorded in genealogical records and archives (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:334)”; among others (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a,b,c). Bhumihar Brahmins have been respected Brahmins in the courts of Kshatriya Rajput principalities of Rewa Raj, falling in Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh today and Dumraon Raj in Bihar and the Maithil Brahmin Maharajas of Darbhanga (Raghav S. Sharma 2003b:97). The Subah (principality/feudatory, an example of subinfeudation) of Pipra in the (then) Hindu Kingdom of Nepal has been held by the descendants of Pandit Gopal Mishra, who are Basmaid mool, Garga gotra Pachchima Brahmins, and are very well-respected and regarded Brahmin scholars in the court of the Kings of Nepal (Raghav S. Sharma 2003b:97)⁵⁷. The leading Nepali political leader Bhadrakali Mishra and Ram Narayan Mishra belonged to this family, which had zamindari in both sides of the border between India and Nepal, and took active part in India’s independence movement as well as playing a prominent role during parliamentary monarchy in Nepal. Another member of the family became a prominent Indian independence activist and later the foreign affairs minister of India, Shyam Nandan Prasad Mishra. In the Brahmanical social system, it was a practical ordering through this efficient division of labour in secular and ritualistic pursuits. It became the two sides of support to the existing social order/system. It cannot be a question of brahminizing a Brahmin caste or any claim to Brahmin status to which it already belonged. It was more a matter of organizing their respective societies which every other Brahmin community like Kanyakubja, Jijhautiya, Maithil, Saryupareen, etc. had also organised themselves during colonial times.

Great Mithil Mīmāṃsā (one of the major schools of Indian philosophy) scholar, Mahamahopadhyaya (traditional title of a great classical scholar) Pandit Chitradhar Mishra opined how Bhumihar Brahmins are coming from different Brahmin families (like Maithil Brahmin or Kanyakubja Brahmin and others) and not from one single group who became rich and landed at differ-

⁵⁷ Babhans/Bhumihar Brahmins in Nepal, which is further North of Mithila (and thus further North of Ranti in Madhubani) are referred and recorded as Pachchima Brahmins by Sahajanand which contradicts the assertion of Kailash Chandra Jha mentioning the term Dakhinaha Brahmins, and not Pachchima Brahmins which is how Sahajanand has recorded about Babhan/Bhumihar Brahmins throughout the Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar text.

ent points of time (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:298) and there was no need to enlist them separately from other Brahmins. Given all the historical records, genealogical records, scriptural authority and social practice of marriage relations of Bhumihar Brahmins with Kanyakubja Brahmins, Jijhoutia Brahmins and Saryupareen Brahmins in Eastern Uttar Pradesh and among Bhumihar Brahmins and Maithil Brahmins in North Bihar attests to the falsity of colonial caste census with regard to just one caste or ethnic community. A separate enlistment of Bhumihar Brahmins in the colonial census report was itself a species of the colonial census and not social fact or lived social reality of Indian social system.⁵⁸ It is just one instance highlighting how the whole enterprise of colonial caste censuses is discreditable and this colonial enterprise of the structuring and ordering of Indian social system is flawed. Much of the sociological literature since these censuses take the censuses as the defining epistemology of Indian social system of caste committing an epistemic violence which post-colonial thinkers rightfully highlight. The very discipline of sociology carries the colonial methods and the same locations of knowledge production offering panegyrics and justifications for some of the most revanchist “sociologists” out to “study” the rest of the colonised world of Asia, Africa and South America (Steinmetz 2023). Often times, these “western” institutions carry on in the same vein as if the people of the rest of the world are still “subjects” of their study (Steinmetz 2023).⁵⁹ Unless, one is trained in a western institution or its imitation in the rest of the world, is well connected with western academia, is English educated and makes scientific production in that language published in western journals and “falls in line” with the European/Western line of thinking, or is subservient and servile to the line of thinking of those of specific European/Western institutions and departments, he is deprived of the platform and centres which are “centres” of knowledge production and the recognition and prestige which such association, platform, connection, publication and presence which brings with it. The most reputed journals and publications are in the west and have their own control mechanisms to ensure adherence and compliance and can often pass off their deep-seated institutional prejudices as matters of procedure and “quality control”. It is a system in and of itself, an autopoietic system which because of its opaqueness to facts and the changed environment

⁵⁸ Rajendralal Mitra, an erudite Sanskrit scholar and polymath from an illustrious background, the first Indian president of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in the 19th century, employing Hindu ideas of social classification put Babhan and Brahmin together, which indeed they are, linguistically synonymous and sociologically equal, in his recommendation to the then Census Commissioner of Bengal (Cohn 1987:245).

⁵⁹ The study of institutional biases and prejudices of social and cultural anthropology is still very far away from critical enquiry and lacks a comprehensive “auto-critical work” like that of Steinmetz for French sociology, for example. It generally falls into “post-colonial” critical thinking again inspired by the western trinity of Karl Marx, Antonio Gramsci and Michel Foucault and uniformly negative predisposition of Edward Said.

would lead to system destruction (Teubner 1993). In India, where there is a clear divide between well-funded and well-connected central and private institutions which have English as their medium of instruction and state universities and colleges in small towns and cities where teaching is done in local languages, in all fields of knowledge including sociology, there is already a huge divide in the possibilities it can offer at every stage of life including jobs, scholarships, publications and so on (Jha 2005). But the curriculum and prescribed textbooks adopted by even state universities and colleges are by European/Western writers leading to a proliferation of poor quality translations and cheap imitative works in local languages (Jha 2005). The curriculum and prescribed textbooks create an anomaly for those studying academic sociology as cheap, imitative, poor translations of those European and American authors are taught, since their works are the academically prescribed works, rather than teaching and referring to a rich and extensive availability of original works written in local Indian languages and original Sanskrit works, which can be taught along with translations and commentary in any of the many Indian languages to be included as prescribed textbooks in curriculums of academic sociology teaching in Indian universities and colleges (Jha 2005). It can then be supplemented by original works from the western world which would then add to knowledge and make the Indian intelligentsia, both teachers and students contribute originally and substantially to sociological knowledge and knowledge production. Otherwise, it would create a stock of Indian sociologists unconnected to their own society – colonialism *ad nauseum* and *ad infinitum*.⁶⁰

One possible reason for separate enlistment of Bhumihar Brahmins from their other fellow Brahmins is because they were the main landed proprietors in addition to the Rajputs from Eastern Uttar Pradesh up until some districts of Bengal as well, and played a significant role in leading multiple revolts against the British colonial rule since the second-half of eighteenth-century (Bayly 1983; Yang 1989, 1999; Alavi 2002; Ansari 2019). They had a huge following among Brahmins and Bayly records how if required Kashi Naresh in Benares could easily muster troops of more than 100,000 at his beckoning to wage a guerrilla warfare apart from related kings from Hathwa and Bettiah providing the support of another 200,000 close-knit community members (Bayly 1983:17-18). The Mughal State had also not tampered with the social order and pre-eminence of the landed gentry belonging to Bhumihar Brahmins, Maithil Brahmins and Rajputs to keep the imperial order intact (Bayly 1983; Yang 1989, 1999; Alavi 2002; Ansari 2019). The Nawab of Awadh also never interfered

⁶⁰ Some of the best known sociologists of India like G.S. Ghurye, Irawati Karve, M.N. Srinivas, T.N. Madan, Andre Betéille and many others had excellent training and knowledge of their “local” mother tongues, besides many of them had a sound knowledge of Sanskrit. No wonder they created a trail blaze of original works of sociology when their sound knowledge basis was coupled with field-work.

with the functioning of these regional satraps (Bayly 1983). In order to break the solidarity and continue their divide-and-rule policy inter-se Brahmins and between Brahmins and Rajputs; as the leading leaders of the Sanyasi rebellion; the protracted war of Raja Fateh Bahadur Shahi of Huseyppur (Jha 1982; Yang 1989; Pandey & Upadhyay 2000; Dixit 2007; Sinha 2011; Aounshuman 2022); rebellion of Raja Chait Singh of Benares (Bayly 1983:27,103,319; Aounshuman 2022); Babu Jagat Singh's fight against the British (Qureshi & Pathak 2024); the restive kingdom of Tekari under Maharaja Mitrajit Singh (Diwakar 1958:640; Chaudhary 1980); or the revolt of 1857 led by Kunwar Singh and his brother Amar Singh who were Rajput rulers but had immense support from Bhumihar Brahmin feudatories and they fought together valiantly against the British (Datta 1957b; Downs 2002); was enough reason for the British to develop policies inducing subservience among the ruling classes of the Indian elite apart from insulting them for having rebelled against the colonial regime.

The Babhan/Ayachak/Bhumihar Brahmin rulers of Huseyppur State, in the modern-day Saran District, but also spread into the adjoining districts of Uttar Pradesh was a family closely related to the ruling families of Hathwa Raj in Bihar and Tamkuhi Raj⁶¹ and Anapur Estate in the adjoining regions of Uttar Pradesh controlling vast territory and having immense following and support of common people. Huseyppur/Hathwa Raj's history is traced back to 6th century BCE in traditional accounts making it one of the oldest ruling families in the world (Jha 1980:54). And the last ruler of Huseyppur branch Raja Fateh Bahadur Shahi led a war against the Company Raj (English East India Company), soon after it got the diwani rights of Bihar, Bengal and Orissa after the Battle of Buxar (1764)⁶², and he continued fighting a guerrilla war for more than thirty years (1765-1795), without ever being caught or having surrendered and in the late 1790s he took to asceticism and disappeared (Jha 1982; Yang 1989; Pandey & Upadhyay 2000; Sinha 2011; Aounshuman 2022). He even executed his cousin heading the Hathwa Raj then for having sided with the British (Jha 1982; Aounshuman 2022). The British were oppressive in their rent-exactions and imposing war indemnities from local rulers and ruling families. Not just the then nominal Mughal suzerain in the 1760s but the Mughal authority even at its peak did not suppress the local ruling families to avoid revolt and continuous

⁶¹ Tamkuhi Raj has also emerged from the same family of Maharaja of Huseyppur, Fateh Bahadur Shahi, much like the Maharaja of Hathwa. Some stories based on facts, oral history, of this principality has been recorded by an emerging Bhojpuri-Hindi poet Sanjeev Kumar Tyagi (Tyagi 2021).

⁶² "The status of this family as *raja* was recognized by the Mughal emperors also. After the fall of the Mughal empire, at the time of the grant of Diwani in 1765, Fateh Sahi held the raj. He refused to acknowledge the sovereign or quasi-sovereign rights of the Company. When towards the end of 1767, the Revenue Collector of Sarkar Saran demanded rent on behalf of the Company, Fateh Sahi not only refused to pay it but also drove out the Company's troops who were sent against him (Jha 1980)."

warfare. It meant relatively better autonomy for local rulers but also relatively better conditions of peasants and lesser proportion of landless agricultural labourers. It was only with the establishment of Permanent Settlement of land tenure in 1793, that the most oppressive *zamindari* (landlord) system was structured and implemented by the British where they did not just directly exploit the Indian masses through unfair trade, destruction of local cottage industries, treating India like a captive market but also set up a small class of Indians to squeeze as much resources from the hinterland as possible (Jha 1980; Das 1982; Guha 1999, 2016; Kumar 2021).

The period of resistance by Fateh Bahadur Shahi also corresponds to the Sanyasi Rebellion which continued intermittently for a century from the 1770s to the 1870s and whose leadership and following was provided by military Brahmins though support and following was widespread coming from Rajputs, Banias and even from Muslims (Bhattacharya 2007, 2012a, 2012b; Aounshuman 2022). The leadership and following also came from the dashnami order of sanyasis, the ten-fold order of sanyasis among whom the dandi sanyasis holding the ritual staff are the highest, the order to which Sahajanand belonged, and those who carry the title of Saraswati and are drawn only from among Brahmins, and they waged a guerrilla war against the British and made control and governance difficult for the colonial regime (Pinch 2006; Bhattacharya 2007, 2012a, 2012b). The widespread support, including from Muslim fakirs, which these sanyasis (ascetics) received was also because of the high social esteem of an ascetic and certainly that of a Brahmin ascetic in a military role of revolt against the British. It is also noticeable how the Bhumihaar Brahmin *zamindaris* in Bengal like Lalgola (in Murshidabad, bordering Bangladesh), Natore (now falls in Bangladesh), etc., were from the Bhojpuri regions of Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and were directly related to Maharaja Fateh Bahadur Shahi's family and to Benares (Kashi Raj) (Sinha 2023). Lalgola Raj's Kali temple was the supreme deity for the Sanyasi rebellion in 1772-1773 (Sinha 2023). Most of the monks visiting Lalgola Raj and its Kali temple were from the Bhojpuri speaking regions of middle-Gangetic plane who spearheaded the Sanyasi Rebellion (Sinha 2023). There are Bhojpuri speaking villages in Lalgola and adjoining regions of Bengal (Sinha 2023). The famous writer and the father of modern Bangla novel-writing, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya was inspired to write the famous novel *Anand Math* during his stay with Maharaja Jogendra Narayan Rai of Lalgola Raj and hearing about the history of Sanyasi Rebellion and the famous Kali temple located there and the hymn *Bande Mataram* was inspired by the prayer invoked to the goddess in Lalgola Raj Kali Bari (Sinha 2023). Here the Goddess Kali's depiction "represented as bound in chains in a grim ambience, representing the difficult times of British rule; while Jagaddhatri, protector of the world, glowing in bliss, reflected the aspirations of the awakened nation (Sinha 2023)." The history of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya's

stay in Lalgola is also worth noticing, “In the 1870s, Bankim came in contact with the Lalgola zamindars while serving as magistrate at Berhampore, says Bhakat. According to him, one December morning, as he crossed Barrack Square on his way to work in a palanquin, British army officer Lt Col Duffin stopped him and insisted he change his route — they were playing a game of cricket. When Bankim refused, Duffin assaulted him. Enraged, Bankim filed a case against him; the incident was reported in the press. The then zamindar of Lalgola, Jogendra Narain Rai, appeared as witness in his support and ultimately the British officer had to apologise in open court. [...]Sensing the gravity of the situation, Bankim went on long leave, and the Lalgola zamindar took him to his residence for protection. During his stay there, Bankim was so inspired by the ambience of the place that he wove it into his novel (Sinha 2023).” If we go by the historian Kishan Chand Bhakat of Lalgola in Bengal’s Murshidabad district (Sinha 2023), it is quite likely that Lalgola Raj’s adjoining zamindars of the Nimtita Raj were also Ayachak/Trikarma Brahmins who were great patrons of art and music, and based on the life of one of the family members and a declining zamindari, Tarashankar Bandopadhyaya wrote a short story “Jalshaghar (The Music Room)” which was immortalised by Satyajit Ray in his film by the same name (Bhura 2018). The story is of a declining Brahmin *zamindar*, proud of his bearings, Upendra Narayan Chaudhuri (Bishwambhar Roy in the film) not budging an inch, for example, to not borrow money from the local money-lender Mahim Ganguly for the sacred-thread ceremony of his only child, or to generally look down upon the upstart and boorish local moneylender and a general disdain at the changing times and then its tragic end are quite iconic in the story and its beautiful sardonic representation in the film (Bhura 2018).

Babu Jagat Singh, belonging to the Bhumihar Brahmin Kashi Raj family led a revolt against the British in 1799, and he was to be exiled to St. Helena, before Napoleon was to be exiled there, but he jumped into the Ganges and drowned himself rather than face indignity as a British prisoner (Qureshi & Pathak 2024). It is also interesting to note that as a learned Brahmin aristocrat, new facts and archival records have emerged to prove that it was Babu Jagat Singh who had discovered the Sarnath stupa which is wrongfully attributed to Alexander Cunningham in a typical colonial historiography (Qureshi & Pathak 2024). Maharaja Jugal Kishore Singh of Babhan/Bhumihar Brahmin Bettiah Raj also refused to acknowledge the suzerainty of English East India Company in 1765 and he refused to pay any revenue to the British (Ansari 2019:232). The company forces invaded Bettiah and the Maharaja fled to Bundelkhand for safety, but still the British were unable to raise any revenue and had to finally relent and request Maharaja Jugal Kishore Singh to take back the reigns of his kingdom and give revenue to the British on terms favourable to Bettiah Raj and to its agnatic lines leading to the establishment of Babhan/Ayachak/

Trikarmi Brahmin Shivhar Raj in Muzaffarpur district and Babhan/Ayachak/Trikarmi Brahmin Madhuban Raj in Champaran district (Ansari 2019:232). All this shows the immense opposition the British received from small to big Ayachak/Trikarma Brahmin principalities which quite likely shaped their colonial attitude and disdain for them. Most of the Bengal army sepoys were these “military” Brahmins and Rajputs from the Bhojpuri speaking region who revolted against the British led by Mangal Pandey in 1857, leading the British to disband the Bengal Army, which was never to be reinstated, besides there are many regiments named after different caste-communities but there was never a Brahmin regiment of the British Indian Army. As India’s intellectual class which played a leading role against Company/British Rule, a psychological warfare was induced on the Brahmins by the British with their depiction as an evil class of priests besides spreading the gibberish of depicting the entire Hindu population as “effeminate, subservient race” which required the “masculine, master English race” to “guide and rule them” (Metcalf 1995; Ganguly 2018). Part of the psychological warfare was to divide the different group of Brahmins and pit one against the other with few loaves of space in the lower rungs of British officialdom. The colonial census was started soon after the revolt of 1857, and both in the decennial census as well as the district censuses the British ethnographers and census officials kept changing the structure, order and the number of caste-communities in their census enumerations. Much as the British administration gave titles of Rajas, Maharajas, princely state status with different number of gun salutes, Rai Bahadur, Khan Bahadur; the whole colonial census exercise with shifting vertical order of communities without any structure was a farce to begin with.

It must be added here how the revolutionary and leadership tradition of revolt led by Babhans/Bhumihar Brahmins against exploitative British colonials continued well into the twentieth century; with the revolts against the colonial planters in Champaran in 1914 (Pipra) and 1916 (Tirkaulia) were organised even before Mahatma Gandhi’s Champaran Satyagraha (Brown 1974:55); leading role played in the revolutionary organizations Hindustan Republican Army (HRA) and Hindustan Socialist Republican Army (HSRA) by the likes of Yogendra Shukla⁶³, Basawon Singh⁶⁴, Baikunth Shukla⁶⁵, Suniti Devi⁶⁶, Kishori

⁶³ Yogendra/Jogendra Shukla/Shukul alias Sohan Singh or Bhai or Rahorji (1896-1960) – born in vilage Jalalpur, Lalganj police station of Muzaffarpur district, now Vaishali; read upto matric in village primary school, Lalganj middle school, and Greer Bhumihar Brahman College, Muzaffarpur; came under the influence of Acharya J.B. Kripalani with whom he spent many years in the Punjab and United Province (now Uttar Pradesh) and smuggled arms; tried to escape to America by getting a porter’s job in Calcutta in a ship but failed in his efforts; came in contact with Chandrashekhar Azad and other revolutionaries in Benares; arrested in Faizabad in the middle of 1923, lodged in Benares Jail where one day he caused consternation by entering into the water tank of the jail, released after a fortnight; became a member of the Central Committee of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army (HSRA) after its formation, 1928; convicted in Tirhut Conspiracy Case and transferred to Cellular Jail, Andamans in

Prasanna Singh⁶⁷ and others; and the most restive regions of Bihar and Eastern Uttar Pradesh including Tirhut, Begusarai, Patna, Monghyr, Ghazipur, Deoria,

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- December, 1932; joined the Congress after his release in 1938 and elected Vice Chairman, Muzaffarpur District Congress Committee, 1938; later joined the Congress Socialist Party; arrested in 1940; became a member of the Central Committee of the All India Kisan Sabha; scaled the walls of Hazaribagh Central Jail in 1942 and along with Suraj Narayan Singh helped four others including Pandit Ramnandan Mishra and Jayaprakash Narayan escape; arrested in Muzaffarpur, December 7, 1942; lodged in Buxar jail, released April, 1948; nominated as a member of the Bihar Legislative Council, 1958 on behalf of the Praja Socialist Party and continued there till 1960 when he died as a blind and sickman in a government hospital after suffering years of torture during British Rule.
- ⁶⁴ Basawon/Basawan/Basavan Singh/Sinha (1909-1989) – alias Ram Basawan Singh alias Lambad, a name among revolutionary circles given by Yogendra Shukla for being very tall; one of the prominent socialist leaders in the country; took part in the Non-Cooperation Movement 1920-22; joined Dacca Anushilan Samiti, 1922; joined Hindustan Republican Army, 1925 and then was the founding member of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army (HSRA), 1928; participated in revolutionary activities and imprisoned several times; was a prominent member of Jogendra Shukul's revolutionary organization and worked closely with Barindra Ghosh and Bhupendranath Datta; absconded in the Tirhut Conspiracy Case, arrested in Patna, August 6, 1930, along with Keshab Chandra Chakravarty, a close friend and notorious Bengal revolutionary; escaped from Bankipore Jail, August 9, 1930; rearrested in Calcutta on September 25, 1930; accused in Tirhut Conspiracy Case and sentenced for six-and-a-half years in prison only to be released in 1936; had started a fast-unto-death against cross-bar fetters which continued for a record 57-days and the British Indian government was forced to accept his demand; joined Congress Socialist Party, 1936; organised labour and peasant movements; formed the Rohtas Industries Mazdoor Sangh at Dehri-on-Sone in 1938 and nearly 500 trade unions over the course of his life and spreading across Assam, Bengal, Bihar (including today's Jharkhand), Madhya Pradesh (including today's Chattisgarh), Odisha and Uttar Pradesh; set up the Tata Collieries Labour Union along with Subhas Chandra Bose, became its President after Bose left the country in 1941; participated in the Quit India Movement, 1942; arrested 1943, released 1946; associated with the All India Railway Men's Federation, its Vice President, 1946; in independent India was member, Bihar Legislative Assembly, 1952-57, 1957-62 and 1977-79, and Bihar Legislative Council, 1962-68 from the Congress Socialist Party (never changed his party but the party changed names over the years); Cabinet Minister, Government of Bihar, 1967 and 1979; absconded and headed the *Jan Sangharsh Samiti* (People's Resistance Council) against internal emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi's government during 1975-77.
- ⁶⁵ Baikunth Shukla/Shukul (1910-1934) – School teacher turned revolutionary and relative of Yogendra Shukla; joined HSRA to avenge the hanging of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru by killing Phanindranath Ghosh whose testimony led to their hanging as well as the arrest and imprisonment of most of the revolutionaries across the country; he along with Chandrama Singh killed Phanindranath Ghosh with a *Khukri* in 1932; later he was caught, tried and hanged on 14th May, 1934; as a final and lasting act of colonial brutality even his dead body was not given to his family members to perform the last rites (Sinha 2011a).
- ⁶⁶ Suniti Devi was labelled „Jhansi ki Rani“ among revolutionary circles; she was a member of HSRA and did not use to cover her head and used to wear kurta-pyjama; she was a sharp-shooter and excellent horse-rider; as a traditional Brahmin woman in a rural-traditional Bihar after marriage with freedom-movement leader Kishori Prasanna Singh she did not remain confined to the household but joined India's struggle for independence along with her husband; died prematurely in the 1930s.
- ⁶⁷ Kishori Prasanna Singh (1903-1984) – Joined the freedom struggle from 1920 centering around Hajipur Gandhi Ashram where he came in contact with other revolutionaries like Akshayvat Rai, Basawon Singh, Ramdeni Sharma, Vasudev Khalifa and others; after Gaya

Azamgarh and adjoining regions which *were* and *are* preponderantly Bhumihar Brahmin villages and regions, with overwhelming social support of all communities, led the Quit India Movement of 1942, and where the British cracked-down most heavily with its colonial might by burning down entire village after village in these districts displaying their medieval brutality and purportedly halcyoned ‘rule of law’ (Henningham 1983:130-179; Niyogi 2010).

The Trikarma/Ayachak/Pachchima/Babhan/Bhumihar Brahmins did not just define and structure the Hindu Brahmanical order in the fertile plains of the middle-Gangetic North India, often as carriers of that knowledge and tradition, and indeed was always its benefactor, supporter and sustainer, across time and place. It was true a hundred years ago as much as it is true now. If the land they own today (39%) is more than the combined ownership of the land owned by the rest of the upper castes, inclusive of the rest of the Brahmins (16%) and Rajputs (19%) combined; they were of course at the apex of Hindu social order to support and sustain its culture a hundred years ago. Much as agriculture is depressed and neglected by the state today, a hundred years or more ago, it was the primary source of economic and indeed social prestige and pre-eminence. And Ayachak Brahmins were in a position to support the Hindu culture and social order including supporting their less fortunate and poor Brahmin brethren; and fighting shoulder to shoulder alongwith Rajputs and other members of society against the British.

In this light, it is also rather surprising, how without providing any reference, some Maithil Brahmin historians like Upendra Thakur as a form of “insinuation” wrote that those Brahmins who became Buddhists in the Magadha region and then later came back to the “mother” faith were called Babhans or later Bhumihar Brahmins and constituted a separate class of Brahmins [Thakur 1988 (1956)]. Thakur sums up the entire history and contribution of Pachchima Brahmins or Babhans or what came to be known as Bhumihar Brahmins in just one paragraph. This is discredited by Professor Ram Sharan Sharma (Kumar 2005), besides Bhumihar Brahmin as a coined terminology

Congress Session of 1922 came in contact with Subhas Chandra Bose and left for Calcutta; he used to help edit the journal Forward Block; was a main pillar of Congress Seva Dal in Bihar and took part in Madras (1927), Calcutta (1928) and Lahore (1929) sessions of the Congress; jailed anumber of times; was married to revolutionary Suniti Devi; spearheaded the salt satyagraha of 1930 at Gandhi Ashram, Hajipur during the Civil Disobedience Movement; joined Congress Socialist Party after its formation in 1934; took part in peasant movements spearheaded by Swami Sahajanand Saraswati; active in labour/trade union movements; joined the Communist Party of India for ideological reasons in 1940s; after independence became member of Bihar Legislative Assembly from Hajipur Constituency in 1967; died in 1984; his autobiographical reminiscences in Hindi *Mujhe Yaad Hai*, as part of the oral history account of interviews conducted by Hari Dev Sharma at Teen Murti was published posthumously in 2004.

is of a recent vintage, whereas *Babhan* is a Pali-Apabrahmsha⁶⁸ terminology for the word Brahmin/Brāhmān and is a very ancient usage to refer to *all* Brahmins. This historically inaccurate version is then quoted by everyone else since then as a textual authority, which actually did not have any scientific basis or contextualization with any scriptural, epigraphical, land records, social practice, marriage relations, etc. Thakur also fails to refer to Sahajanand and his work Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar. “Agraharams” were rent-free land (*bhumi*) grants to Brahmins and temples given since the later-Vedic age, “As in the case of pre-feudal Europe, most of the grants during the Epic period were in favour of the priestly class. *Yāgnavalkya* lays down in this connection what may be called the official procedure relating to the issue of royal charters for the donation of lands to the Brāhmaṇas. Such endowments, evidently were not only revenue- free and perpetual, but also carried with them the right of alienation. In the chapters relating to the settlement of the new and old tracts the Arthaśāstra enjoins the king to grant lands exempted from taxes and fines (*adanḍkarāni*) to the following classes of persons: the sacrificing priest (*ritvik*) the preceptor, the domestic chaplain (*purohita*) and those learned in the Vēdas. Kautilya even while inculcating the methods of raising the revenue during emergencies, expressly enjoins the immunity of the *Brāhmaṇas* learned in the Vēdas (*srotriya*) (Husaini 1959:138-139).” Besides, Buddhist texts also attest to land-grants to Brahmins, “The Pāli canonical work *Digha Nakāya*, which represents Buddhist traditions and which was written after the Buddha, reports at the beginning of the third *sutta* that the Brāhmaṇa Pauskarasadi was endowed with the village of Ukkatta by Pasenadi, king of Kōsala. Similarly, at the beginning of the fifth *sutta* we read that the Brāhmaṇa Kutadanta was endowed by king Bimbisāra of Magadha with the village of Khānumata. The twelfth *sutta* begins with the mention of Salavatika, a village that had been given by the Kōsalan king to a Brāhmaṇa, Lohichcha. The tradition of such royal gifts of villages goes back to the middle of the first millennium before Christ (Husaini 1959:139).” But land began to be given on a large scale since the Gupta Period⁶⁹, perhaps also because of making new settlements or organising older ones, leading to feudalism and sub-infeudation as a complex and stable

⁶⁸ Pali is the language spoken during the times of Buddha, circa 6th century BCE. Apabrahmsha is a generic term for the spoken languages of late ancient early-medieval period (6th century CE to 13th century CE) and their different branches and sub-branches many of which are full-fledged languages with a rich history and literature today.

⁶⁹ “During the Gupta period we may mention the Gaya Copper-plate of Samudragupta, the Nālanda plate of the same ruler, the Bhitari stone pillar inscription of Skandagupta, the Khoh copper-plate inscription of Sarvanātha, the Ārang copper-plate of Mahā-Jayarāja, the Rāypur Copper-plate of Mahā-Sudevaraja, the Siwani copper-plate of Pravarasena II, the Majhgawām copper-plate of Hastin, the Kārta-lāi copper-plate of Jayanātha, the Khoh Copper-plate of Jayanātha, and the Khoh copper-plate of Sarvanātha. In most of these cases the Brāhmaṇa donees enjoyed all items of royal dues which are specifically recorded in the inscriptions. The donees could punish or evict tenants who refused to pay their dues (Husaini 1959:139-140).”

socio-economic structure of rural society and the relationship of central power whether Gupta, or Mughal or later the British with the rural village society was mediated through this feudal structure – and the control of “agrahar bhumi” by Brahmins could be one reason for popularising land-owning Ayachak/Trikarma Brahmins as Bhumihar Brahmins since the late-nineteenth century (Sharma & Jha 1974; Ram S. Sharma 1980; Coulborn 1968). This is most likely the case because rent-free land granted to Brahmins alone could be referred as “agrahar bhumi”, “It can be observed that a village endowed for the settlement of learned Brahmanas is called agrahara and epigraphs expressly refer to it as such (Deglurkar 1979).” Therefore, the two-fold “professional” distinction between Ayachak/Trikarma and Yachak/Shatkarma was already taking shape though not rigidly formed in the early years of the Common Era, with such huge land-ownership, and taking to “secular” professions by Brahmins, “It cannot be argued that commendation of the population to religious people could not amount to a feudal commendation; for as the number of the land owning Brāhmaṇas went on increasing, some of them shed their priestly functions and turned their attention to the management of land; in their case secular functions became more important than religious functions (Husaini 1959:147)”. The occupational and the large two-fold distinction shows the remarkable capacity of Brahmins to adapt to new challenges despite not losing their roots, ritualistic and sacerdotal functions, and their valued commitment to learning, the Vedas classically, but taking to the new sciences, “the new Vedas” with a zeal (Khare 1970). The broad two-fold professional distinction among Brahmins is brought forth by the enumeration of the Anthropological Survey of India, a major post-independence anthropological survey conducted in the second half of twentieth-century headed by its remarkable academic administrator, Kumar Suresh Singh (Singh 1998:470-471). This ancient professional distinction, coupled with small principalities and evolution of local linguistic-cultural groups since the middle ages, and disappearance of Hindu rulers as central authority since the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal rule, led to a proliferation of groups/jatis/castes/sub-castes among Brahmins from the thirteenth-fourteenth century onwards. Thus, any non-European theoretical conception of modernity will have to take into account the study of the “society of Brahmins” who are modern yet traditional and traditional yet modern.

Then there are others like, Girish Mishra and Braj Kumar Pandey who are unable to grasp how caste as a social identity is not class and is crucially dependent on connubiality and commensality (Mishra & Pandey 1996). They seem to have written with a single-minded devotion of hate towards those who constitute Bhumihar Brahmins and also Rajputs (Kashtriya caste), and how they are responsible for what Mishra and Pandey refer to as “casteism” in the province of Bihar. First, they are unable to understand caste as community and community identity as caste-identity and the cultural function of having solidarity and

support based on caste-community identity, which is not a specific trait of Bhumihar Brahmins and Rajputs alone (Sahay 2004; Lee 2020). It is a common social behaviour among all caste-community groups, not just in Bihar, but all over the country. Every political leader had a social context and often many had community affiliations but they all worked hand-in-hand first for India's freedom and then its development thereafter. It becomes a problem when this group-behavior spills over into the political realm with nepotism, which surely has been problematic in the country. But Mishra and Pandey put every single political actor, left, right or centre, especially if they belong to the Bhumihar Brahmin background into the same basket committing lot of inaccuracies in the process. One instance is where they mention how Basawon Singh was close to Shri Krishna Singh, which is absolute wrong (Sharma 2022). Basawon Singh was the leader of opposition from the Congress Socialist Party/Socialist Party/Praja Socialist Party and at his instance there was a no confidence motion issued against the then Chief Minister of Bihar, Shri Krishna Singh in 1957 for not having delivered on his political/electoral promises even after staying in the helm uninterruptedly since 1946 and even earlier from 1937-39 during colonial times as the Premier of the Province of Bihar during British India (Kumar 2017). Basawon Singh was rather close to Anugraha Narayan Sinha, who was not from his community or party or ideology, and Anugraha Narayan Sinha as a matter of fairplay as industries minister organized a plebiscite in Dalmianagar where he held the Rohtas Industries Mazdoor Sangh to be the representative trade union headed by Basawon Singh as against the spurious union set up by the Congress (Sharma 2022)⁷⁰. If at all, Dr. Shri Krishna Sinha, a Bhumihar Brahmin of Kanyakubja Brahmin descent (Singh 2001), went out of his way to promote the career of Mr. Lalit Narayan Mishra an able and the most famous Maithil Brahmin political leader of twentieth-century Bihar

⁷⁰ The audacity to spread lies is quite spectacular in Girish Mishra and Braj Kumar Pandey, where without knowing the trade union history of Dalmianagar/Delhi-on-Sone or rather purposefully misrepresenting its history, they hurl an insult at the great revolutionary and freedom fighter Basawon Singh for having colluded with the management. They should have gone through the archival records, the history of Basawon Singh's role in its trade union movement through Rohtas Industries Mazdoor Sangh since 1938 till his death in 1989, his inaugural speech as industries minister in 1967 where he narrated the history of the trade union movement and how he had threatened to self-immolate if Mr. Abdul Qayum Ansari did not detract from his „loose statement“ of saying that Basawon Singh had colluded with the management. Mr. Abdul Qayum Ansari detracted and aplogised publicly in the assembly. But such meticulous detailing before making „loose statements and assertions“ is not a characteristic of Girish Misha and Braj Kumar Pandey. Girish Mishra's own background is worth noticing. His father was a second-rank politician working under the leadership of Dr. Shri Krishna Sinha in the Congress Party and he lost election to one of Basawon Singh's closest political allies who was like a younger brother, Thakur Ramapati Singh. Dr. Shri Krishna Sinha was a Bhumihar Brahmin and Thakur Ramapati Singh was a Rajput. Perhaps this made him harbour prejudice against both these then politically dominant caste-communities.

and national politics (Shahi 2008; Chaudhary 2009).⁷¹ At Shri Babu's (short form for Shri Krishna Sinha) behest the illustrious son of Bihar Dr. Amarnath Jha, Professor of English literature, son of Sir Ganganath Jha and former Vice Chancellor of Allahabad University was made the Chairman of Bihar Public Service Commission from 1953 till his sudden death in 1955 (Singh 2014). Dr. Amarnath Jha had taken premature retirement from Allahabad University for some institutional problems despite his sterling contribution (Jha 1997).⁷² Whatever development happened in Bihar happened during Dr. Shri Krishna Sinha's tenure lasting from 1937 to 1939 in colonial times and with the formation of interim government in 1946 until his death in 1961 (Sinha 2012; Singh 2013, 2014). Bihar has only seen decline since Sri Babu's demise. Additionally, by painting a narrow picture of Kisan Sabha and the role of Swami Sahajanand Saraswati in India's freedom movement and his single-minded role in the abolition of *zamindari* (landlordism) in the country starting with Bihar in 1950 betray their lack of historical understanding (Kumar 2021). For opposing landlordism, Kisan Sabha was actually accused of being "traitors to the community" and Pandit Karyanand Sharma of *Barahiya Bakasht Movement* (movement for the rights of peasant-tenants, share-croppers and incrementally for agricultural labourers)⁷³ fame was brutally assaulted by his own community members of Babhans/Bhumihar Brahmins and thrown into the river Ganges for "daring" to fight election against Dr. Sri Krishna Sinha as a candidate of the Communist Party which he was leading in Bihar (Jha 1972:80-81; Das 1982:63-64).⁷⁴ But, of course, getting beaten mercilessly and nearly killed by his own community was also not enough ideological commitment for narrow writers Mishra and Pandey. Mishra and Pandey also did not have any understanding of sociology, as they incorrectly mention that poor Maithil Brahmin girls are getting married into Bhumihar Brahmin families which is discredited nearly a century earlier

⁷¹ There is a voluminous commemorative volume on Mr. Lalit Narayan Mishra without any mention acknowledging Shri Babu's role in bringing him into not just politics but national politics by requesting Pandit Nehru numerous times to find an avenue for him in Delhi by directly working with the Prime Minister of India (Thakur ed., 1982).

⁷² Though one criticism could be how some of these appointments, including that of Dr. Amarnath Jha, were of fellow Brahmins, as Bhumihar Brahmins and Maithil Brahmins belong to the same group of Brahmins, but the fact is no one really matched Dr. Jha's qualifications, experience or brilliance as an academic leader and intellectual to hold such an office. Certainly no career bureaucrat could match it, as they are "mere" graduates with no scholarship or specialized knowledge to their credit as a matter of prerequisites for entering the services or doing their job as "babus" (how such bureaucrats are referred) as an unmistakable, continuous and lasting administrative legacy of the British Empire.

⁷³ Through the Barahita Tal Bakasht Movement led by Pandit Karyanand Sharma as a Kisan Sabha leader set up and spearheaded by Swami Sahajanand Saraswati, the beneficiary tenants mostly belonged to low castes like Dhanuks who got a thousand bighas of land in 1938-39 itself at the cost of Bhumihar Brahmin zamindars (Frankel 1989:79).

⁷⁴ I would like to thank my friend Sugandha Sinha a leading law faculty from Chanakya National Law University, Patna for bringing this article to my notice.

in Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar. Maithil Brahmins married Bhumihaar Brahmins of similar status because they belong to the same group of Brahmins and not because of class differential. If class were a factor, today half of the toilet cleaners in Sulabh Shauchalaya public toilets in India, as a traditionally ritualistically unclean profession, are poor Maithil Brahmins from North Bihar (Raman 2022), they are not marrying into caste-communities from non-Brahmin background who might still be engaged in toilet cleaning despite sharing the same class and profession with them. In pre-modern times, before the colonial contact, such choice of profession due to economic or other circumstances would have invariably led to the formation of a new caste-community but today it has only led to the transformation of traditional hierarchy into an ethnicity (Lee 2020). Mishra and Pandey discuss the mool of Maithil Brahmins but overlooks it for Bhumihaar Brahmins mentioning in a single sentence how it is not relevant for them, which is grossly incorrect. Many of the *mool/dih/root* of Bhumihaar Brahmins and Maithil Brahmins are the same showing the same root with the same root ancestor as well as the same root village. It is not the same as gotra which is due to rishis/primal sages which Brahmins could also share with other varnas. *Mool/dih/root* both geographically as well as genealogically is more concretely founded in socio-cultural fact.

As the “initial” caste censuses conducted by British colonial regime was an incorrect and flawed representation of Indian social reality, so was its replication by the recently conducted caste census held in 2023 in the state of Bihar is flawed. In the second half of the twentieth century, the British had recorded 700 castes in Bihar which by the second half of twentieth century were reduced to 250 in number (Jha 2005:406). What criteria was employed for such a change? The British enumerators did not and could not and ought not to have developed any structures of the caste system apart from the ritualistic, scriptural, societal and self-definitional categories which were all part of Indian societal realities and self-realities irrespective of whoever was the “ruler”. Then, we are brought back to the question of - what was/were the purposes of such caste censuses in the first place? Why such an “amorphous”, “unspecified”, “structurally” and “functionally” flimsy and “unorganized” characterization of Indian society was ordered by the British in the first place and adopted whole-somely by Indian intelligentsia and politics largely uncritically.⁷⁵ And now in

⁷⁵ Either the structure of Indian society was “structurally” well-defined, indeed hierarchically the most well-defined in human civilization (Dumont 1998); or it was a mere “castes of mind” formed, organized and orchestrated by the colonial regime (Dirks 2002); rendering the colonial exercise of caste censuses useless in both instances and in the huge spectrum of different analyses between the two extreme positions of Dumont and Dirks, in how it was structured and implemented and its lasting negative repercussions in Indian society and politics up until today. Historical evidence of western and southern India in the immediate pre-modern period suggests extensive diversity not just in the horizontal but also in the vertical social “hierarchy” which was anything but uniform (Dharampal-Frick 1995:82-100). If not the “hierarchy”, but

a classic example of British *impeperium redux*, the Government of Bihar did not just conduct caste census in 2023, but also created new and arbitrary caste categories, for example, the Donwar/Dronwar mool/root of Bhumihaar/Maithil Brahmins have been counted as a separate and new caste (for the completely erroneous creation of Dronwars as a separate caste-category, see Appendix I below); in an absolute act of discrimination the “third gender” is a new caste in Bihar (Business Standard 2023); in addition to the inherited “colonial” enumeration. Much like “Bhumihaar Brahmin” was a new terminology enlisted, new and other arbitrary enlistments are being done. And there is a new din in the demand for caste censuses coming from some leaders and parties who are keen to base their electorate on social dissention, violence and entitlement as the permanent allurement of the state (Kaviraj 2005) which is in a binary code with the constitutional system of the country (Luhmann 2008) in sheer disregard of its societal constitutionalisms (Teubner 1988, 1993, 2012). This is a question of sociology law and legal theory which is referred to as “law and society” or “socio-legal studies” in the Anglo-American jurisprudence.⁷⁶ As mentioned in the preface this aspect will be addressed more directly and more comprehensively in an ongoing project relating to sociology of law, legal theory and constitutional law to be published subsequently. And it would be done in the framework of systems theory and societal constitutionalism.⁷⁷

Hence, its post-colonial life and message, nearly a century after it was written, lies in the fact that non-European sources of literature, primarily written in non-European languages, should be explored and discussed in greater detail

certainly diversity, differentiation and the lack of a rigid social order, can be interpreted for the entire Indian subcontinent. Though Dipankar Gupta believes even in the “modern period” of nineteenth century onwards, with colonial contact, the self-perception of “castes” as discrete identities as cultural-groups/communities/ethnicities was anything but devalued and in the *longue durée* of twentieth century the “ideology of the true hierarchy (Dumont)”, if it ever existed, has been checkmated by politics and economy (Gupta 1991:110-142).

⁷⁶ „Law and society; also known as ‚socio-legal studies‘, involves the study of law through the social sciences, in particular sociology and empirical political science. It is a broad group or movement, but tends towards the study of ‚law in action‘, in contrast to the conceptual study of law one finds in analytical jurisprudence. [] Much of the work in the field fits the label ‚law in action‘: investigations of the effectiveness, or just the general effects, of certain legal rules (Bix 2004: 118).“

⁷⁷ „Luhmann’s version of systems theory, autopoiesis, views social systems as entities that reproduce themselves by appropriating elements of their environment. Within Luhmann’s theory, social systems are seen as basically systems of communication, which process meaning. Luhmann, Gunther Teubner, and others have tried to apply autopoiesis to law, discussing the ways in which and the extent to which law defines and controls its own meanings (e.g. the way that the question of whether something is ‚legal‘ or ‚illegal‘ is determined entirely by and within the legal system (Bix 2004: 131).“

Though, Teubner expanded the scope of systems theory by grafting societal constitutionalism on it, which leads to, for example, better theoretical-processual-practical protection of fundamental human rights in multiple system rationalities, which as a result of dense and ever-expanding functional differentiations due to industrial modernity, cannot be covered by the „classical“ state constitutional framework.

which would lead to many new, fresh and unsettling details emerging out of it. It also unsettles rigidities in social and political structures which colonial administrations followed across empires in their zeal to govern through European categories of hierarchization and differentiation and which colonial 'subjects' often adopted as their own. Such an attempt would be the true decolonization of the mind which resonates through all post-colonial societies. One of its impacts could be a 'horizontal affiliation' among different castes and sub-castes of Brahmins in their own attempt to metamorphose from hierarchy to ethnicity.⁷⁸ This article attempts to show through just one example of the colonial form of knowledge and its serious limitations and shortcomings in "studying" the society of the "colonial subject". It is an attempt at decolonizing the mind, where what is knowledge, and how it is perceived and perpetuated even in post-colonial societies needs correction and therefore has global relevance.

To conclude, "Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar" is an excellent work on the history and culture of Brahmins, including their marriage relations, which needs to be explored. There are some shortcomings in the work which could have been rectified by the editor Raghav Sharan Sharma, like lacking modern form of citation with annotated notes and references, detailed and separate introduction to the work, and a detailed bibliography and index in the end. A non-Sanskritist contemporary reader will find it very daunting to assess the hundreds of original classical Sanskrit references only with their names provided. The oral method of remembering texts, verses and references has obviously found its way into the book which requires careful editing in its Sanskrit-Hindi original but also in any future translation into English and other European languages. Sahajanand has provided a comprehensive scriptural-textual structure backed by social practice, customs, livelihood and occupations of the internal social ordering of all Brahmins but, of course, he could not cover marriage relations and customary practices of Brahmins of the entire sub-continent within the confines of one work. By his own admission he could never work on the third edition of his book to at least enlist marriage relations among other Ayachak/Trikarmi Brahmins and Yachak/Shatkarmi Brahmin groups like among Mohyals and Saraswats, but also to discuss in particular details the social practices of other Ayachak/Trikarmi Brahmins across the country like Zamin-dar Brahmins (Rarhi Kulin Brahmins) of Bengal, Chitpavans of Maharashtra, Telugu Niyogi Brahmins and Anavil Desais of Gujarat (Kumar 2005)⁷⁹. His

⁷⁸ Lee (2020). The horizontal affiliation in marriage relations among different sub-castes of Tamil Brahmins was already observed by André Bêteille in the 1960s (Bêteille 1966). Rajni Kothari, also in the 1960s, observed in politics in Gujarat that a horizontal affiliation was built among a diverse group of castes under the common banner of Kshatriya since the late 1940s (Kothari and Maru 1965).

⁷⁹ Complementing on Swami Sahajanand Saraswati's work, Professor Siyaram Tiwari, an eminent litterateur and the former dean at Vishwa Bharti University in Shantiniketan (a UNESCO World Heritage Site now) set up by Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore highlights about this

field-work is confined to North India in general and the middle-Gangetic plain in particular. When Sahajanand is quoting from other sources and references like someone's speech mentioning Aristotle visiting India with Alexander and talking about Indian society finds no historical affirmation and it needs to be contextualized and discussed (like any other Greek reference to Indian society and to Brahmins but falsely attributed to Aristotle) by any future editor (though this part deals with the theoretical conception of a Brahmin; Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:256). Besides, the brides are nameless in the work representing male domination and identification of genealogies based on male ancestor (*mool*) and marriage relations are solemnised between families where the name of grooms is mentioned (*See Appendix I, II & III*).⁸⁰ The well-off and illustrious

nation-wide phenomenon on the emergence of Ayachak/Trikarmi Brahmins on the one hand and Yachak/Shatkarmi Brahmins on the other, since the medieval period, as a practical occupational ordering of Brahmin social world performing the dual role of secular (for the lack of a better terminology) and sacerdotal functions. When the erudite and singular Gandhian ascetic, Acharya Vinoba Bhave while leading Harijan (now called Dalits) entry into the famous Shiva temple in Deoghar he was wounded in an attack by priests, the then Chief Minister of Bihar Dr. Shri got insinuated and led temple-entry for Dalits himself and all the priests of Deoghar had run away. Later Vinoba, who hailed from Ayachak/Trikarmi Chitpavan Brahmin family, started Bhoodan Movement (land gifting movement), and it received maximum support from Babhan/Ayachak/Trikarmi/Pachchima/Bhumihar Brahmin landowners who felt a sense of kinship with Acharya Vinoba Bhave. Despite its limited success, the Bhoodan Movement received maximum land gifts in Bihar and it should be a matter of sociological study of who gave how much land and to whom. In addition to his ideological commitment, Madhu Limaye as a "non-Bihari" Chitpavan Brahmin, used to receive Ayachak/Bhumihar Brahmin votes to win elections in Bihar as Bhumihar Brahmins considered him to be one of their kin. When Morarji Desai became part of Congress (O) in 1969 and later became the Prime Minister of India in 1977 leading the Janata Party government many Babhan/Ayachak/Trikarmi/Pachchima/Bhumihar Brahmin leaders left Congress (Indira) due to Indira Gandhi's undemocratic and heavy-handed way of running the party to join him as they also considered Anavil Desais of Gujarat, to which Brahmin community Morarji Desai belonged, as one of their own, in addition to his impeccable integrity. The Ayachak/Trikarmi Telugu speaking Niyogi Brahmins have given great scholars like Dr.S. Radhakrishnan, who also became the President of India and Dr. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, an eminent historian besides giving the former Prime Minister of India, P.V. Narasimha Rao, who liberalized Indian economy and brought India "closer" to the world. It must be highlighted here that the Ayachak/Trikarmi Brahmins across the Indian sub-continent share the Parashurama myth, (who is the sixth among ten avatars of Lord Vishnu, and who are born on earth in the cataclysmic ages, when Dharma is endangered), as his descendants and Brahmin followers and students (Karve 1932).

⁸⁰ Although, it must be pointed out that women from Ayachak/Trikarma/Babhan/Pachchima/Bhumihar Brahmin background have played a pioneering role in India's freedom struggle. Manorama Devi (her husband was Pandit Punyadev Sharma, a non-cooperator in the 1920s) took active part in Civil Disobedience Movement and was jailed for her political activities for India's freedom from colonial rule; Suniti Devi was a revolutionary leader in the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army in the 1930s, the only one from such an illustrious background, her husband was Kishori Prasanna Singh, a leading figure of revolutionary, socialist, trade union movement and later Communist Party in the State of Bihar. Rajkishori Devi, the daughter of a landed estate owner and married into an illustrious landed estate and the wife of Pandit Ramnandan Mishra who joined Mahatma Gandhi in Sabarmati Ashram and actively took part

families would marry their daughters keeping in mind her aspirations in an equally or more well-off and illustrious family but the individuality of both brides and bridegrooms did not matter much in the early twentieth century when this work was written.

Therefore, apart from being relevant to sociologists, social and cultural anthropologists, it is also important to social scientists and lawyers, because after all caste-politics is a tenacious presence in the Indian public sphere (Béteille 2012) and 'caste' is also constitutionally entrenched for lawyers to eschew its study at their own peril (Shourie 2012). The demands on and from the state (Kaviraj 2005) are articulated in the language of 'caste' and the entire policy of reservation in educational institutions, public jobs, and even promotion is based on 'caste identity', giving the famed Manu, author of *Mānava-Dharmaśāstra* (the Code of Manu), based on how he is characterised, a new lease of life from the backdoor and by reversing the traditional social order.

in India's independence struggle, even being incarcerated for taking part in the movement, would take great hardships to sell hand-spun khadi carrying it in baskets overhead like day labourers to popularize and raise funds for the independence movement. Tarkeshwari Sinha had played an active role in Quit India Movement and became the first woman minister in independent India's cabinet hailing from Bihar. The entire Reora Satyagraha was led by Bhumihar Brahmin women later joined by the menfolk in late-1930s (Kuwajima 2017). It is remarkable and perhaps even natural and predictable to note how in the state of Bihar, the first pioneering leaders who happened to be women, including an armed revolutionary against British colonialism, came from Ayachak/Trikarma/Babhan/Pachchima/Bhumihar Brahmin background.

Appendix I:

Marriage Relations among Bhumihar Brahmins and Maithil Brahmins as recorded in Brahmareshi Vansha Vistar⁸¹ (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:313-321)

1. Pargana Loam, district Darbhanga, village Dularpur, Mool Adaivarnan pur, Vats gotra, Maithil Turantlal Chaudhary married to the sister of Khagan Chaudhary and Pokhan Chaudhary from Saraisa, district Darbhanga, village Mau Sherpur, Shandilya or Vats gotra, mool Jalaiwar, Pachchima Brahmin (Bhumihar Brahmin). Their son, Bachcha Chaudhary alias Kari Chaudhary was married into a Yogya Shreni Maithil Brahmin family from village Bhawanipur Jamsam, Pargana Hati, Darbhanga district.

All other marriages mentioned hereunder are also from Darbhanga district.

2. In the family of above-mentioned Turantlal Chaudhary, the daughter of a Pachchima Brahmin, Rambakas Rai is married who belongs to the village Deodha near Nayanagar station and belongs to Sanaivar Mool and Bharadwaj gotra.

3. Magni Ram Chaudhary, a Maithil Brahmin of Dularpur is married to a Dogamia Maithil girl, daughter of Parasmani Rai, from village Bhirha, Pargana Jakhalpur, of Anriye mool, gotra Shandilya. In turn, from this Bhirha village of Anriye mool Dogamia Brahmins have numerous marital relations with Pachchima Brahmins of Sanaiwar mool from Deodha, Nayanagar, etc.

4. Manohar Chaudhary from Dularpur is married to the sister of Churaman Chaudhary in village Makhanpur Basaha, of Brahmapuriye mool, Brahmapur gotra Shandilya. These Brahmapuriye Maithils have reached unison through marital relations with Sanaiwar Pachchima Brahmins.

5. The son of Nandurai, a Maithil Brahmin of above mentioned Bhirha village is married to the niece of Nathuni Rai, a Pachchima Brahmin from village Sakarpura, of Sanaiwar mool.

6. In the household of same Nandurai from Bhirha village there are marital relations with Chote Jha and Jagatmani Jha from village Bharaura, of Pargana Bharaura.

7. Belkhandi Rai, Maithil from Bhirha, of Anriye mool is also martially related to Pachchima Brahmins of Sakarpura.

⁸¹ This list is translated from Hindi by the current author.

8. Belkhandi Rai's daughter is married to Avadh Narayan's Chaudhary's father, Chitra Narayan Chaudhary, a Maithil Brahmin from Kursi village near Jhanjharpur station, and belong to Jalaiwar mool.

9. In the household of above mentioned Nandurai, Bachcha Chaudhary, the son of Pyarelal Chaudhary of Kursi village is married.

10. Bachchan Rai, son of Lalji Rai, who is the nephew of Sheetal Rai, Maithil of Bhirha village is married to the sister of Nathuni Rai, a Sanaiwar Pachchima Brahmin of village Malpur.

11. In the same household of Sheetal Rai of Bhirha, Maithil Brahmin Kirtinayan Chaudhary's son, Dwarkanath Chaudhary from village Panchobh, west of the city of Darbhanga, is married.

12. Above mentioned Sheetal Rai's son Ramkishun Rai is married to the daughter of Babui Kal Chaudhary, Maithil, of Marrain Magrauni mool, from Basti Badhauna village, of Pargana Saraisa.

13. Ishru Chaudhary from the same village of Badhauna is the maternal grandfather of Vindhyeswari Prasad Singh, a Sanaiwar Pachchima Brahmin of Nayanagar. (It means Ishru Chaudhary, a Maithil Brahmin from Badhauna's daughter is married into a Pachchima/Bhumihar Brahmin family).

14. Badri Chaudhary from same Badhauna village is married into the family of Kodariya Pachchima Brahmin and *sagotra* (of the same *gotra*) of Fateh Narayan Singh of Mauje Bhathahi thana pargana and because he was intestate, Badri Chaudhary has also inherited Fateh Narayan Singh's share of property.

15. The same Badri Chaudhary's son Babuwe Lal Chaudhary is married into a Maithil Brahmin Shri Gudar Singh's family of village Pakda, of district Bhagalpur, pargana Chchai.

16. From the same village of Badhauna, Raksharam Chaudhary, son of Devi Lal Chaudhary is married into the family of Shri Yadunandan Singh, Bhumihar Brahmin, Savarna gotra from village Punarak (also called Pandarakh or Punyark in Sanskrit due to an ancient Sun temple there, also a railway station) in Patna district.

17. From the same village of Badhauna, Kunji Lal Chaudhary is married to the sister of Shri Janki Prasad Singh, a Pachchima Brahmin of Savarna gotra from village Khagadia (also a railway station) in district Munger (Monghyr).

18. From the same village of Badhauna, Padarath Singh Chaudhary is married to the niece of Shri Santosh Singh, a Pachchima Brahmin of Barahi station from district Munger (Monghyr).

The Maithil Brahmin settlement of Badhauna's station is Muhiuddin Nagar. Those (Maithil Brahmins) from Badhauna are also related to the Anriye (mool) of Shandilya gotra who are merged/inter-connected/related to Pachchima Brahmins of Sanaiwar mool. Like:

19. Badri Chaudhary's relative Subarai, Maithil, Anriye, or Brahmapuriye, village Dekuli, Pargana Jabalpur.
20. Parayagdutt Chaudhary's sister's son Shri Laxminarayan Rai, Maithil, Anriye, village Yataili.
21. Tillu Chaudhary's relative Harihar Rai, Anriye, village Jagannathpur.
22. Tillu Chaudhary's relative Ramgovind Jha, village Phulera, Jalaiwar mool, Vatsa or Kashyap gotra.
23. Jagdish Rai Maithil of Jalaiwar Mool from village Basti, Muhiuddin Nagar station is married to the daughter of Avadh Singh Kodariya from village Bhathahi.
24. Daughter of Gangu Chaudhary of Badhauna is married to Ramsundar Jha of village Bela, nearby Mujauna, pargana Saraisa.
25. The nephew of Maithil Mewalal Chaudhary of Simri village which is north of the above mentioned Panchobh village is married into the family of Digambar Rai from Bhirha. Shri Mewalal was a close friend of Maharaja Lakshmishwar Singh of Darbhanga and was the tehsildar of the famous Babu Durgadutt of Madhuban.
26. Two kos (six km) west of Darbhanga from the village Kali Maithil Gyanilal Chaudhary is married to the daughter of Bhailal from Bhirhan village.
27. From the same village Kali, Kunwar Chaudhary is (or departed) the nephew (sister's son) of Dharmal Rai of Bhirhan.
28. Anriye Maithil Harihar Rai of above-mentioned Jagannathpur village is married to a Brahmin (Bhumihar) of Sanaiwar Mool Bhujanga Singh's daughter from Naya Nagar.
29. Anriye Maithil Bachchu Rai of Bairampur is married in the household of Bhujanga Singh of Naya Nagar.
- Thus, Anriye Maithils of twelve villages are intrinsically connected to Sanaiwar Pachchima Brahmins of twelve villages (and thus is difficult to separate the two Brahmin sub-castes). These Anriye Maithils of Bhirhan village are related (by inter-marriage) with (Maithil Brahmins) from Kurson, Dasaut, etc. along with Maithils of Yogya Shreni. ("Yogya" literally means worthy, respectable, eligible, and therefore somewhat comparable to Kulin Brahmins of Bengal and thus are considered highest among Maithil Brahmins.)
- Similarly, Brahmapuriye Maithils of Shandilya gotra from villages like Kevata, Asinchak are intrinsically related by marriage with Brahmins (Pachchima, Bhumihar) of Sanaiwar mool, like:
30. Three daughters of Gajraj Chaudhary from Kevata (Maithil Brahmin) are married to Sanaiwar Brahmins (Pachchima, Bhumihar), Narsingh Dutt Singh, Raghuvar Sharan Singh and Zalim Singh of Naya Nagar.

31. Seth Ramashray Chaudhary of Kevata's grandfather Raghubar Dayal Singh's sister was married to Jivlal Singh of Naya Nagar.
32. Ram Dayal Chaudhary of Asinchak's sister is married to Mahoday Singh of Nayanagar.
33. Sanaiwar Brahmin Digambar Rai (son of Lekha Rai) of Rampur Kachchery's (Cutchery) sister is married to Anriye (or Brahmपुरiye) Subarai, son of Harakh Rai from Dekuli.
34. Seth's daughter from Kewata is married to Digambar Rai of Bhiraha.
35. The present Seth Shri Ramashray Singh Chaudhary's paternal cousin is married to above mentioned Prayag Dutt Chaudhary's daughter from Badhauna.
36. From the same Badhauna, in Uday Singh Chaudhary's household, Amrit Prasad Singh and Baldev Prasad Singh of Badhauna are married.
37. Dronwar Brahmin of Vibhutipur Narhan, Shri Dwarika Prasad Singh's brother Harikrishna Singh is married to the granddaughter of Chaman Singh, brother of Shri Vednarayan Singh from village Badalpura, Begusarai station in Munger (Monghyr) district. And Shri Vednarayan Singh's daughter is married to the current Seth Shri Ramashray Singh Chaudhary, son of Seth Chatradhari Chaudhary of Kevata. The same Chatradhari Chaudhary's father Raghubar Dayal Chaudhary was the maternal uncle of Ramadhin Rai Maithil from Vithauli village near Darbhanga. Ramadhin Rai's daughter is married to the son of Bachcha Thakur Maithil from Bachaul Pargana, Darbhanga, village Bharatpatti, Vardepur tole (neighbourhood).
38. Seth Chatradhari Chaudhary's daughter is married in the house of Suvanshal Jha from Vaigani Nawada village, which is four *kos* (12 km) from Darbhanga.
39. Digwait Pachchima Brahmin Shri Bhatu Prasad Chaudhary from Darbhanga-Khirhar's maternal uncles are Bhaiji Chaudhary and Khushi Chaudhary from Dularpur. Because Bhatu Prasad's maternal grandfather is the maternal uncle of Madhusingh Bhaiji Chaudhary from Devdha. Bhatu Chaudhary's father was Ram Vashisht Chaudhary and Khushi Chaudhary's father was Hansraj Chaudhary.
40. Dronwar Bhumihar Brahmin Shri Kali Prasad Singh from Kevat village close to Kusheshwarsthan and Maithil Kaushiki Dutt Chaudhary from village Pokhraon near Darbhanga – both have got married in village Meghaul near Vibhutpur in Begusarai sub-division to the daughters of Vanshirai Maithil. Vanshirai's son Jagdwip is around.
41. Ram Chaudhary Maithil of root Marre Magrauni from Bishunpur, Begusarai close to Munger district's daughter is married to the grandson of Shri Parasmani Singh of Nayanagar.

42. From village Kehshave, *mool* (root) Dadhiare, Kashyap gotra Maithil Bala Rai's daughter is married to the brother of Shri Parasmani Singh.
43. Village Naav Kothi, *mool* suraire kanti, Gautam gotra Maithil Chaudhari Ayodhya Prasad is married to the paternal cousin sister (*phupheri*) of Shri Shivnandan Singh of Nayanagar. She hails from Muhammadpur village and her *mool* is Sihauria and belongs to Shandilya gotra.
44. From village Jogiara, *mool* Sihoria or Sihulia (Sohgauraiya) Shri Khoob Lal Singh's son Ishwar Dayal Singh got married to Maithil Brahmin, *mool* Surganai, Parashar gotra Shri Anup Singh's brother Doman Singh's granddaughter from district Munger, village Birpur, by the side of Chhoti Gandak river. Their (Anup Singh and Doman Singh) paternal aunt was married to the grandfather of Shri Shivnandan Singh of Nayanagar, named Chaudhary Ram Dayal Singh. He is the same Shivnandan Singh in whose household Shri Ram Bahadur Singh, Dronwar Brahmin from Gangapur is married.
45. Sanaiwar Brahmin from Devadha Rameshwar Prasad Singh is married in the household of Ramdin Chaudhary, Maithil, Brahmapuriye from Kevata.
46. From above mentioned Bhiraha Dharmalal Rai's daughter is married with Maithil Bhagwan Dutt Chaudhary from village Thahar, Pargana Jakhalpur, *Mool* Panchobhe Bhan Pur, Savarna Gotra.
47. In the same Thahar village in the household of Maithil Jivan Chaudhary, Chaudhary Jharula Singh from Nagar's sister is married. And in Khedan Chaudhary's household, Chaudhary Udan Singh's sister is married.
48. *Sa-gotra* (*gotia*, from the same *Gotra*) from Thahar is married to a boy from the household of Vanmali Saraswati alias Saraswati Babu who is a Yogya Shreni Maithil in Ballipur, close to Sakri station in Dahaura village. This means that currently Mahindra Narayan Saraswati has his maternal grandparental relation in Ballipur. The same Saraswati Babu is related to the Shrotriya Maharaja Darbhanga as well.
49. The matrimonial relationship of Kurson (place) with Pachchima Brahmins has already been shown. From the same Kurson, Avadh Narayan Chaudhary's daughter is married to Banmali Saraswati of Dahaura whose son is Laxmi Narayan Saraswati.
50. From Ballipur, Vanshi Chaudhary is married to Bholi Chaudhary's daughter from pargana Saraisa, village Vamaiya, and *mool* Anriye.
51. Village Lama Ujaan, *mool* Jalaiwar Garaul, Kashyap gotra, Vanshilal Chaudhary Maithil is married to the daughter of Balmukund Rai, who is a Brahmin (Bhumihar) of Sanaiwar *mool* from village Devadha.
52. Shri Pitambar Singh, the most illustrious name in Nayanagar was married to the aunt of Maithil Ranglal Rai's father from Bhirhan.

53. From above mentioned Keshave village, all Maithil Brahmin girls of Dadhiare mool are married into Naya Nagar village (of Bhumihar Brahmins).
54. Sahdaulia Pachchima Brahmin Mani Mishra's son from village Patori, pargana Saraisa is married to Gopal Rai Maithil's sister from above mentioned Basti village.
55. Maithil Mohan Rai's daughter from Narepur near Bachchwara station is married to the son of Ganapati Mishra from Patori.
56. In Pargana Pidaruch, village Pidaruch, Gautam gotra, mool Khauvade Nampur, Mitralal Chaudhary's father was married to Khedu Ishwar Maithil's sister from district Munger, pargana Naipur, village Maranchi, mool Jalaiwar Jale, and Vatsa gotra.
57. The same Khedu Ishwar's another sister is married to Belkhandi Rai from Bhirahan.
58. Maithil of Yogya Shreni (considered very high among Maithil Brahmins, right after Shrotriya to which belonged the Maharaja of Darbhanga) Bachchu Chaudhary's grandfather from Lohar-Bhawanipur was married to a Bhumihar Brahmin family from Magadh region.
59. Maharaja Lakshmishwar Singh of Darbhanga's second marriage was in the family of Faturi Thakur of Samaul village. With the same family (of Faturi Thakur of Samaul) Banaili (another zamindari of Maithil Brahmins) was also related. Banaili Raj had regular marriage relations with Pachchima Brahmins (Babhans/Bhumihar Brahmins).
- Similarly 15-20 kos (45 km – 60 km) North and South and 20-22 kos (60 km – 66 km) East and West from Dalsinghsarai station, generally in Saraisa Pargana and in its adjoining regions, thousands of Maithil Brahmins and Pachchima Brahmins (Babhans/Bhumihar Brahmins) are related. Not all can be listed out here.
60. Dularpur village's (Maithil Brahmins) marriage relations with Pachchima Brahmins has been proven. Dularpur village's relationship is with the village of Bhaurkhauvade mool in which Maharaja of Darbhanga's sagotra (cognate) Mahamahopadhyaya Shri Krishna Singh Thakur resides.
61. The current Maharaja of Darbhanga Sir Rameshwar Singh Ji is married to the daughter of Parasmani Jha from Mangrauni. The Maharaja's wife is the paternal cousin of Katirbu Jha. Katirbu Jha is married to the paternal aunt of Bucchi Chaudhary of Karaj. Bucchi Chaudhary's paternal cousin-sisters are married to Gorelal Kunwar of Sonbarsa, Bhagalpur and Lalji Thakur Chaudhary of Gauripur. Karaj village is related to above mentioned Lakhi Babu's household from Maranchi village in Monghyr and Panchobh village has relations in Maranchi, and the relationship of both Maranchi and Panchobh has already been shown with Pachchima Brahmins.

62. With the maternal granddaughter of *mool/root* Velochain Sudai, village Samaul was married the Late Shriman Maharaj Bahadur of Darbhanga Naresh Srotriya Lakshmishwar Singh. The younger Maharani Sahiba is still alive and Samaul is related to Dularpur and Habi Bauardh. Dularpur's relations with Pachchima Brahmins have already been shown and will show the relations of Habi Bauardh subsequently.

This way, if the highest of Maithils, Maithil Shiromani Srotriya Maharaja Darbhanga is related to Pachchima Brahmins through marital relationships, and Yogya Maithil Brahmins have also been shown to be related to Pachchima Brahmins earlier, then what about the rest of Maithil Brahmins?

63. Karaj village whose marriage relationship with Pachchima Brahmins has already been established above, is also related to Salempur village in Pargana Saraisa and Salempuris related to Maithil Raja Banaili.

64. From Khirhar, Darbhanga Digwait Brahmin (another *mool/root/dih* of Pachchima Brahmins) Shri Ramjulum Chaudhary and Turant Lal Chaudhary of Dularpur are maternal cousins. Their mothers are sisters and their maternal grandparental village is Jhahuri near Samastipur.

65. Shri Gopi Chaudhary from Nehra is related to above mentioned Maithil Babu of Barari, and Shri Gopi Chaudhary is also related to the Maithil Brahmin households of Nanha Ishwar and Nunu Ishwar from Maranchi village in Monghyr.

Maranchi's marital relationship with Pachchima Brahmins has already been established above. Therefore, Maithil Brahmin Maharaja of Banaili, Shri Kirtyanand Singh and the distinguished Maithil Brahmins from Barari and all their relations of distinguished Maithil Brahmins are all related to Pachchima Brahmins, and Raja Banaili is related to Mahamahopadhyay Shrikrishna Thakur (renowned Srotriya Maithil Brahmin scholar also related to Darbhanga Maharaja), thus his relationship with Pachchima Brahmins is established. In this manner, and if following the traditional accounts of marital relationships is accounted for, there is not a single Maithil Brahmin who is unrelated to Ayachak Pachchima Brahmins (now called Bhumihar Brahmins). Accordingly, Paramhansji (Maithil Brahmin writer Paramhans Mahopadeshak) has written, "Dhakhjari, Kurson, Vallipur, Dasaut, Dularpur, Nawada and Nehra's *kutumb* (relatives through marriage relations), *kutumb's kutumb* and their *kutumbs* all are Srotriya, Yogya and Panjibaddh Maithil Brahmins." He listed them out because they are all famous in Mithila (region in North Bihar).

Now instead of pointing out each family and their relationships, I would only list out the names of villages where normally Pachchima Brahmins Dogamia Maithils and other Maithils live and are interrelated by marriage relations.

- (1) Below mentioned are generally the names of those villages where Pachchima Brahmins live and they have marital relations with Dogamia Maithils and other Maithil Brahmins. They are thus – In district Monghyr, Pargana Nayipur vilages named Dahiya, Rasalpur, Damodarpur, Aagan, Alapur, Chilhai, Pali, Banhara, Amba, Rampur, Sajat, Narharpur, Tajpur, Chariya, Harpur Nayatola, Fataha, Rasidpur, Aagapur, Ladeपुर, Bachchwara, Temuha, Saryupura; and in Pargana Bhusadi villeges Meghaul, Harakhpura, etc., Brahmins of Surgane Mool of Parashar Gotra reside. In Saraisa Pargana of Darbhanga district, in twelve villeges including Bhathahi, Susta, Chandichaur, Brahmins of Kodariye Mool reside. Brahmins of Jalaiwar Mool reside in Jalalpur, Rampur, Surauli, Mau, Sherpur named villeges. Devdha, Patsa, Nayanagar, Rampur, Dudhauna, Kachahari Rampur, Sakarpur, Khadhैया, Madhepur, Sihma, etc. villeges are inhabited by Sanaiwar Brahmins. In Monghyr, Badalपुर, Malati, Bahadur Nagar named villeges reside Brahmins of Marrain Magrauni reside. Apart from these, knowing Vibhutpur, Mahathi, etc.villeges is also required. In these beforementioned villeges either Pachchima Brahmins reside, or those Maithils also reside who have so many relationships over generations with Pachchima Brahmins that they are now considered Pachchima Brahmins.
- (2) Now belowmentioned are those villeges in which Dogamia Maithils reside – Bhirha, Banda, Jagannathpur, Dasaut, Jodपुर, Bamaiya, Belsandi, Sihma, Pataili, Dharha, Rupauli named villeges in district Darbhanga, Saraisa Pargana, reside Anriye Mool, Shandilya Gotra Maithil Brahmins. In Lachchiminiya, Pavra, and Kankad, etc.villeges reside Takware Mool, Vatsa Gotra Maithils. In Akhtiyarpur, Mathurapur, Ese Jhakda, Gurmaaha, Tiswara, Maheshpur, Bajitpur, Khajutiya, Basti, Badhauna, Toypur, Byasपुर, Saryupur, Gaupur, Kumhira Morva, Nauvachak, Bhojpur named villeges reside Jalaiwar Mool, Vatsa Gotra Maithil Brahmins of Saraisa Pargana. In Udaipur, etc. villeges reside Parisare Mool, Shandilya Gotra Maithils. In Pokhram and Motipur named villeges Garga Gotra Maithils reside (Mool is absent due to typographical error). In Kevta and Asinchak named villeges reside Brahmapuriye Brahmapur Moo, Gautam Gotra Brahmins. In Nari villege reside Karamheura Mool Brahmins.
- (3) Now I would list out the names of Maithil Brahmin villeges with which these Dogamias and Pachchima Brahmins have marital relationships. Like in Garaul, Dasaut, Kurson, Sherpur, Kathwar, Vishnupur and Makrampur, etc., reside Jalaiwar Garaul Mool Maithil Brahmins reside. In Habi Bhauaad, Vatho, Dharoda, Bithauli, Mohli, Simrama, Ufardahan, Paudi, Behda, etc.villeges reside Belauche Behda Mool Maithil Brahmins. Ballipur, Gahad, Banhar, Badgama, Thahar, Hasanpur, Baijnathpur, Gaighatta, Tengraha, Gudarghat and in Pramana named villeges reside Panchobhe Bhanpur Mool Maithil Brahmins. In Sahasram, Patniyan, Dumri, Jamuwan, Mo-

haddipur, etc. villages reside Takware Nima Mool Maithil Brahmins. Padri, Boranj, Dahiyar, Baligamai Darhar and Govindpur named villagers belong to Khauvad Simadwar Mool Maithil Brahmins. In Ganga Patti Senuwar, etc., villages reside Maithil Brahmins of Unaiwar Mool. In Kushothar, etc. (villages) reside Bhuswadai Mool whereas in Lavani, etc., villages reside Koiyarai Jadail Mool Maithils. Similarly in Thalwar, Manjhaulia Karaj, Mishraulia, Pidaruch, Panchobh and Devram are villages whose Maithil Brahmins have currently as well as traditionally have had marital relations with Ayachak Brahmins (Pachchima/Bhumihar Brahmins).

Maithil Brahmins have famously four sub-divisions, the highest of whom are Srotriyas, followed by Yogyas, Panjibaddh and lastly by Jaibars.⁸² I have already shown how all these sub-divisions of Maithil Brahmins have marital relations with Pachchima Brahmins.⁸³ It is possible that sometimes there could be differences in identifying *Mool*, *Gotra* or village but the essential fact of the matter of marital relations remain. Like in the province of Kashi (it constituted the District of Oudh and Benares in United Provinces, now Uttar Pradesh), it (the root place) is called *Sthan* or *Dih*; like the root/*mool/sthan/pindi* of Tiwaris of Pindi is Pindi. Similarly, such a place in the West (Western India) is called *Nikas* and in Mithila it is called *Mool* where in those villages where their primal patriarch had lived and settled with means of livelihood, where both (settled village with primal patriarch and means of livelihood) combined, it became a centre of business and trade.⁸⁴ Like Panchobhe Bhanpur, etc. There is one more fact worth noticeable among Maithil Brahmins is how many of their *Mool* and *Gotra* is exactly the same as those of Pachchima Brahmins; like Dighwai or Dighwait Mool, Shandilya Gotra is the same among both. Similarly, Kothwe or Kothwait Mool, Gotra Vishnuvridh is the same. Surganai Mool, Gotra Parashar; Kodariye Mool, Shandilya Gotra; Basahai or Basmait Mool, Gotra Garga. Suba Gopal Mishra of Janakpur Pipra was a Basmait Mool Brahmin. Jalaiwar Mool, Vatsa or Kashyap gotra. Panchobhe Mool, Savarna Gotra and Dadhiarai, Chakwar and Sanaiwar Mool should also be noticed (for their sameness in both Maithil Brahmins and Pachchima Brahmins). All this shows

⁸² Some scholars list out five sub-divisions but four sub-divisions of Maithil Brahmins is the most standard depiction.

⁸³ It is a remarkable achievement of Swami Sahajanand Saraswati to meticulously record marriage relations among Pachchima/Bhumihar Brahmins and Maithil Brahmins through his intense fieldwork in 1915-1916. It is equally surprising how this dense work finds absolutely no reference in academic/scientific writings including those on sociology, apart from sometimes just a grudging mention of the work Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar without discursively engaging with its content.

⁸⁴ It is remarkable how Sahajanand has again become a forerunner in the kind of research taken forward by Christopher Alan Bayly, Anand A. Yang and Jacques Pouchepadass on the local fairs and businesses called bazaars.

without an iota of doubt how Maithils and Pachchima Brahmins are intimately related and were always intimately related.

The primal ancestors of Sanaiwar (Mool) Brahmins were brothers Gopalrai and Kesarirai. Kesarirai's descendants reside in Patsa and adjoining villages and Gopalrai's descendants reside in in Nayanagar and adjoining villages. Just two-three years ago the Patsa resident Raghavrai, etc., have split up from Pachchima Brahmins and have merged in Maithil Brahmins. Their commensal relations of Patsa residents with those from Nayanagar remain the same (as they both descend from the same *mool*). The primal patriarch of Kodariye Brahmins lived in Loma village of Saraisa Pargana. From there some of his descendants Bhathahi and Susta named villages, who are named as Bhumihar Brahmins or Pachchima Brahmins. The secretary of Bhumihar Brahmin Mahasabha, Shri Raghunandan Singhji is a Kodariya Brahmin from Susta village. From the same Loma village some descendants settled in Dhakhjari village and bound themselves by panji-prabandh and merged in Maithil Brahmins. What Mukund Mishra calls himself namely Kodariye Loam or Dhakhjari Loam. Do all these facts no attest to the unity of both these sub-castes (of Brahmins)?

If one studies the work "Brahman Sambandh [Brahmin (Marital) Relations]" of Paramhansji (Paramhans Mahopadeshak, referred in the text above), one would realise that many Maithil Brahmins are descendants of pachchima Brahmins. For example, take the instance of earlier referred Bharadwaj Gotra, Dumtikars. Later while showing relationships of Kanyakubja and Saryupareen with Pachchima Brahmins, we would see that in reality it is Saryupareen Brahmins who are Tiwaris and Pandeyas, etc., of Dumtikar. Therefore, the correct terminology should be Dumtikar or Dumtikariye, but people forgot/transformed (for phonetic reasons or for simplicity) the terminology to then refer it as Domkatar, Damm, or Dammkatriye. Pilakhvad village resident Panjekar Jainath Sharma Maithil Brahmin who has published Maithil Brahmin Genealogy and published by Balkrishna Sharma of Sugauna, while explaining about Bharadwaj Gotra there is a mention of Dammkariye Mool. It is possible that the Maithils might have changed the name/terminology, or they would have merged again among Pachchima Brahmins, but it is without doubt that they became Maithil Brahmins from Pachchima Brahmins only. Even now in Mirzapur near Darbhanga station, there are Domkatriye Maithil Brahmins. Paramhansji (Paramhans Mahopadeshak, referred in the text above) has also substantiated in his work how there are many such Brahmins who changed from Pachchima Brahmins to Maithil Brahmins, and from Maithil Brahmins to Pachchima Brahmins and Maithil Brahmins once again. For example, Suraire Mool Pachchima Brahmins became Maithil Brahmins and then Pachchima Brahmins once again. For example, from Sabauda to Edhu, from Edhu to Navkothi, Mohanpur, Chandpura, Bandovar and Khamhar. And from Sabauda itself have emerged

Ramdiri, Gauda, Bijalpura, Songdahaand Amba, etc. From Gauda to Naula, and from Naula to Maithil Brahmin once again, for example Ujiarpur.

While contesting the claim of (some) Pachchima Brahmins who advocate discontinuance of marriage with Maithil Brahmins, Paramhansji (Paramhans Mahopadeshak, referred in the text above) has shown how if we look into the genealogical roots of Dronvar Brahmins we would find that they are all Maithil Brahmins. Then what is this prohibition of marriage for? Because Kanyakubja Brahmin, Pandey of Devkali Sadhoram's son Raja Abhiman's son Rai Gangaram is the primal ancestor of Dronvar Brahmins. Gangapur and Narhan, etc., have all descended from him. The first marriage of Rai Gangaram is with Bhag Rani, the daughter of Raja Singh Chakwar Maithil Brahmin from the Mool village Chak of Chakwars, and the second marriage is with Mukta Rani, the daughter of Pandit Gopi Thakur Maithil Brahmin resident of Tiswara village.⁸⁵ There were six sons from the first marriage and three sons from the second marriage. From these nine comes the entire Dronvar (Mool) of Brahmins. Therefore, in all truthfulness, there is no distinction between Maithil and Bhumihar Brahmins. Therefore, earlier mentioned (earlier in Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar but not excerpted in this work) Dr. Wilson and Bangladeshi (Bengali) Brahmin Lahiri Mahashay in his Bengali work, 'Prithvir Itihas (Earth's History)' has mentioned Bhumihar Brahmins to be Maithil Brahmins, and therefore the Maithili language word "Babhan" (Brahmin in Hindi) is the commonly used word to identify Bhumihar Brahmins, and the mention has been made as such by Lahiri Mahashay. The likes of this would be excerpted later in the work ("Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar").

⁸⁵ It is interesting to note here how unlike the rest of the listing of marriage relations, the brides have also been named. It shows their background as royalty/nobility as well as knowledge and better social conditions.

Appendix II: Marriage Relations among Bhumihar Brahmins and Saryupareen Brahmins as recorded in Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar⁸⁶ (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:321-325)

While showing marriage relations of Saryupareen and Kanyakubja Brahmins with landed or Bhumihar Brahmins I would by start recording firstly with Saryupareens. It is because Brahmins who are referred to as Saryupareens are most numerous in the vicinity of Kashi (Varanasi). We should understand this much and make our social assessments (of Brahmin society) on how the highest of Maithils, Maharaja Darbhanga and Mahamahopadhyay Shri Krishna Singh Thakur are clearly related by marriage relations with Pachchima/Bhumihar Brahmins and if actually all marriage relations are recorded then everyone (all Maithil Brahmins) are included. Similarly, if marriage relations are assessed (and recorded) on this side (in Eastern United Provinces) among Saryupareen/Kanyakubja Brahmins and Bhumihar Brahmins, no one would be left out, i.e., they would all be related with each other.

Name of Bhumihar Brahmin Bridegrooms	Brides from Saryupareen Brahmin families with their addresses
(1) Ramkumar Singh	Pandit Mahavir Pandey, village Panvar, Gautam Gotra, Pargana Arail
(2) Matabadal Singh	Pandit Shitalabaksh Pandey, village Panvar, Gautam Gotra, Pargana Arail
(3) Thakur Prasad Singh	Pandit Bawolram Pandey, village Panvar, Gautam gotra, pargana Arail
(4) Ram Kishore Singh	Pandit Suryadeen, village Panvar, Gautam gotra, pargana Arail
(5) Shivbalak Singh	Pandit Ramprasanna Tiwari, village Viraul, Vashisht gotra, pargana Arail
(6) Alopi Singh	Pandit Durgaprasad Tiwari, village Chaka, Vashisht gotra, pargana Arail
(7) Shital Singh	Pandit Durgaprasad Tiwari, village Chaka, Vashisht gotra, pargana Arail
(8) Jagannath Singh	Pandit Vinda Prasad Tiwari, Chaka, Arail
(9) Thakur Prasad Singh	Pandit Vinda Prasad Tiwari, Chaka, Arail

⁸⁶ This list is translated from Hindi by the current author. I have provided this abridged translation as an illustration as there are cross references to marriage relations across the *Brahmarshi VanshaVistar*. The work still awaits more attention for a detailed and comprehensive translation with notes and cross-references. The genealogical records can also be updated till today.

(10) Babusingh Medhai	Pandit Madan Mohan Prasad Tiwari, Chaka, Arail
(11) Matabadal Singh	Pandit Ramratan Prasad Tiwari, Chaka, Arail
(12) Matabadal Singh	Pandit Shivnandan Ram Tiwari, Shindhuvar
(13) Radhamohan Singh	Pandit Shivnandan Ram Tiwari, Shindhuvar
(14) Ramkripal Singh	Pandit Datadeen Pandey, village Pandhar, Gautam gotra
(15) Ramkripal Singh	Pandit Sampatram Tiwari, Sindhuvar, Vashisht gotra
(16) Kashi Prasad Singh	Pandit Mahaveer Prasad Tiwari, Sindhuvar, Vashisht gotra
(17) Vindhreshwari Prasad	Pandit Mahaveer Prasad Tiwari, Sindhuvar, Vashisht gotra
(18) Vairisal Singh	Pandit Mataprasanna Pandey Vampuri, village Chauki, Parashar gotra, Khairagarh
(19) Bhodu Singh	Pandit Mataprasanna Pandey Vampuri, village Chauki, Parashar gotra, Khairagarh
(20) Dansingh, Machaiyan Pandey, Bharadwaj Gotra	Pandit Mataprasanna Pandey Vampuri, village Chauki, Parashar gotra, Khairagarh
Now we have the list of Bharadwaj Gotra Bhumihar Brahmins from Ramgarh Deori, Vasahi, and Lakaha Khai	
(21) Shivjagat Singh, Ramgarh	Pandit Datadeen Pandey, village Panvar, Gautam gotra, Pargana Arail
(22) Shatruhan Singh, Ramgarh	Pandit Vindaprasad Tiwari, Chaka, Vashisht
(23) Indrajit Singh	Pandit Madan Mohan Tiwari, Chaka, Vashisht
(24) Gayaprasad Singh, Deori	Pandit Bodhiram Pandey, Panvar, Gautam, Arail
(25) Bharat Singh	Pandit Shivnandan Tiwari, Sindhuvar, Vashisht
(26) Chandrabhan Singh, Vasahi	Pandit Bodhiram Pandey, Panvar, Viraul, Arail
(27) Gayaprasad Singh, Deori	Pandit Ramnarayan Tiwari, Viraul, Vashisht
(28) Gangotri Singh, Lakthaha	Pandit Madanmohan Tiwari, Chaka, Arail
(29) Ramkripal Singh	Pandit Sampatram Tiwari, Chaka, Arail
(30) Chatradhari, Khai	Pandit Harichand Pandey, Panvar, Gautam, Arail
(31) Brajmandal, Khai	Pandit Shivnandanram Tiwari, Sindhuvar, Arail, Vashisht
Now Vashisht Gotra Bhumihar Brahmins from Khairagarh Pargana, their title is Mishra	

(32) Mahaveer Singh, Bihagna	Pandit Sheetalbaksh Pandey, Panvar, Gautam, Arail
(33) Chaudhary Thakurprasad Singh	Pandit Binduram Tiwari, Sindhuvar, Vashisht
(34) Raghunath Singh, Ramnagar	Pandit Durga Prasad Tiwari, Chaka, Vashisht
Bridegroom from Saryupareen Brahmin families with their addresses	Bhumihar Brahmin bride families with their addresses
(35) Pandit Gangaram Tiwari from Unwalia, Village Basahi Kotaha, Pargana Arail, Vashisht Gotra	Shri Pitapal Singh, village Purauni, Pargana Arail, Bharadwaj gotra Pandey
(36) Ramsundar Tiwari	Shri Shivsaran Singh, village Purauni, Pargana Arail, Bharadwaj gotra Pandey
(37) Samayal Tiwari	Shri Jaigopal Singh, village Puraini, pargana Arail
(38) Ramphal Pandey, Malayyan, village Malaka, tehsil Suram, Allahabad, Sankrit gotra, now stays in Mahru Dih	Jaswant Singh, gautam, Ganjari, Gangapur, Kuswar Pargana, Banaras
	Shri Jaswant Singh's daughter was married to Ramphal Pandey from Malayyan. She is still alive. Though Jaswant became intestate and his son in law lives in Gangapur.
(39) Shisht Narayan Singh, village Gathauli, pargana Arail, Gautam Mishra Gotra	Ramsewak Tiwari from Unwalia, village Vasahi Kotaha, Pargana Arail, Gotra Vashisht
(40) Shiv Prasad Singh Kathauli, Pargana Khairagarh, Allahabad, Bharadwaj Gotra, Pandey	Pandit Matabhikh Tiwari, Marau, Pargana Kewai, Kathauli, Pargana Allahabad
(41) Nankusingh Kathauli	Pandit Shivilal Tiwari, Hariipur, Pargana Kewai, Kathauli, Pargana Allahabad
(42) Lauleen Singh Kathauli	Pandit Ayodhya Dubey, Khemapatti, Pargana Mahi, Allahabad
(43) Shiv Sampat Singh	Pandit Ramavtar Dubey, Khemapatti, Pargana Mahi, Allahabad
(44) Shivratan Singh	Pandit Shivdeen Pandey, Misiri Gadauda, Pargana Kewai, Prayag
(45) Shiv Darshan Singh	Pandit Ramdeen Pandey, Misiri Gadauda, Pargana Kewai, Prayag
(46) Hanuman Singh	Pandit Gangaram Dubey, Kot, Pargana Kewai, Prayag
(47) Shivtahal Singh	Pandit Yadunandan Shukla, Kripalpur, Pargana Kewai, Prayag
(48) Jhagga Singh	Pandit Swayamwar Mishra from Dharampura, Gudanpura, Khairagarh
(49) Rajnarayan Singh	Pandit Rambharose Upadhyay, Suriyawan, Bhadohi, Mirzapur

(50) Bholisingh	Pandit Kolahal Upadhyay, Kodar, Bhadohi, Mirzapur
(51) Kolai Singh	Pandit Kalika Ramdeen Upadhyay, Bhadohi, Abarna, Mirzapur
(52) Hanuman Singh	Pandit Parsan Upadhyay, Barmohani, Bhadohi, Mirzapur
(53) Kalika Singh	Pandit Raghu Upadhyay, Dohia, Bhadohi, Mirzapur
(54) Ganesh Singh	Pandit Nageshwar Dubey, Barmohani, Bhadohi, Mirzapur
(55) Atmanarayan Singh	Pandit Jhingur Dubey, Kawal, Barmohani, Bhadohi, Mirzapur
(56) Shivshankar Singh, Kathauli Khairagarh, Prayag	Pandit Ramdas Dubey, Barmohani, Bhadohi, Mirzapur
(57) Suryanarayan Singh	Ishwariram Upadhyay, Suriyawan, Bhadohi, Mirzapur
(58) Kamta Singh	Pandit Sampattiram Upadhyay, Patulki, Bhadohi, Mirzapur
(59) Bhawanicharan Singh	Pandit Ramkumar Upadhyay, Baswara, Bhadohi, Mirzapur
(60) Ramkripal Singh	Bodharam Upadhyay, Awarana, Bhadohi, Mirzapur

Appendix III: Marriage Relations among Bhumihar Brahmins and Kanyakubja Brahmins as recorded in Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar⁸⁷ (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:325-329)

For above mentioned (Appendix II) Brahmins, where there was a doubt regarding the certainty of gotra, I have not mentioned it, but if someone wants to know it can surely be ascertained by the addresses mentioned therein.

Now, I will show relations of (Pachchima/Bhumihar Brahmins) with few famous Kanyakubja Brahmins and then show connected relations with both Kanyakubja and Saryupareen Brahmins.

1. The Ayachak (Bhumihar) Brahmins residing in Pargana Suram, district Prayag (in United Provinces now Uttar Pradesh), like Shri Devkinandan Singh of Aanapur and other neighbouring villages are descendants of Sukshamati Pandey, Pandey of Pahitipur, who are Saryupareen Brahmins of Shandilya Gotra. This fact is registered in the genealogical records of Saryupareen Brahmins, but because of marital relations with Bhumihar Brahmins for many generations they have merged with them. For example, Shri Devkinandan Singh's sister was married to Shri Alrav Singh of Kashi (Varanasi), whose son is Krishnaprasad Singh. And Shri Devkinandan Singh himself was married to the paternal aunt (*phua*) of Shri Ram Govind Singh, a Kudhniya Bhumihar Brahmin of Saryupur in Azamgarh district.
2. From the same marriage (above-mentioned) of Shri Devkinandan Singh, one of his daughters was married to Kashyap Gotra, Kanyakubja Brahmin Siru's household, in district Fatehpur, village Virsinghpur, Pargana Koda Jahanabad, and they still maintain relations and visit each other.
3. Shri Devkinandan Singh's second daughter was married in district Fatehpur, station Bindaki road, village Sultanganj in a Kanyakubja Brahmin household of Harnarayan Singh and Sudarshan Singh, who are Avasthi Gotra from Siru. Among their descendants are Shankar Singh, Gandharva Singh, etc., who still maintain relations with their matriarchal family and visit each other.
4. In district Kanpur (earlier Cawnpore), Bithur, in Chaudhari Khuman Singh Awasthi, Kashyap gotra's household is married the paternal aunt (*phua*) of

⁸⁷ This list is translated from Hindi by the current author.

One instance of horizontal solidarity among Bhumihar Brahmins and Kanyakubja Brahmins was in the political career of Sukhada Pandey, a professor at Patna University and a woman political leader from the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) in Bihar (Sharma & Kamlesh 2010). She herself is a Bhumihar Brahmin married to a Kanyakubja Brahmin making her a winnable candidate garnering votes of both (Sharma & Kamlesh 2010).

Shri Siddhanarayan Singh of Aanapur. In Khuman Singh's house, now his descendant Shiv Singh is there.

5. Similarly, Shri Prasiddhnarayan's father paternal aunt (phua) was married in district Basti, tehsil Haraiya, village Trignauta, Vatsagotra, Saryupareen Brahmin, Ram Narayan Ojha Khairi's household whose son has maintained relations with his maternal side and visit each other.

6. Shri Siddhanarayan's father's paternal aunt (phua) was married to Triphala Pandey Laxminarayan of district Basti, pargana Amodha, village Nathpur Visnayan, Kashyap *gotra*.

7. District Gorakhpur, village Mahavankhor, in Baisi Deen Mishra is related to his (*Siddhnarayan*) third paternal aunt (*phua*). They are both Saryupareen Brahmins.

8. Vikramjit Singh, etc., are also Pandeys of Pihitipur just like those of Aanapur and are *samgotriya* (belonging to the same *gotra*) from district Prayaag (Allahabad), Pargana Suram, Kalyanpur. But now they are called landed Brahmins (Bhumihar Brahmins).

Vikramjit's daughter is married to Saryupareen Brahmin from district Sultanpur, village and pargana Beraunsa in the household of Mangalram, Shivcharan Ram Nagwa belonging to Shukla Garg *gotra*.

9. From the same village (of Vikramjit Singh), Kamtaprasad Singh's daughter is married into the household of Shitalram Shukla and Babu Shukla of Beraunsa.

10. From the same village (of Vikramjit Singh), Mahavir Prasad Singh's daughter is married in the household of Balgovind Ram Shukla of Beraunsa.

11. From the same village (of Vikramjit Singh), Sukhnandan Prasad Singh's daughter is married in the household of Shaligram Shukla of Beraunsa.

Additionally, Zamindar Brahmins (landed Brahmins/Bhumihar Brahmins) from Mahrudih, Sarai Gaon, Malaka Gaon Pareshpur, Chauhare, Aanapur, Ismailpur, Sarai Hiram, Chaturipur, Sarai Gopal, and from Chauraroad, etc., villages are maritally related to Nagwa Shuklas of Beraunsa and 10-12 other adjoining villages.

12. Like Bhagwati Shukla from Mahrudih in Beraunsa is the son of Baijnath Prasad Singh's uncle's daughter.

Now I will list of marital relations (of Bhumihar Brahmins) with both Kanyakubja and Saryupareen Brahmins:

13. Kamtaprasad Pandey and Durgaprasad Pandey from Mirzapur district, Kathinhin village are Tiwaris of Pindi, Shandilya Gotra, and Saryupareen Brahmins. Their marital relation is with the household of Beniprasad Tiwari, with Pannalal of Prayag-Jhunsi, who are Tiwari Saryupareen of Khoriya, and their mansion (*kothi*) is in Agra-Belanganj. The same Pannalal, son of Beniprasad is

married to the daughter of Shri Ramsharan Singh Pandey of Charwa (village) of Pargana Chayal, district Prayag. He (Shri Ramsharan Singh Pandey) is Kaushik Gotra, Pandey of Tekar, and now merged and counted among Bhumihar Brahmins. Because the same Ramsharan Singh's other daughter is married to above mentioned Panasa's Shri Braj Bihari Singh alias Matar Singh. And Matar Singh's paternal aunt (*phua*) is married in district Benares, village Khochwa to Shri Mahavir Prasad Singh, who is a Gautam (*gotra*) Bhumihar Brahmin and a Mishra of Pipra.

14. In the household of the above-mentioned Pandey of Kathinhin; Tripathi Bua Singh of district Prayag, pargana Karari, village Berauncha, Tiwari of Kusumi, Shandilya gotra's two sons are married.

Bua Singh's own marriage, or those Tripathis from district Banda from Madaur, etc., 24 villages like Tripathi Nripati Singh, Madhav Singh, Raghuvir Singh, Avadh Singh, Shivpal Singh and Ramsharan Singh named Saryupareen Kusumi Tiwaris – who resemble the landed Brahmins (Bhumihar Brahmins) today – their sons are married to Pandey of Savarnya Tikra, who are referred to as Chappangaonwale/Chappanwale, i.e., (Kanyakubja Brahmins) who reside in 56 villages in district Prayag, pargana Kada. For example, (those Kanyakubja Brahmins who are related to Bhumihar Brahmins by marriage) from Parsara village, Vishwanath, Thakurdeen, Chandradayal Pandey, etc.; from Bisra (village) Saryupal, Baldev Pandey, etc.; from Aswa (village) Ramratna, Bhagirath Pandey, etc.; from Balak Mau (village) Sukhnandan Ram, Jagmohan Ram Pandey, etc.; from Kakoda (village), Shivsahayram, Raghuvirram Pandey, etc.; from Vidanpur (village) Ramprasanna Ram Pandey; from Tikra Dih (village), Ramjiyawan Pandey, Mathuraprasad Pandey, etc. From Chappangaonwale/Chappanwale Pandey of Tikra (Saryupareen Brahmins), are frequently and openly related by marriage with above-mentioned Bhumihar Brahmins of Aanapur, etc., villages and Panasa, etc., villages. And above-mentioned Charwa village, whose marriage relations with Panasa has already been shown. In Charwa village, Ramsharan Singh, Ramnidhi Singh and Rampratap Singh, etc., 150 households of Saryupareen/Landed/Bhumihar Brahmins live. In Tata village, nearby Charwa, in the household of Brahmaddutt Singh Tiwari's household also Chappangaonwale/Chappanwale have marital relationships. Nearby Tata village, in Chauradih, Mathura Prasad Singh Tiwari; in Sana Jalalpur, Shri Kallu Singh Tiwari; in Singhpur, Bhaggusingh; in Faridpur, Chhedisingh and in Kamalpur, Sudhwal, Nimi, and Sana, named 12 villages live Saryupareen Brahmins, who are now transforming into landed Brahmins/Bhumihar Brahmins and are referred to as Bharadwaj gotra, Tiwaris of Dumtikar. Additionally, in Charwa, Kaushik gotra Pandey of Tekar and in Parsara, etc., villages, Savarna gotra, Pandey of Tikra, have already been mentioned. Tikra Dih has also been referred already.

Exactly, these Pandeys and Tiwaris of Tikra and Dumtikar from Uttar Pradesh when settled in the Magadh region (of Bihar) became the Maharaja of Tekari/Tikari and other Bhumihaar Brahmins belonging to Bharadwaj and other gotras. They (Pandeys and Tiwaris of Tikra and Dumtikar) spread out and became known with titles of Pandey, Tiwari and Dubey in Magadh (south Bihar) and Tirhut (north Bihar, north of river Ganga) and in some places also adopted the titles (became known as) of Rai, Singh and Chaudhary. Pandeys and Tiwaris of Dumtikar, who are the Brahmins of Chappangaonwale/Chappanwale, mention Tekari/Tikari from Magadh as the place of their ancestors (thus they are Saryupareen Brahmins of Bhumihaar Brahmin descent). It is quite possible that these people in order to commemorate Tekari/Tikari as their original place of ancestry, established Tikra named village in Uttar Pradesh.

Over time, these descendants often took up names in oral history like Dumkatar, Domkatr, Domkatar, etc., in different places and even developed falsified local mythologies. But the original and correct phonetical usage is Dumtikar or Dumtekar. Therefore, this should be used more widely. In reality, these people (above listed) are Sayupareen Brahmins.

15. The sons of above mentioned Chappanwale (from 56 villages in district Prayag, pargana Kada) are often married into the households of Tiwaris of Sonhi in Fatehpur district near Sirthu station. These (Tiwaris of Sonhi) live in 12 villages like Bhadwa, Brahmanouli and Ichauli and are Kanyakubja Brahmins.

16. Brahmin from Charwa village Ramsharan Singh's (marital) relations have been shown in Panasa, etc. His son-in-law Mata Dayal Singh's daughter is married in district Pratapgarh, Pargana Nawabganj, village Bamhanpura to Laxminarayan Mishra, from Mainach, of Vatsa or Katyayan gotra, whose son is Narayandas Mishra.

17. Mata Dayal Singh's (above-mentioned) daughter, is married in Prayag-Katwa Nawai Jaisingh, into the household of Jai (Jwala) Shankar Dubey, Kamlakant Dubey, of Belwa Sauri, Vatsa gotra.

The above-mentioned Tiwari Bua Singh of Kusumi whose family's marital relationships have been shown with Bhumihaar Brahmins; his daughters have been married in Rewa (Madhya Pradesh) and Prayag (United Provinces now Uttar Pradesh) in Saryupareen Brahmin families whose details are the following:

18. District Rewa, village Rang Pateri, to Nripati Singh of Mandaur in the household of Baldevprasad Tiwari;

19. District Rewa, village Matiyari, to Madhav Singh in the household of Pandit Ayodhyaprasad Mishra, of Vashisht gotra from Padraha;

20. District Prayag, village Badshahi Mandai, to Raghuvir Singh in the household of Baijnath Mishra from Pipra belonging to Gautam gotra;

21. District Prayag, village Bahadur Ganj, to Avadh Singh in the household of Mahadev Shukla from Mamkhor belonging to Garg gotra;
22. Prayag, Pargana Suram, Kilahnapur, to Shivpal Singh in the household of Rudraprasad Mishra of Dharampur Laguni.
23. Prayag, Pargana Suram, village Bandhpur, Ramsharan Singh Tiwari's daughters are married in the household of Sukhnandan Ram Pandit.
- In addition to Berauncha and Mandaur, Kusumi Tiwaris live in Tari, Mau, Ahiri, Surodha, and Akhauda, etc. villages.
24. Two-three kos (6-9 km) from Prayag, near Jasra station, in Beraul village by the banks of Yamuna river, in the household of Saryupareen Brahmin Ramnarayan Tiwari and other Tiwaris have marital relations with Bhumihar Brahmins of Panasa and Suram pargana.
- Bhumihar Brahmins from above-mentioned Panasa, etc. villages in Arail pargana and Kalyanpur, etc. villages in Suram pargana are martially related to Mishras of Badarka, who are Kanyakubja Brahmins of Katyayana gotra who live in Bhagipur, etc. villages of district Allahabad, pargana Mirzapur Chauhari. For example:
25. Pandit Vindeshwari Bakshsingh Mishra from Bhagipur is related to the household of Rajasaheb Shri Raghavendra Narayan Singh of Varaon village, Arail pargana.
26. And Pandit Vindeshwari Bakshsingh Mishra's nephew Ramanandsingh Mishra's niece is married in the household of Bhumihar Brahmin Shri Adityanarayan Singh from Sirsa Ramnagar in Prayag and who is a Vatsa gotra, Mishra of Gana.
27. Similarly from Charwa, etc. villages, Ramsharan Singh and the like's marital relations with Bhumihar Brahmins has already been shown. From the same Charwa village in the household of Ramnath Singh and Kashi Prasanna Singh's household the above mentioned Pandit Vindeshwari Bakshsingh Mishra's son is married.
28. Pandit Vindeshwari Bakshsingh Mishra's younger brother is married in the household of Ambika Prasad Singh Tiwari from Chaura, who is from Dumtikar, belonging to Bharadwaj gotra. People from Chaura have already been proven to be martially related to Bhumihar Brahmins. Now the same Pandit Vindeshwari Bakshsingh Mishra's marital relations with Kanyakubja Brahmins and Saryupareen Brahmins are as follows:
29. Pandit Vindeshwari Bakshsingh Mishra's daughter is married in the household of Ramlal Mishra who is a Vashisht gotra of Marjani, Saryupareen Brahmin, from village Anjana in district Faizabad.

30. Pandit Vindeshwari Bakshsingh Mishra's sister is married in the household of Kashi Nath Mishra who is a Gautam gotra Saryupareen Brahmin from village Bhakra in district Pratapgarh.

31. Pandit Vindeshwari Bakshsingh Mishra's second sister is married to Huberaj Dube/Dubey in the household of Raj Kishore Dube, of Sarar, Bharadwaj gotra, Saryupareen Brahmin from village Pahitiyapur, district Jaunpur.

32. Pandit Vindeshwari Bakshsingh Mishra's third sister is married in the household of Prayag Mishra, of Mau, Kashyap gotra, Saryupareen Brahmin from village Chema Saraiya, district Pratapgarh.

In addition to Bhagipur, the Mishras of Badarka live in the following villages:

- (1) Village Hussainpur, district Pratapgarh (Durgaprasad Singh)
- (2) Dhinapur, district Prayag, (Matadayal Singh)
- (3) Village Vardaha, district Pratapgarh (Shitaldin Singh)
- (4) Village Kesruwa (Surya Singh).
- (5) The Mishras of Badarka also live in Garhchampa, Bhanpur, Singhi and Mahammadpur villages.

Ramsukh Singh of village Kesruwa; Janki Singh of Vardaha; and Shiv Shankar Singh of Ismailpur have the following marital relationships:

33. Shriyut Ramsukh Singh's daughter is married in the household of Shitaldin Mishra of Mau, Kashyap gotra from village Chemar Saraiya, district Pratapgarh.

34. Janki Singh's daughter is married in the household of Janki Mishra, of Mau, Kashyap gotra, from village Domipur, district Pratapgarh.

35. Shiv Shankar Singh's daughter is married in the household of Shiv Mangal Mishra of Mau, from village Saruwa, district Pratapgarh.

36. Pandit Vindeshwari Bakshsingh Mishra of Bhagipur's daughter is married in the household of Devakinandan Upadhyay, of Khoriya, Bharadwaj gotra, Saryupareen Brahmin from Shekhpur village, district Pratapgarh.

37. Gautam (Bhumihar Brahmins) Gurai Singh, Ram Manorath Singh, etc. from Odhi etc. villages, district Mirzapur's daughters are married in the household of Pathaks from Tiliya Pati village in Rewa and one Pathak from this village has been taken in adoption in Odhi.

38. Brijlal Pandey, of Nagchauri, village Mardapur, pargana Chayal, district Prayag's sister is married to Matadayal Singh, Sarai Ragho, pargana Nawabganj, district Prayag. Pandit Brijlal Pandey is till now the purohit (officiating priest) of eight-ten villages (which means he would be enjoying jajmani ties/ties of prestations).

39. Pandit Indranarayan Dwivedi, Secretary, Kisan Sabha's nephew is married in the household of Kusumi Tiwaris of Virauncha. Hisdaughter's maternal grandparent's household is in Kakoda.

40. Pandit Balraj Sahay Upadhyay, lawyer's (Pratapgarh) nephew is married to the daughter of Bhairo Prasad Singh, Kalyanpur, Suram, from Prayag and Pandit Balraj Sahay Upadhyay's son is married in the household of Gayaprasad Pandey, from Mirzapur.

Appendix IV: Marriage Relations among Tyagi Brahmins and Gaud Brahmins as recorded in Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar⁸⁸ (Raghav S. Sharma 2003a:329-333)

Now I would show some examples of marriage relations between Tyagis (Tage) and Gaudas. After the names of every individual the marital status is indicated and then the names of their village and district is indicated. They are as follows:

Bridegroom Tyagi Brahmin	Groom Gaud Brahmin
(1) Gangaram (groom), Govindpuri, Ambala	Tulsiram's sister, Mulana, Ambala
(2) Madhusudan Das (groom), Govindpuri, Ambala	Kaliram's daughter, Chajrauli, Ambala
(3) Aaya Ram (groom), Govindpuri, Ambala	Gitaram's daughter, Dasani, Ambala
(4) Dinnath (groom), Govindpuri, Ambala	Badridas' daughter, Ambala, Ambala
(5) Asharam (groom), Govardhanpur, Saharanpur	Molhadmal's daughter, Chajrauli, Ambala
(6) Krishnadutt (groom), Govardhanpur, Saharanpur	Kanhaiyalal's daughter, Sarmornahan, Ambala
(7) Moolraj (groom), Govardhanpur, Saharanpur	Gitaram's daughter, Salhapur, Ambala
(8) Shadiram (groom), Govardhanpur, Saharanpur	Parashuram's sister, Mujafat, Ambala
(9) Pratapsingh (groom), Govardhanpur, Saharanpur	Shankarlal's sister, Dasani, Ambala
(10) Dharamsingh (groom), Govardhanpur, Saharanpur	Teluram's sister, Hariyawas, Ambala
(11) Nanakchandra's son, Govardhanpur, Saharanpur	Badriprasad's sister, Dasani, Ambala
(12) Shambhudayal's son, Govardhanpur, Saharanpur	Maderam's sister, Dasani, Ambala

⁸⁸ This list is an abridged translated from Hindi by the current author. Though the primary attention is on marriage relations among Brahmins in the middle Gangetic plain. This section concerns marriage relations among Brahmins in North India covering regions predominantly from Western Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Haryana and eastern reaches of Punjab. Therefore, it is understandable how Sahajanand had planned to record marriage relations among Mohyal Brahmins and Saraswat Brahmins who live in Punjab (the then undivided Punjab, much of which falls in Pakistan after India's partition), and the adjoining regions of Jammu in Jammu and Kashmir in the planned third edition of Brahmarshi Vansha Vistar which he never ended up writing. The centre of Saraswat Brahmins is Kashmir which developed Kashmiri Shaivite aesthetic philosophy and where Kashmir derives its name from the sage, Kashyap Rishi.

(13) Kaliram (groom), Govardhanpur, Saharanpur	Devichand's daughter, Jagadhari, Ambala
(14) Hajras Sharma (groom), Govardhanpur, Saharanpur	Shri Nivas' daughter, Gamli, Ambala
(15) Jirajsingh (groom), Govardhanpur, Saharanpur	Ramjidas' sister, Khura, Ambala
(16) Amichand (groom), Govardhanpur, Saharanpur	Anantram's sister, Mamedi, Ambala
(17) Amichand (groom), Govardhanpur, Saharanpur	Mansaram's sister, Gadhilaukri, Ambala
(18) Badamsingh's son, Vijepura, Saharanpur	Daulatram's sister, Hariyawas, Ambala
(19) Sisram's son, Vijepura, Saharanpur	Daulatsingh's sister, Tehima, Ambala
(20) Mukhtarsingh (groom), Govardhanpur, Saharanpur	Ramprasad's daughter, Madkhedi, Ambala
(21) Girdharilal (groom), Govardhanpur, Saharanpur	Natthuram's daughter, Hariyawas, Ambala
(22) Prithvisingh (groom), Badagaon, Saharanpur	Teluram's daughter, Katki, Badhawali, Ambala
(23) Sisusingh (groom), Rulhaki, Saharanpur	Nandram's daughter, Raipuradmoli, Ambala
(24) Mansaram (groom), Rulhaki, Saharanpur	Ramjidas' daughter, Bhud Brahman, Ambala
(25) Govindram's son, Meharwani, Saharanpur	Harishankar's daughter, Marwa, Ambala
(26) Ramchandra (groom), Meharwani, Saharanpur	Ramjisahay's daughter, Vilaspur, Ambala
(27) Asharam (groom), Sultanpur, Saharanpur	Hiralal's daughter, Madkhedi, Ambala
(28) Ishwardutt (groom), Govindpuri, Ambala	Prabhudayal's daughter, Karnal, Karnal
(29) Budhram's son, Govindpuri, Ambala	Suryabhan's sister, Yara, Karnal
(30) Moladsingh (groom), Nukkad, Saharanpur	Devichand's daughter, Jatlana
(31) Risalsingh's family, Adhiyana, Saharanpur	Rajmidas' family, Sanch, Karnal
(32) Bakhtawarsingh's family, Adhiyana, Saharanpur	Khushiram's family, Kohand, Karnal
(33) Mukhram's family, Adhiyana, Saharanpur	Gopinath's family, Jalkhedi, Karnal
(34) Gangasingh (groom), Shikarpur, Delhi	Jasram's niece, Dujana, Rohtak
(35) Sisasingh (groom), Shikarpur, Delhi	Sattu's sister, Maksudpur, Rohtak
(36) Ramprasad (groom), Jhatikara, Gurgaon	Gangaram's sister, Sagiheda, Rohtak

(37) Bhanwansahay (groom), Jhatikara, Gurugaon	Ramrikh's daughter, Maksudpur, Rohtak
(38) Khushhali (groom), Jhatikara, Gurugaon	Pirusharma's daughter, Maksudpur, Rohtak
(39) Balaram (groom), Jhatikara, Gurugaon	Hariram's daughter, Maksudpur, Rohtak
(40) Kisunram (groom), Jhatikara, Gurugaon	Shivkaran's daughter, Maksudpur, Rohtak
(41) Udayram (groom), Shikarpur, Delhi	Bakshiram's paternal aunt (fua), Diwana, Rohtak
(42) Kudesingh (groom), Shikarpur, Delhi	Nanakchand's sister, Diwana, Rohtak
(43) Khushiya (groom), Shikarpur, Delhi	Hardev's sister, Perval, Rohtak
(44) Sakhiram (groom), Keshavpur, Delhi	Badriprasad's daughter, Nagal, Rohtak
(45) Trikharan (groom), Keshavpur, Delhi	Kudesingh, Nambardar Nagal, Rohtak
(46) Mohra (groom), Dharampur, Gurugaon	Nandpandit's sister, Maksudpur, Rohtak
(47) Parsa (groom), Momedhri, Gurugaon	Shobla's sister, Kannaur, Rohtak
(48) Lakshman (groom), Jhatikara, Gurugaon	Lekhi's daughter, Bhagai, Jhind
(49) Devisahay (groom), Jhatikara, Gurugaon	Saujiram's daughter, Sitobpur, Jhind
(50) Prabhu (groom), Jhatikara, Gurugaon	Dharma ⁸⁹ , Nambardar's daughter, Bhawas, Jhind
(51) Lachchu (groom), Jhatikara, Gurugaon	Chabile's daughter, Ghirana, Jhind
(52) Jiram (groom), Dharampur, Gurugaon	Shadiram's sister, Sitobpur, Jhind
(53) Shadiram (groom), Dharampur, Gurugaon	Totaram's sister, Samaspur, Jhind
(54) Hatam (groom), Bhagel, Bulandshaher	Balram's daughter, Dandikarampur, Jhind
(55) Chandsen (groom), Dalelpur, Bulandshaher	Natthu's daughter, Kuruthal, Gurugaon
(56) Ramchandra's father, Sulakhni, Ambala	Bishanlal's sister, Shahpur, Machchoda, Patiala
(57) Fateh Singh (groom), Dharampur, Gurugaon	Patiram's daughter, Babal, Hisar
(58) Hargyan (groom), Momedhri, Gurugaon	Jayram's daughter, Thaneji, Delhi
(59) Hajras (groom), Momedhri, Gurugaon	Shundram's daughter, Rodhkamuwana, Delhi
(60) Nattharam's family, Haibatpur, Ambala	Munshilal's family, Kutubpur, Muzaffarnagar
(61) Mathuradas' family, Odhana, Karnal	Umraonsingh's family, Tevda, Saharanpur
(62) Dwarkadas' family, Jatlane, Karnal	Ganeshilal's family, Sultanpur, Saharanpur
(63) Ramjidas' family, Tehma, Ambala	Deendayal's family, Sultanpur, Saharanpur

⁸⁹ It is very important to note here how the bride's name has been indicated, it shows that it must be a prominent Gaud Brahmin family which must have a marital relationship with an equally, if not more, prominent Tyagi Brahmin family.

(64) Shaligram's family, Chholi, Ambala	Deendayal, Sultanpur, Saharanpur
(65) Pandit Umadutt's son, Sambhli, Karnal	Pandit Kundanji's niece (paternal), Jalwana, Karnal
Bridegroom Gaud Brahmin	Groom Tyagi Brahmin
(66) Keshav (groom), Kannaur, Rohtak	Jaylal's sister, Shikarpur, Delhi
(67) Yamunadas (groom), Salaudha, Rohtak	Tukharam's sister, Hastal, Delhi
(68) Jiram (groom), Bhaisawal, Rohtak	Momchand's sister, Jhatikara, Gurugaon
(69) Dubbabudha (groom), Maksudpur, Gurugaon	Mohram's daughter, Dharmapur, Gurugaon
(70) Dr. Gitaram (groom), Karnal, Karnal	Nanakchand's daughter, Govindpuri, Ambala
(71) Shivcharan's father, Digh, Karnal	Sahab Singh, Govindpuri, Ambala
(72) Sundarlal (groom), Ladwa, Karnal	Gangaram's daughter, Govindpuri, Ambala
(73) Jagannath (groom), Bijalpur, Ambala	Gangaram's daughter, Govindpuri, Ambala
(74) Biharilal's son, Bijalpur, Ambala	Asharam's daughter, Govindpuri, Ambala
(75) Bishwambhardas' (judge) paternal grandson, Sarkornahan, Ambala	Layakram's daughter, Govindpuri, Ambala
(76) Chhajuram's son, Isopur, Ambala	Ramswarup's daughter, Govardhanpur, Saharanpur
(77) Mohanlal's son, Gadauli, Ambala	Jagram Singh's daughter, Govardhanpur, Saharanpur
(78) Rajaram (groom), Sulakhni, Ambala	Deendayalu's daughter, Govardhanpur, Saharanpur

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Glossary

Dashnami Sanyasi – Ten classical order of monks; three holding *danda* or ritual staff, Tirtha, Ashram and Saraswati drawn from Brahmins, with Saraswati title-holder monk being the highest; the other seven are Bharati, Puri, Ban, Aranya, Giri, Parbat and Sagar who cannot hold the danda, and can be drawn from any of the varnas.

Sabhas/Mahasabhas – community associations/assembly/organizations.

Kisan Sabha – peasants' assembly; first organized peasants' assembly was West Patna Kisan Sabha in 1927, then Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha in 1929 and then the All India Kisan Sabha in 1936 with Swami Sahajanand Saraswati as the progenitor and the most important leader of all the three assemblies.

Mool/Dih – root ancestor or place/village.

Panji-Prabandha – detailed genealogical records kept by Brahmins of North Bihar from the 14th-15th century in the region of Mithila who overtime got geographically and culturally-linguistically identified as Maithil Brahmins. The system was supported by Brahmin rulers of Darbhanga Raj.

Ramlila at Ramnagar – the operatic performance of the epic Ramayana, in its rendition by Goswami Tulsidas' *Ramcharitmanas*, for a month started and supported by the Brahmin Maharaja of Benares for close to two-and-a-half centuries in Ramnagar, Benares. Ramlila is now part of the oral and intangible heritage of mankind as designated by UNESCO.

Puruṣasūkta myth – It is the verse in the Rig Veda which gives the origin of the four-fold Varna from the cosmic being- Brahma – into Brahmin, originating from Brahma's head, Kshatriya originating from Brahma's shoulders, Vaishya originating from Brahma's thighs and the Shudra from Brahma's feet respectively.

Srotriyas – the word comes from *sruti* or the Vedas, and, therefore, the term is employed to refer to Brahmins who have mastered the Vedas; from medieval times, in Mithila, it was used by specifically observant ritualistic and scholarly Maithil Brahmins headed by the Maharaja of Darbhanga as the highest of Brahmins in the Mithila region of Bihar. In Bengal, however, the Srotriyas are third in the hierarchy, the highest being the Kulin Brahmins/Rarhi Brahmins, who were both landed as well as learned.

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